



1.11 Complaints Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines how St George Community Housing (SGCH) will deal with complaints from applicants, tenants and stakeholders about our service delivery.

Underpinning principles

- Applicants, tenants and stakeholders have the right to complain and will not be disadvantaged or penalised for lodging a complaint.
- SGCH will adopt a transparent and objective approach to receiving, investigating and responding to complaints.
- SGCH welcomes complaints and will use the outcomes and learnings from complaints in our continuous improvement approach to service delivery.
- Applicants and tenants are encouraged to involve an advocate or support person at any point in the complaints process.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a response to or quality of service delivery. A complaint is different to an appeal. An appeal is a request to have a decision reviewed.

This policy does not deal with complaints from tenants about other tenants.

How to lodge a complaint

SGCH welcomes complaints and is focussed on continually improving our service delivery.

If an applicant, tenant or stakeholder is dissatisfied with a response to or quality of service delivery they should lodge a complaint as soon as possible.

A complaint can be lodged by email, letter and phone or by completing a Complaint form. This form is available on our website or by contacting our office.

SGCH standards in responding to complaints

Complaints will be formally acknowledged within three working days of receipt at SGCH.

The process of investigating and reviewing a complaint will take no longer than 28 days from the date of receipt. If a delay is likely to occur, SGCH will notify the complainant of the expected timeframe and the reasons for this.

If the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT), the person will be informed immediately of any time limits that apply to making an application to have their matter heard.

Investigating complaints

All complaints will be investigated by a Manager, General Manager or the CEO.

The complaint will be reviewed independently and will consider all information available at the time of the complaint.

Responding to complaints

Once the investigation is completed, the complainant will be formally advised. The response will explain the reason(s) for any decision.

If the complainant is still not satisfied with SGCH' response they have the option of referring the matter to an external body. SGCH' response will include information on how to make a complaint to an external body.

Records of complaints

The file record of the complaint will be confidential and will only be discussed with employees as required for the purpose of investigating the complaint. The complaint will be kept with the tenant's/applicant's file, except for complaints about SGCH employees which will be kept in the employees personnel file.

Complaints Register

Decisions on complaints will be recorded in the electronic Complaints Register with limited access by SGCH employees. Complaints being handled by the Board of Directors will be monitored via the Board meetings.

Corruption

If a complaint concerns corrupt conduct, the matter will be referred to the CEO or a General Manager. All such information will be treated in a confidential manner.

Other avenues

A formal complaint to SGCH does not deny a client their right to follow any other avenues for complaint. These may include:

- Seeking support from their local Member of Parliament.
- Contacting their nearest Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service or Community Legal Centre for information, advice and advocacy.
- Lodging a complaint with the Federation of Housing Associations (FHA). FHA will address complaints against community housing providers who are signed up to the Code of Practice, if the complainant has attempted to resolve the complaint through the provider's internal complaints process and if the complaint relates to a breach of the Code of Practice.
- Lodging a complaint with the Community Housing Division (CHD). CHD is a business unit of Housing NSW that funds and regulates community housing in NSW. Complaints can be made to CHD about community housing providers or about CHD and its policies, practices and decisions.
- Lodging a complaint with the Registrar of Community Housing. The Registrar investigates complaints about community housing providers that have been registered under the Housing Act. Complaints can be lodged about a community housing providers performance against the Regulatory Code.

- Making an application to the CTTT. CTTT is available for tenants who believe the conditions of their rental agreement have been or are being breached by SGCH.