

A guide to the Westminster City Council Complaints procedure

Westminster Community Homes uses the City Council's complaints procedure for dealing with concerns raised by tenants.

Complaints procedure

Stage 1

Please visit <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/complaints> and make your complaint online.

If you want to make a complaint about the service you've received from Westminster Community Homes, you'll need to tell us what your complaint is about so that we can direct you to the right team.

When you make a complaint to the council it goes directly to the manager of the department that you're complaining about. This means that problems can be resolved quickly.

We aim to reply within 10 working days. If we require longer we will let you know. Due to the current national lockdown some complaints are taking longer than usual and we will endeavour to respond as soon as possible

Stage 2

We would expect the relevant service area to have issued a formal stage 1 response before the concern can be escalated to stage 2.

If you are not satisfied with the stage 1 response, you can appeal to the Chief Executive by making a stage 2 complaint. Your complaint will be sent to the Complaints and Customer Manager who will carry out a review of your concern(s).

When making a stage 2 complaint, please explain why you are dissatisfied and what you expect from the review.

We aim to reply within 10 working days. If we require longer we will let you know. Due to the current national lockdown some complaints are taking longer than usual and we will endeavour to respond as soon as possible.

Contact information for stage 2 complaints only

Email: stage2complaints@westminster.gov.uk.

Call us: 07811 011 925.

Write to the Complaints Team, Finance & Resources, Westminster City Council, 16th Floor City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP.

Complaining to the Local Government Ombudsman

If you're unhappy with the way that we have handled your stage 1 and stage 2 complaints, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman.

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/>

Complaints that we can't investigate

There are certain types of complaints that we can't investigate, these might include:

- an appeal against a Housing Benefit/Council Tax decision
- a matter that has already been heard by a Court or tribunal, including the council's Benefit Review Panel
- a matter where the customer or the council has started legal proceedings or has taken court action (this does not include cases where the customer has simply threatened legal proceedings against the council)
- complaints more than 12 months old, i.e where the issue was known about by the customer but not reported to the council within 12 months may not be accepted, unless there is a good reason for the delay
- complaints that involve insurance claims against the council (although there may be some aspects of the complaint that could be investigated concurrently eg an allegation that the service area delayed in sending information about how to make an insurance claim against the council)
- complaints about a member of staff that would more properly be dealt with through the council's disciplinary code or through staff management or performance procedures

- allegations of fraud or corruption that would more properly be dealt with by the council's Anti Fraud procedures or Whistle Blowing procedure
- complaints about Councillors or a co-opted member, as these are dealt with under a separate procedure (please contact the Head of Council, Cabinet and Committee Secretariat, Department of Legal and Democratic Services for more details)
- complaints about a council policy (the customer should be advised to contact their local Ward Councillor or write to the relevant Cabinet Member)
- criminal actions

The above list is a general guide and not exhaustive.

If for any reason we cannot accept a complaint under the council's complaints procedure, the complainant will be advised of this and be provided with any alternative option that might be available to them.

Where alternative options are not clear, the complainant should be advised to seek their own independent legal advice (at their own cost).

If you are unsure, you can seek advice from the Complaints Team on: 07811 011 925.