



livin

Guide to giving
feedback

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1. Introduction

We have introduced this guidance booklet to tell you what to do when you want to give us your feedback about the services we provide. This can include compliments, complaints, service requests and general comments to give us suggestions about how we can improve the services we give you.

2. What type of feedback can I give?

Compliments and positive feedback

We really would like to hear from you if you are happy with our services. If there is a particular person you have spoken to, or a service you think that we are really good at, or you may just want to say thank you, please let us know. Any compliment you give us will be forwarded to the person or service team you are praising.

General comments and suggestions to improve services

Your comments may not be a compliment or complaint, but they are still important to us. They can help us to plan future services and give us ideas on how to improve the services we provide.

Service requests

If you are unhappy with a situation that you wish to have rectified. We will aim to agree the actions needed to resolve the issue within a time frame agreed with you.

If further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if you request it, the issue must be logged as a formal complaint.

Complaints

We always try to provide you with an excellent service but recognise that sometimes things can go wrong. We regard your comments as an opportunity to look at if our services are meeting your needs or not.

Don't be afraid to tell us what you think we are doing wrong. We will respond to reasonable adjustment requests in line with the Equality Act 2010 and we will work with you if you have specific needs and vulnerabilities to make sure you can access the service, have your views listened to and receive your complaint response in a way that meets your needs. For example, we can provide a translation service.

Your right to services will not be affected if you make a complaint. We need to know so that we can make changes and stop these problems happening again. Your complaint is the first step in helping us put matters right.

What is not a complaint?

Examples of where a complaint might not be opened include:

- A matter that has previously been investigated through all stages of the complaints process and a full written response was given
- Something which happened, or you knew of, more than twelve months before contacting us.
- An issue where legal proceedings have started where the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim have been filed at court.



- An anonymous complaint that does not provide enough information to investigate. In these cases, the Customer Experience Manager will decide if a complaint can be opened depending on the seriousness and if it is possible to investigate it. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be considered would include the:

- o Seriousness of the issues raised
- o Credibility of the complaint
- o Complaint can be verified by a reliable source

Complaints regarding any of the following services or issues are not dealt with as part of this procedure.

Anti-social behaviour

A complaint relating to anti-social behaviour (ASB), which would normally be dealt with under our ASB policy.

Explanations on the ASB policy or procedure will be dealt with as a service enquiry, with discretion to open a complaint if appropriate.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your case, we have discretion to open a complaint.

Allocations and Lettings

These matters are handled as part of the Durham Key Options (DKO) Policy and Procedure, however, we may consider complaints regarding the handling of the application and lettings process.



Health and Safety complaints/incidents

Health and Safety complaints and incidents are handled by our Health and Safety team in accordance with our Accidents and Incidents Procedure and prescribed timescales. However, we may consider complaints regarding the handling of a health and safety incident. Contact us for details.

3. How to give us your feedback

You can give us your feedback:

- By completing the online enquiry form at Livin.co.uk
- In person at our office at Farrell House, Arlington Way, Durham Gate, Spennymoor, Durham, DL16 6NL
- By telephoning us on **0800 587 4538**
- In writing via letter or email at feedback@livin.co.uk
- By completing a satisfaction survey we have sent you
- In person during any visits to your home
- Via our website (Livin's "live web chat" facility)
- Via the Livin app which can be downloaded to your smart device (android and iOS)
- Through our social media pages on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook

You can give us your comments yourself or you can ask someone to do this on your behalf. If you would like someone to deal with this for you, please tell us when you first get in touch. We will require permission from you to do this, either verbally or written. If you wish to refer a complaint to us via a Councillor, Board Member or MP you must give us your permission in writing before your complaint can be discussed with your representative.

You can also get independent advice on making a complaint from the Housing Ombudsman on **0300 111 3000**.

4. Our complaints procedure

We operate a stage 2 complaints procedure which consists of two stages.

Stage 1

This is the first formal stage of our internal complaints procedure.

We will aim to acknowledge, define, and log the complaint within five working days of the request being received.

Your complaint will then be allocated to a Complaints Investigator who will deal with the complaint on its merits, act independently and give you a fair chance to set out your position.

We will offer to meet with you in person or discuss your complaint by email or telephone if you prefer.

All points raised in the complaint definition will be addressed, with clear reasons for the decision to uphold, or not uphold the complaint provided, referencing the relevant policy, law, and good practice where appropriate.

Once the Stage 1 investigation is concluded we will contact you to discuss our findings before providing a final written response.

We will aim to do this within 10 working days.

If we need a little longer to complete the investigation we will aim to give a final response no later than a further 10 working days.

We will let you know if extra time is needed.

Stage 2 (Appeal)

If all, or part of the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction at Stage 1, you can request to escalate to a Stage 2 complaint.

This is the final stage of our internal complaints procedure.

We will acknowledge, define and log the Stage 2 complaint within five working days of the request being received.

The handling of your complaint at Stage 2 will be investigated by a different manager who will review the handling and decision making at Stage 1 and make reasonable efforts to understand why you remain unhappy.

If new evidence is provided that was not presented during the original complaint and this substantially changes the nature of the complaint, we reserve the right to open and investigate this as a new complaint.

Once the stage 2 investigation is concluded we will write to you with our findings.

We will aim to give you our decision within 20 working days. If we need a little longer to complete the investigation we will let you know and give you a final response no later than a further 20 working days.

This is the end of our internal complaints process. You may have the right to refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

Housing Ombudsman Service

You may contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage of the complaints process for advice and guidance. You can contact them in the following ways:

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Write: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ

5. Unacceptable complainant behaviour

We recognise that you may act out of character in times of trouble or distress, and we do not automatically view forceful or determined behaviour as unacceptable. However, we will not tolerate unacceptable complainant behaviour (UCB) nor actions that result in unacceptable or excessive demands on our service in that it prevents us from carrying out our duties effectively.

It is these behaviours and actions that we aim to manage under our UCB procedure in accordance with Housing Ombudsman guidance.

6. Reasonable adjustments

We understand that sometimes you may find it difficult for you to express yourself or communicate clearly, especially if you are anxious or upset. To do this, we ask that you explain what adjustments you need and how this will help you to make a complaint.

We will always consider making reasonable adjustments for you if you ask us to.

Examples of adjustments we can consider are:

- Different methods of communication
- Providing written communication in large print, coloured text, or in translation
- Working with an advocate
- Giving you clear warnings if conversations become unproductive and allowing you the opportunity to modify your behaviour before ending a call

We may still use the UCB procedure if there are actions or behaviours which are having a negative effect on our employees or our work even where a reasonable adjustment has been made.

However, if you are rude, demanding, vexatious and consistently place unreasonable demands on us will not be tolerated and risk having access to services being restricted.

Behaviour that is verbally or physically threatening may be reported to the police or will be treated as anti-social behaviour and dealt with in accordance with our Anti-Social Behaviour procedures.



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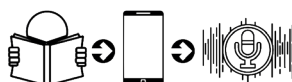


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