



First Choice
Housing Association Limited • Cymdeithas Tai
Dewis Cyntaf Cyf

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

TENANT VERSION

NOVEMBER 2015

We want you to find it easy to complain - and get things put right - when you receive a service from First Choice that is not good enough.



First Choice will deal with any complaints you have about our services. We will try to explain things to you if you do not understand. If we got something wrong we will apologise and will try to put things right.

We will aim to learn from our mistakes and make our services better.

When to use this policy

When you make a complaint to us we will usually respond in the way we explain in this policy.

If your complaint is about something we do not control, e.g. where the Welsh Government has not approved Physical Adaptations Grant funding, we will tell you how to contact the right people.



Have you asked us yet?

If you are contacting us about a service for the first time, (e.g. reporting a faulty electrical socket, requesting an appointment, etc) then this policy does not apply. You should first give us a chance to deal with your request.

If you make a request for a service and then are not happy with our response, you will be able to make a complaint as described in this policy.



Informal resolution

We believe it is best to deal with things straight away if we can, rather than try to sort them out later. If you have a concern, raise it with the person you are dealing with. He or she will try to deal with it for you there and then.

If the member of staff cannot help then they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

How to make a complaint

You can make a complaint in any of the ways below:

- You can ask for a copy of our complaints form from the person you have been dealing with. Tell them that you want us to deal with your complaint formally.
- You can get in touch with our Complaints Officer on **029 2071 3752** if you want to make your complaint over the phone.
- You can use the form on our website at **www.fcha.org.uk**
- You can e-mail us at **admin@fcha.org.uk**
- You can write a letter to us at the following address
First Choice Housing Association, 19 Stanwell Road, Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan. CF64 2EZ.



We have complaint forms available at our office.

Copies of this policy and the complaint form are available in English, Welsh and any other language or format upon request e.g. audio, large print etc.

Dealing with your complaint

- We will contact you within 5 working days and let you know how we intend to deal with your complaint.
- We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and whether you have any requirements – for example, if you have a disability.
- We will deal with your complaint in an honest way. We will make sure our future services to you are not affected because you have made a complaint to us.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your complaint if you tell us about the problem within six months. This is because it is better to look into your complaint while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.

If you are making a complaint on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement to you acting for them.

What if there is more than one organisation involved?

If your complaint covers more than one organisation, such as the Local Authority Social Services Department or a support provider, we will work with them to decide who should deal with your complaint.



You will then be given the name of the person who will be looking at your complaint.

If the complaint is about an organisation working on our behalf, such as contractors or anyone whom First Choice has asked to visit your property, you may wish to talk to them first.

However, if you want to complain formally, we will look into this and respond to you.

Investigation

The person at First Choice who will usually investigate your complaint is the Operational Housing Manager. He will ask you to tell him what outcome you are hoping for.



If there is a simple answer to your problem, First Choice may ask you if you are happy to accept this. An example of this could be where you asked for a service and we see straight away that you should have had it.

In this case we will offer to provide the service rather than look into it as a complaint.

We will deal with complaints as quickly as possible. We expect to deal with complaints within 20 working days.



If your complaint is not a simple one, we will let you know how long we expect it to take.

We will also give you regular updates. We may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns.

Occasionally we might suggest mediation or another way to try to resolve your complaint.

Outcome

After we have looked into your complaint we will let you know what we have found.

If we got something wrong we will tell you why it happened.

If there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things we will tell you. We will tell you how we will change things to stop it happening again.

If we got something wrong we will always apologise to you.

Putting Things Right

If we did not provide a service that you should have had we will provide it straight away if it is possible.

If we did not do something well, we will put it right if we can.



Ombudsman

If we cannot solve your complaint you can complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Ombudsman is independent of all government bodies and can look into your complaint if you believe that you, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining has been treated unfairly or received a bad service by First Choice.

The Ombudsman expects you to give us a chance to put things right first. You can contact the Ombudsman by:

- phone: 01656 641150
- e-mail: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk
- website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk
- writing to: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ



Learning lessons

We will take your complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we have made. Our senior management team and our Board of Management consider our response to complaints every month.

What if I need help

Our staff will help you make your complaint to us.

If you need extra help, please let us know. You may wish to contact a family member, your support provider (if you have one) or an advocacy service to help you.

If you are under the age of 18, you can speak to someone on the Meic Helpline (phone 080880 23456, www.meiccymru.org) or contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

Contact details are:

01792 765600 (South Wales)

01492 523333 (North Wales)

post@childcomwales.org.uk

www.childcom.org.uk

South Wales Office: North Wales Office:

Oystermouth House

Phoenix Way

Llansamlet

Swansea

SA7 9FS

Penrhos Manor

Oak Drive

Colwyn Bay

Conwy

LL29 7YW

What we expect from you

We believe that anybody who complains has the right to be heard, understood and respected.

First Choice also considers our staff to have the same rights. We expect you to be polite when contacting us.

First Choice is registered with the Welsh Government: J094.

First Choice is registered with Charitable Status under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965: 26118R.

First Choice will treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality. A full copy of our Welsh Language Scheme and a Welsh version of this document is available on request.

Please contact the Association if you require this information in another language or format.

First Choice is committed to the principles of equality and diversity as an employer and landlord. If you feel that you have been treated unfairly, please contact the Chief Executive on 029 2070 3758.

