

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy is available in large type and has been prepared to be accessible with screen reader software.

Seymour Housing Co-operative Limited (“SHC”/“We”) encourages all members to follow the Complaints Policy notwithstanding what certain of the Co-op tenancy agreements may stipulate.

### CATEGORIES OF COMPLAINTS COVERED BY THIS POLICY

SHC aims to provide a good service to its members. The Co-op will take all complaints seriously, and any such complaints will be thoroughly and fairly investigated and considered. The Co-op can, however, deal only with complaints that are about Landlord and Tenant issues – that is, those that concern the service the Co-op provides to Co-op members. For example: failure of the Co-op to provide service to a reasonable standard; failure by the Co-op to follow its own policies and procedures; or complaints about people employed or contracted by the Co-op.

SHC reserves the right to refuse to deal with a complaint, or to deal with it differently, if it considers that complaint is being pursued unreasonably or vexatiously.

The Co-op notes that the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code defines a complaint as: “An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.”

### CATEGORIES OF COMPLAINTS NOT COVERED BY THIS POLICY

The Co-op's Complaints Procedure does not apply to complaints about the actions or behaviour of your neighbours, other Co-op members or visitors. These matters are covered by the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Good Neighbour Agreement.

The Complaints Procedure also does not apply to complaints made about individual staff. If your complaint is about an individual member of staff, you should address it to their Line Manager and mark it “Private and Confidential”. Please see the Disciplinary Procedure for further information.

If a member of staff has a complaint against a member or members of the Co-op or another member of staff, they should address their complaint in writing to their Line Manager and mark it “Private and Confidential”. Please see the Grievance Procedure for further information.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPALS OF THIS POLICY**

All complaints are treated confidentially.

A complaint can only be dealt with if it is made within three months of the occurrence of the event / issue in question.

At each stage of the procedure complainants will be kept informed about what is happening with their complaint. If it is not possible to respond in the agreed timescales complainants will be informed and given a revised deadline in writing.

It is not possible to skip a stage in the procedure although complainants can contact the Housing Ombudsman for advice at any point.

Any complainant who requires sign language interpretation, transcription service or similar adjustments is asked to make this need known at the very beginning of the process.

## **AIMS OF THE COMPLAINTS POLICY / PROCEDURE**

- To ensure a speedy and fair resolution to the problem.
- To promote conciliation, not confrontation.
- To gain valuable feedback on the Co-op's services.
- To offer an opportunity to identify and resolve problems.

## **HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT**

Complaints can be made in person to the office, by telephone, by email or by letter.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the service you have received from the Co-op you should in the first instance contact the Office and we will attempt to informally resolve your complaint. The office address is: 20A Seymour Buildings, 153-155 Seymour Place, London W1H 4PP, telephone number is 020 7723 3203 and email address – [office@seymourhc.org](mailto:office@seymourhc.org).

If you remain dissatisfied with the service provided, or the response, the next step is to make a formal "Stage 1 Complaint", you may do so by telephone, email, or letter to the Housing Manager using the contact details above, who will pass it on to the relevant person responsible. You will be informed who is dealing with your complaint. If you make a formal complaint by telephone, our staff member will document the details of your complaint. You will then receive a follow-up letter confirming our understanding of your complaint, which will provide you with an opportunity to clarify any points or make corrections.

All communications to the Co-op regarding an official complaint must be made to the appropriate person via the Co-op office and not to their personal email or home address. The office address is: 20A Seymour Buildings, 153-155 Seymour Place, London W1H 4PP, telephone number is 020 7723 3203 and email address – [office@seymourhc.org](mailto:office@seymourhc.org).

All email communication regarding an official complaint must also be copied to the email address [office@seymourhc.org](mailto:office@seymourhc.org), except in the case of a complaint about the Housing Manager, when the relevant email must be copied to the Chair's email address - [chair@seymourhc.org](mailto:chair@seymourhc.org).

Complainants will be updated on the progress of their complaint in accordance with the Stages below.

Throughout the process, residents may contact the Housing Ombudsman service for advice in respect of the complaints process. The Housing Ombudsman may be contacted on 0300 111 3000, by email to [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk), or by letter to PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ.

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A COMPLAINT IS RECEIVED**

### **STAGE 1**

Following the Stage 1 Complaint being received, an acknowledgment of the Stage 1 Complaint will be provided by SHC to the complainant within 5 working days.

The Complaint is given a reference number and is recorded by filing the complaint and any supporting documentation (or by documenting the details when received by phone). The complaint will be held on the tenancy file of the complainant and a record kept for monitoring purposes.

The complaint will be investigated by the relevant staff member who will respond to the complainant in writing within 10 working days.

The complainant will be given details of the next stage of the process if they are not satisfied with the response. A copy of this letter will be held on the tenancy file of the complainant and a record kept for monitoring purposes.

### **STAGE 2**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the stage 1 resolution, an appeal may be made which will initiate Stage 2 of the procedure. Please note that in order to be considered by the panel, all appeals to decisions made in Stage 1 of the complaint must be received by the Co-op within 28 days of the complainant's receipt of the Stage 1 decision.

The request for appeal as a Stage 2 Complaint should be sent to the Chair in writing via email or letter and marked 'Private and confidential'.

Following a Stage 2 Complaint being made, the Chair will set up a complaints panel of 3 Co-op members. The Management Committee may appoint an external independent member of the panel if it decides this is required.

The panel will meet to hear the complaint. The panel will choose one person to act as panel chair; this person will respond to the complainant outlining the panel's decision. A copy of this letter will be held on the tenancy file of the complainant and a record kept for monitoring purposes.

The panel must keep minutes of all meetings/discussions held. The notes/minutes must then be forwarded to the Co-op Office for retention in the Complaints file.

If it is not possible to form a Complaint Panel the Management Committee will hear the complaint at its next available meeting. Such a hearing will be held in strict confidence (in the "confidential section").

Following either the Complaint Panel Meeting or Management Committee meeting, a response in writing outlining the decision of the panel or MC will be provided to the complainant within 20 working days of the Stage 2 Complaint being received.

## **HOUSING OMBUDSMAN**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response and feels that the complaint has not been resolved to their satisfaction, after Stage 2 they may wish to take their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman for consideration.

**Please note that the Housing Ombudsman may deal with complaint once the complaints procedure has been exhausted, although the Housing Ombudsman may be contacted at any stage in the process.** If the Housing Ombudsman finds that the Co-op has not dealt with the matter properly it can make recommendations and orders and can recommend or order that the tenant receives compensation from the Co-op.

Housing Ombudsman Service  
PO Box 152 Liverpool L33 7WQ  
Tel: 0300 111 3000  
Minicom: 020 7404 7092  
Web: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>  
Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

## **MONITORING**

The Co-op will use the feedback it receives through the Complaints Procedure to assist it to identify problems, review policies and practices and apply its resources more effectively.

All complaints are logged in reports prepared for the Management Committee. These reports analyse the type of complaints received, length of time taken to respond, stage that the complaint is at and the outcome.

## **OUTSIDE AGENCIES THAT MAY BE ABLE TO ASSIST WITH YOUR COMPLAINT**

### **Seymour Buildings**

#### **Your Local Councillors:**

The Councillors for Marylebone Ward can be contacted via:

- **T:** 020 7641 5377 (Members' Support Team) or individually:
  - Barbara Arzymanow – **E:** [barzymanow@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:barzymanow@westminster.gov.uk)
  - Ian Rowley – **E:** [irowley@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:irowley@westminster.gov.uk)
  - Karen Scarborough – **E:** [kscarborough@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:kscarborough@westminster.gov.uk)
- **W:** via <https://committees.westminster.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx>

#### **Your Local MP is:**

- Nickie Aiken (Conservative MP)
- **T:** 020 7219 4553 or 020 7139 5125
- **E:** [nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk)
- **W:** <http://www.nickieaiken.org.uk/contact>

### **Daventry Street**

#### **Your Local Councillors:**

The Councillors for Church Street Ward can be contacted via:

- **T:** 020 7641 5377 (Members' Team) or individually:
  - Matt Noble – **E:** [mnooble@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:mnooble@westminster.gov.uk)
  - Aziz Toki – **E:** [atoki@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:atoki@westminster.gov.uk)
  - Aicha Less – **E:** [aless@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:aless@westminster.gov.uk)
- **W:** via <https://committees.westminster.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx>

#### **Your Local MP is:**

Karen Buck (Labour MP)

**T:** 0208 968 7999 or 020 7219 3000

**E:** [buckk@parliament.uk](mailto:buckk@parliament.uk)

**W:** <https://www.karenbuck.org.uk/>

### **Grove Dwellings**

#### **Your local councillors:**

The councillors for Stepney Green Ward can be contacted via:

- **A:** Tower Hamlets Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London, E1 1BJ, or individually:
  - Sabina Akhtar – **E:** [sabina.akhtar@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:sabina.akhtar@towerhamlets.gov.uk)
  - Abdul Wahid – **E:** [abdul.wahid@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:abdul.wahid@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

W: via

<https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/mgFindMember.aspx?XXR=0&AC=POSTCODE&sPC=E1%203BX>

**Your Local MP is:**

Rushanara Ali (Labour MP)

T: 0207 219 7200

E: [rushanara@rushanaraali.org](mailto:rushanara@rushanaraali.org) or [rushanara.ali.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:rushanara.ali.mp@parliament.uk)

W: <https://www.rushanaraali.org/>

You can also contact your MP via the [House of Commons](#): House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

## INDEPENDENT ADVICE

You can also seek independent advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), housing advice centre or law centre.

### Grove Dwellings (E1)

Tower Hamlets (East End) Citizens Advice Bureau is located in Whitechapel.

A: Unit 32, Greatorex Street, E1 5NP

T: 020 3855 4472 or 020 3855 5234

E: [towerhamlets@eastendcab.org.uk](mailto:towerhamlets@eastendcab.org.uk)

W: [www.eastendcab.org.uk](http://www.eastendcab.org.uk)

### Seymour Buildings and Daventry Street (W1/NW1)

Westminster Citizens Advice Bureau is located in Paddington.

A: 21a Conduit Place, London, W2 1HS

T: 0808 278 7834 (option 4)

E: via <https://www.westminstercab.org.uk/online-enquiry-form/>

W: <https://www.westminstercab.org.uk/>

**If you do go to another agency, take a copy of this document with you so that they are aware of the Co-op's Complaint's Policy.**