

Comments

Complaints

Compliments

Working
together for
positive change



Complaints, Compliments and Comments

We aim to offer a helpful and efficient service, but recognise that sometimes we make mistakes, so if you are not happy with the service you have received from us, we want to know.

We want to hear from you if you have any comments, suggestions or compliments about our services or staff.

How to Complain

We define a complaint as ‘any oral or written expression of dissatisfaction by any person, however made, about the service, actions or inactions of Choice or its officers which requires a response’.

You can complain in person, in writing, by phone or email through our website or through a third party. Our first action will be to consider if we can resolve your concern immediately. If we can’t, we will register your complaint. We aim to acknowledge all complaints within one working day.

Local Resolution

Problems can be raised informally in the first instance. Please discuss your concerns with your Scheme Co-ordinator, Housing Officer, Property Services Officer or Development Officer. Where a complainant is unhappy with the initial response, he or she has the opportunity to appeal to a higher level within Choice.

We will fully investigate all reasonable complaints made about our service and aim to find a solution as quickly as possible. Where we cannot resolve the issue immediately, you can ask to have your complaint dealt with through our two stage complaints procedure.



1

Stage 1

Chief Executive / Director nominated by the Chief Executive

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of formal discussions you can contact Choice to register your complaint with the Customer Services Officer. You will be sent a letter of acknowledgement on the date of receipt and your complaint will be passed to the Chief Executive’s nominee who will undertake an investigation and aim to respond to you within 14 working days.

2

Stage 2

Independent Review

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you must contact Choice within 28 working days from the date of the response to the Stage 1 complaint. You should inform us as to the reason why you are dissatisfied with the proposed resolution and how you would like us to resolve it. If this proposal is reasonable and does not simply raise the same issues again, the complaint will be escalated to Stage 2.

The Customer Services Officer will forward your complaint to an independent nominee who will review the complaint and investigate along with a representative

of the Choice Tenants’ Forum, make a decision and reply to you within 20 working days. The complaint will be considered on an anonymous basis by removing all reference to your details and concentrate on the issues and principles involved in the complaint.

Please remember that some things may not be within our control and may be difficult to sort out. Should we not be able to resolve the matter within our response times detailed, we will advise you of this by phone, email or letter. We will also advise you of the reason and how long it is likely to take to resolve the matter.

Next Steps

Once our internal complaints procedure has been completed, you have the right to take your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

However, the Ombudsman may not investigate your complaint if you make it more than six months after completing our complaint procedure. The decision to investigate complaints after this six month period is at the discretion of the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman is completely independent of Choice. Choice will co-operate fully in the course of any investigation carried out by the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)

Freepost: Freepost NIPSO
(No Stamp Required)

Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast BT1 6HN

Tel: 028 9023 3821
Tel: 0800 34 34 24 (Freephone)

Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk
www.nipso.org.uk



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Group, Third Party and Anonymous Complaints

Where a group of tenants, housing applicants or another group of individuals make a complaint we will request a “lead complainant” to be nominated with whom we can liaise.

Any person who makes a complaint on behalf of another tenant, housing applicant etc. will be asked to provide the name and address of that person and their desired resolution.

All correspondence will be copied to the person being represented.

If a tenant, housing applicant etc contacts us to complain but wishes to remain anonymous we will respect this decision and investigate the complaint in the normal manner. We will close the complaint once we have investigated and taken any necessary actions.

Persistent Complainants

We have a duty to use our time and resources as effectively as possible and tenants have a responsibility to behave reasonably. We will regularly monitor and review our Complaints Policy to ensure that it continues to meet our corporate objectives, and is fair and equitable.

We reserve the right to deal with some complaints in a different manner, for example; if it is being pursued in an unreasonable manner, or unreasonably raising matters which have already been responded to, we may consider a different course of action to achieve a resolution. We consider the actions of persistent or unreasonable complainants to be unacceptable when they take up what we regard as being a disproportionate amount of time and resources.

Choice understands that individuals may act out of character in times of difficulty or distress.

Unacceptable Actions or Behavior by Complainants

Choice understands that individuals may act out of character in times of difficulty or distress. Indeed a complainant may have encountered upsetting or distressing circumstances prior to bringing a complaint to the Association. Choice does not therefore view actions or behavior as unacceptable simply because a complainant is assertive or determined.

However, the actions or behaviour of complainants who are angry, demanding or persistent may be viewed as unacceptable behaviour towards Choice staff. It is these actions or behaviours that the Association considers unacceptable. In certain circumstances where a complainant's actions are unacceptable, overly demanding, violent or abusive we reserve the right to restrict or change their access.

Complaints Received when Court Action is Pending

A complainant cannot make a formal complaint to Choice if it is in relation to any pending court action initiated by either Choice or the Complainant.

Freedom from Harassment and Illegal Eviction

A landlord who continually acts in a way that is designed to make a tenant leave the property could be guilty of harassment. This could include things such as; changing the locks, cutting off your water or electricity supply, interfering with your possessions or threatening verbal or physical behaviour. The law offers protection to tenants in these circumstances, always seek advice immediately. The Environmental Health Department of your local Council has power to investigate such actions.



We deal with and respond to complaints openly and nondefensively and take a problem-solving approach.

How We Manage our Complaints

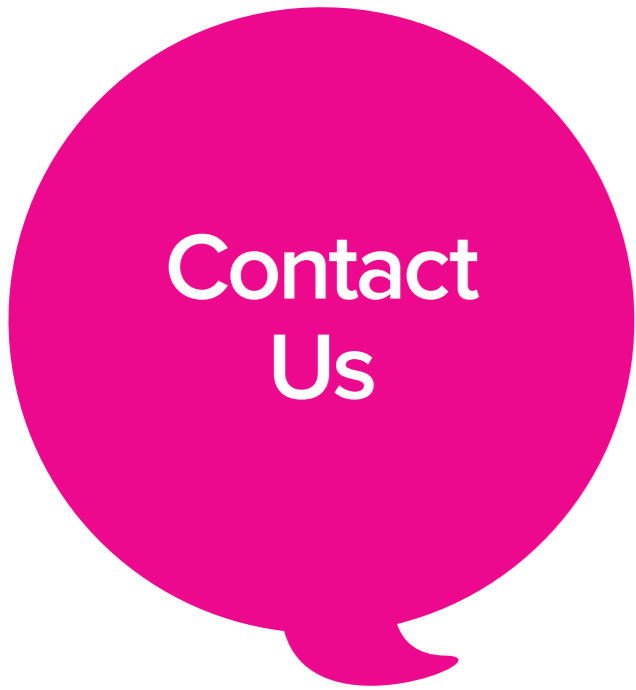
Our Complaints Department focuses on reaching a solution to all complaints. We deal with and respond to complaints openly and nondefensively and take a problem-solving approach. We record and monitor all complaints and will inform complainants of progress and the outcome of any investigation. We try at all times to deal with complaints promptly, courteously, systematically, and fairly and we use the complaints system to learn from mistakes and to raise the level of customer satisfaction.

We will advise all complainants of their rights to redress. Where we make mistakes we will apologise and seek to rectify our error.

Tenant Disputes/Anti-social Behaviour

Matters relating to fellow tenants/neighbours will be dealt with by the Housing Management Team. If and when we can help, the Housing Management Team will give assistance but this is not always possible. If you are unsatisfied with the response from the Housing Management team you can ask for your complaint to be investigated under the Formal Complaints Policy.





Contact Us

Independent Advice

In order to ensure impartiality, the Association reserves the right to engage the services of Housing Rights to comment on how the Association conducted their investigation. Finally, before completing this form please consider if Choice is the appropriate body to complain to about your issue.

Routine Requests

The Association has implemented a dedicated customer Services Centre for you to report repairs or make general housing enquiries. Choice Services Centre can be contacted on **T: 0300 111 2211**.

We are committed to providing high quality services and we welcome and value your feedback

Choice

**Leslie Morrell House,
37-41 May Street,
Belfast BT1 4DN**

**Email:
enquiries@choice-housing.org**

**Tel:
0300 111 2211**

**Web:
choice-housing.org**

Complaint Form

1 Contact Details

Name of Complainant _____

Home Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Do you want the Association to deal directly with someone acting on your behalf?

Yes No

If YES, please ask your helper or advisor to fill in the section below:

My relationship to the complainant is: _____

My address is: _____

Telephone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

2 Details of Complaint

Please give details of your complaint below.

Remember to include dates, times, names and any other relevant information (attach a separate sheet if required.)

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY POST TO:

Choice
Leslie Morrell House
37 - 41 May Street
Belfast
BT1 4DN



Complaint Form

3 Supporting Documentation

Please list below any supporting documentation which you are including with your complaint.

4 Resolution of Complaint

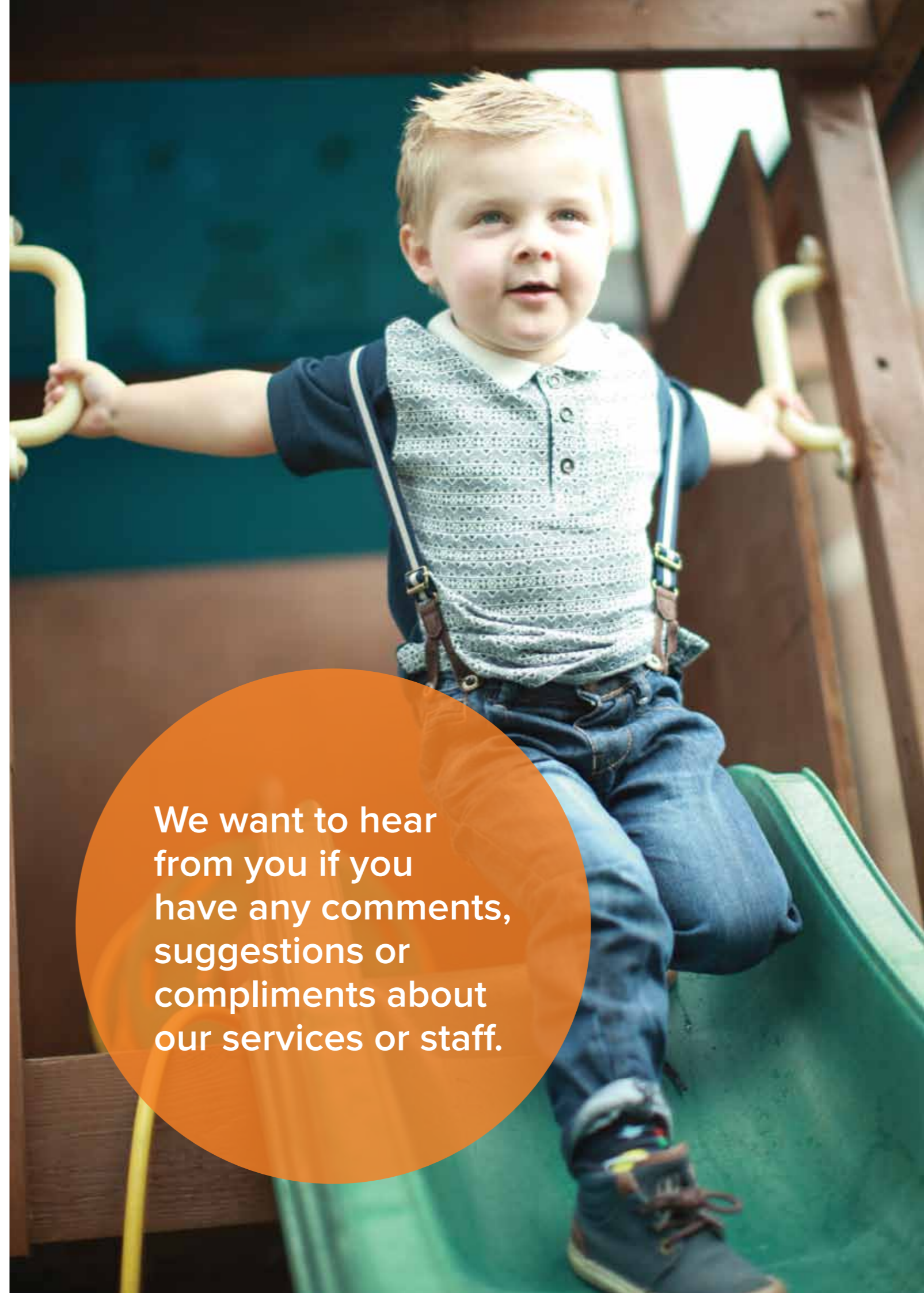
What action would you like the Association to take to help resolve your complaint?

5 Data Protection

In order to investigate your complaint and help us deliver efficient services, we need to collect relevant personal details. We comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 when dealing with personal data. This means that your personal data will be processed in accordance with the law. Please note that we may share personal data with other organisations where appropriate.

Please tick the box to confirm that you have read the Data Protection information above and are consenting to Choice processing your personal data.

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