



Is everything okay?

A guide to our complaints and
appeals processes



We always strive to provide great services, but we understand that sometimes things do go wrong. If you are unhappy with our services, please tell us so we can work to put things right.

This leaflet provides information about our complaints and appeals processes. While this information acts as a guide, we are happy to help you through the process if you need any support. If you wish, you may also ask us to work with a representative, such as a friend, relative, advocate, advice agency, councillor or MP – however we would need confirmation that the person is acting with your permission first.

Service Request

There are some things you might be unhappy about that don't fall under our complaints or appeal process. For example, nobody likes when their boiler breaks down, but we can order a repair for you when you tell us about it. We treat these reports as a 'service request', rather than a complaint. However, if you think we haven't dealt with your service request properly - we will then treat this as a complaint.

Complaints

We use a straight forward definition for complaints:

“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 our behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents”

Appeals

Sometimes you may be unhappy about a decision we have made. We have to make a lot of decisions every day and sometimes we may get it wrong, or we could reconsider the decision if you tell us you aren't satisfied with it. We treat this as a 'customer appeal'.

Our complaints process

We have tried to make our complaints process as simple as possible. It is split into two stages and a voluntary third stage.

STAGE

1

When you report a complaint to us, we will try to resolve it within one working day. If we cannot, it may need a more detailed investigation. A senior officer will investigate and aim to provide you with a full response within 10 working days. Most issues are resolved at this stage.

If you are unhappy with the Stage One resolution, you can escalate the complaint to the second stage of our process. A Head of Service or other Senior Manager will review the case again. These issues are usually more complicated but we aim to provide a full response within 20 working days. This is normally the final stage of our complaints process.

STAGE

2

STAGE

3

If you are unhappy with the Stage Two resolution, you can request that we take another look at your complaint. This will enable you to present your case to an Appeals Panel which will always include a customer. We understand some people may not want to do this so we have made it voluntary. We try to convene a panel within 20 working days.

If you are still unhappy, you can ask the Housing Ombudsman to look at your case after Stage Two (or after the outcome of a Stage Three complaint if that is what you requested). Once you have referred a matter to the Housing Ombudsman you cannot then ask us to convene a panel, as we agree to be bound by the decision of the Ombudsman.

What you need to do

We need you to tell us why you want to complain so we can understand the problem. We also need you to tell us what you would like us to do to put things right. If we need more information, we will ask you for it and we need you to work with us to provide the information. If you don't, we might not fully understand what has gone wrong or be able to investigate thoroughly.

Aside from a few exceptions, we cannot look into things that happened more than six months ago, so please tell us as soon as you are dissatisfied about something.

You can find more information on our complaints process on our website at www.pioneergroup.org.uk



Our appeals process

Our appeals process is similar to our complaints process

STAGE

1

Request a review. When you tell us you are dissatisfied with a decision we have made, a manager will carry out a review. We aim to provide you with a response within 10 working days.

Formal Appeal. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review, we will pass the matter to a Head of Service or other Senior Manager to carry out a review. We aim to respond fully within 10 working days.

STAGE

2

STAGE

3

Final appeal. If you remain dissatisfied following the formal appeal, you will have the opportunity to present your case to an Appeals Panel, which will normally include a customer. We aim to convene an Appeals Panel within 15 working days of your request. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final, and there is no further right of appeal.

You can take your own legal advice at any time, including after our final appeal decision. However, if you start legal proceedings, we will stop the appeals process and deal with the matter through the legal proceedings instead.

Can I appeal about anything?

There are some decisions you cannot appeal against. For example, we can't consider an appeal about something another organisation has decided e.g. the Council or Government. There are some legal issues we can't consider too, because these might need to be decided by a court. If you aren't sure, please talk to us and we will tell you what your options are. You can find more information on appeals on our website at www.pioneergroup.org.uk

What do I need to do?

Tell us if we have made a decision you don't agree with and why. It is helpful if you can tell us what you think the decision should be instead. We might need some more information from you and it's important that you work with us to fully understand the problem so we have all the facts to come to our decision. If we don't we may have to make a decision without all of the information.

The Housing Ombudsman Service

We are members of the Housing Ombudsman Service, who provide a free advice service to our customers who have a dispute with their landlord about a housing issue. They normally ask you to go through our complaints or appeals process before they will look at a case, but you can ask them for advice at any time. You can find more information on their website at www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk or by calling them on 0300 111 3000.

We are committed to the highest standards in complaints management, and we publish our assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code on our website. We use your feedback to help shape and improve our services.

Ready to tell us about your concern? Get in touch!

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