

Foreword for Scottish Public Services Ombudsman 2012 (updated 2020) Model Complaints Handling Procedure

Foreword

Our Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) reflects our commitment to valuing complaints. It seeks to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery and to conduct thorough, impartial and fair investigations of customer complaints so that, where appropriate, we can make evidence-based decisions on the facts of the case.

The procedure was first developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), working in partnership with an advisory panel of housing associations and a high level group of key stakeholders.

The Model Complaints Handling Procedures (MCHPs) were revised in 2019 by the SPSO in consultation with all sectors. This new edition includes a core text, which is consistent across all public services in Scotland, with some additional text and examples specific to this sector. As far as is possible we have produced a standard approach to handling complaints across Scotland's public services, which complies with the SPSO's guidance on a MCHP. This procedure aims to help us 'get it right first time'. We want quicker, simpler and more streamlined complaints handling with local, early responses by capable, well-trained staff.

Sanctuary Scotland responsibilities

All staff across Sanctuary Scotland must cover this procedure as part of their induction and must be given refresher training as required, to ensure they are confident in identifying complaints, empowered to resolve simple complaints on the spot, and familiar with how to apply this procedure (including recording complaints).

Complaints give us valuable information we can use to improve service provision and customer satisfaction. Our complaints handling procedure will enable us to address a customer's dissatisfaction and may also prevent the same problem happening again. For our staff, complaints provide a first-hand account of the customers' views and experience, and can highlight problems we may otherwise miss. Handled well, complaints can give our customers a form of redress when things go wrong, and can also help us continuously improve our services.

Handling complaints early creates better customer relations. Handling complaints close to the point of service delivery means we can deal with them locally and quickly, so they are less likely to escalate to the next stage of the procedure. Complaints that we do not handle swiftly can greatly add to our workload and are more costly to administer.

The complaints handling procedure will help us do our job better, improve relationships with our customers and enhance our public perception. It will help us keep the customer at the heart of the process, while enabling us to better understand how to improve our services by learning from complaints.