



Complaints Procedure

The Hillcrest Group is committed to providing high-quality customer services.

We value complaints and use information from them to improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our service please tell us.

This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint.

It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

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www.hillcrest.org.uk

The Hillcrest Group of Companies is a
Registered Scottish Charity No SC006809.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about our action/lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests;
- failure to provide a service;
- our standard of service;
- dissatisfaction with our policy;
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff; and
- our failure to follow proper procedures.

Your complaint may involve more than one of our services or be about someone working on our behalf.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints procedure.

These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service, for example, reporting a problem that needs to be repaired or initial action on anti-social behaviour;
- requests for compensation;
- our policies and procedures that have a separate right of appeal, for example, if you are dissatisfied with the level of priority you have been given when applying for a house, you may have the right to appeal against the decision; and
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal.
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following a stage 2 investigation.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns we will give information and advice to help you.

Who can complain?

Anyone can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service.

Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint' on page 6.

How do I complain?

You can complain in person at any of our offices, by phone, in writing, email or by using our complaints form.

Contact details -

Hillcrest Group of Companies, 1 Explorer Road, Dundee DD2 1EG

Telephone: 0300 123 2640

Email: YourOpinionCounts@hillcrestha.org.uk

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned.

Please talk to a member of staff at the service you are complaining about so they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, please tell us:

- your full name and address;
- as much as you can about the complaint;
- what has gone wrong; and
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

You must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about; or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint.

Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage 1: Frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly. This could mean an on-the-spot apology, an explanation if something has clearly gone wrong and immediate action to resolve the problem.

When dealing with a Stage 1 complaint we will:

- give you our decision at Stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances; and
- if we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your Stage 1 complaint and wish this to be taken further, you can ask for it to be escalated to a Stage 2 complaint.

You may choose to do this immediately or after you get our initial response.

We can help you with making this request.

Stage 2: Investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint:

- those that have not been resolved at Stage 1; and
- those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

When using Stage 2 complaint we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days;
- discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for; and
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days we will tell you.

We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

Should you be dissatisfied with outcome of your complaint or the complaints process and wish to appeal you are entitled to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

The SPSO cannot normally look at complaints:

- where you have not gone all the way through Hillcrest Group's complaints handling procedure;
- more than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about; or
- that have been or are being considered in court.

The SPSO's contact details are -

In person: SPSO

Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

By post: FREEPOST SPSO

By phone: 0800 377 7330

Online: www.spsso.org.uk

Care complaints

If your complaint relates to Gowrie Care, you can choose whether to complain to us or direct to the Care Inspectorate.

Information about Care Inspectorate's complaints procedure, contact details and offices around Scotland, and information about how to complain can be found on their website:

In person/post: Care Inspectorate, Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY

Website: www.careinspectorate.com

Phone: 0345 600 9527

Complaints about Mid Market Rent

The SPSO will not deal with complaints about Mid Market Rent properties. The Housing and Property Chamber are responsible for these complaints. So if your complaint is about a Mid Market Rental home, and you are still dissatisfied after our investigation stage you should contact the Housing and Property Chamber at:

In person/post: Housing and Property Chamber

First-tier Tribunal for Scotland
20 York Street, Glasgow G2 8GT

Phone: 0141 302 5900

Fax: 0141 302 5901

Reporting a significant performance failure to the SHR

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues raised with them about “Significant Performance Failures”. A Significant Performance Failure is defined by the SHR as something a landlord does or fails to do that puts the interests of its tenants at risk, and which the landlord has not resolved. This is something that is a systematic problem that does, or could, affect all of a landlord’s tenants. If you are affected by a problem like this, you should report it to Hillcrest first. If you have told us about it but we have not resolved it, you can report it directly to the SHR.

A complaint between an individual tenant and a landlord is not a Significant Performance Failure. Significant Performance Failures are not dealt with through this complaints handling procedure. You can ask us for more information about Significant Performance Failures. The SHR also has more information on their website: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative or an advocate providing you have given them your consent to complain for you.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting one of the below:

- **Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance**
Phone: 0131 524 1975 Website: www.siaa.org.uk
- **Citizens Advice Scotland**
Website: www.cas.org.uk Or check your Phone Book for your local bureau.

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help customers access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing please tell us.

We can also give you this leaflet in other languages and formats (such as large print, audio and Braille).

You can contact us by the following means:

Email: YourOpinionCounts@hillcrestha.org.uk

Website: www.hillcrest.org.uk

Phone: 0300 123 2640

Letter: FREEPOST RSLG-SXSY-JAHS, Hillcrest Group of Companies, 1 Explorer Road, Dundee DD2 1EG

Form: You can complete the form at the end of this booklet and send it to the Freepost address above.

In person: At your local office (if you’re unsure of where this is visit our website or call us for more info).

A quick guide to our complaints procedure

Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, email or in writing. We have a two-stage complaints procedure. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly, but if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.



Stage 1: Frontline resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within five working days if we can. If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.



Stage 2: Investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days and will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than 20 working days unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.



The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (or other body)

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO (or other relevant body mentioned in this leaflet) to consider it.

We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.



Contact form

I wish to make a...

Complaint

Compliment

Suggestion

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

.....

Phone:

Email:

How would you like us to contact you?

Email

Letter

Phone

No response needed

Have you contacted us about this before?

Yes

No

If yes, who did you speak to?

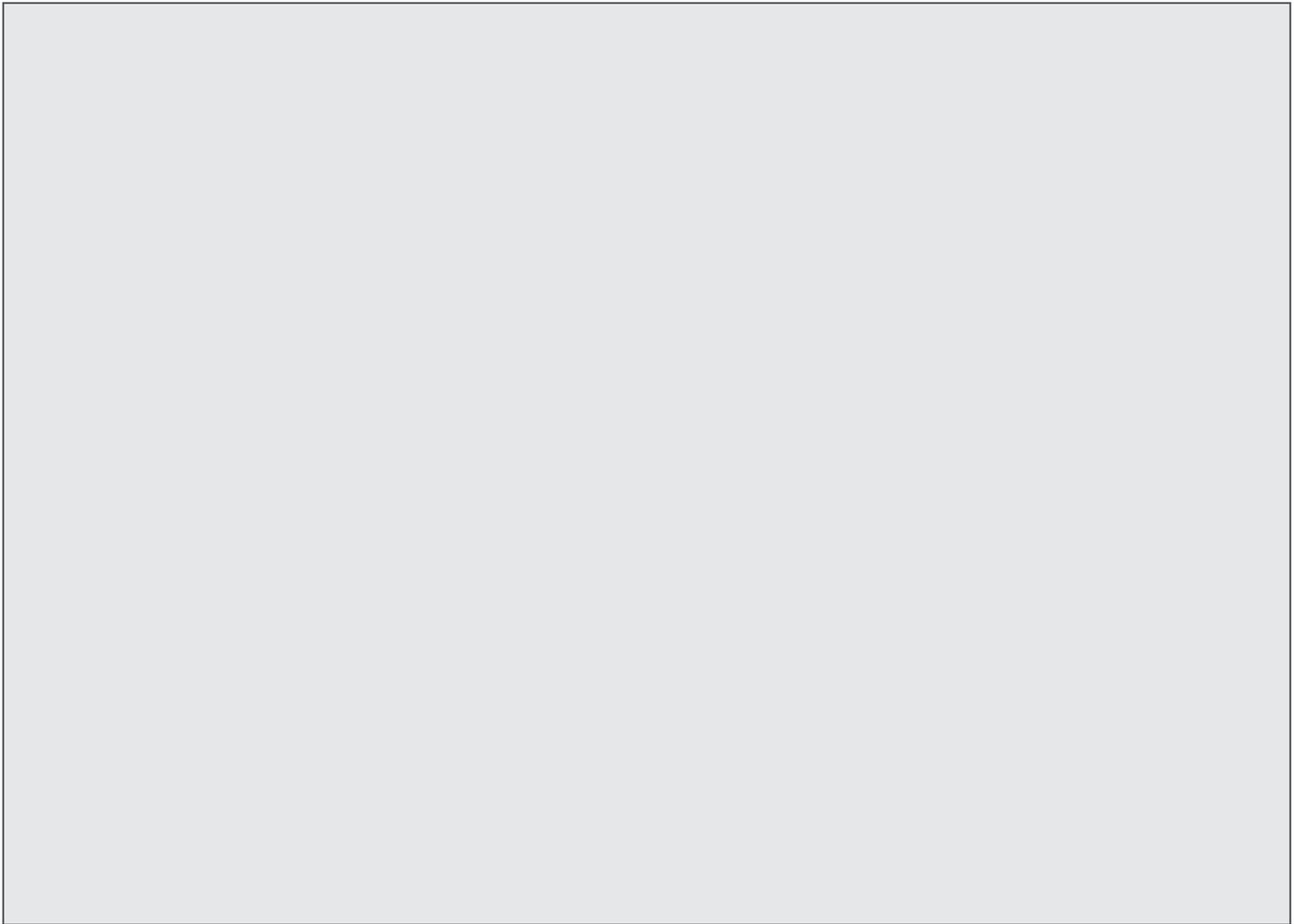
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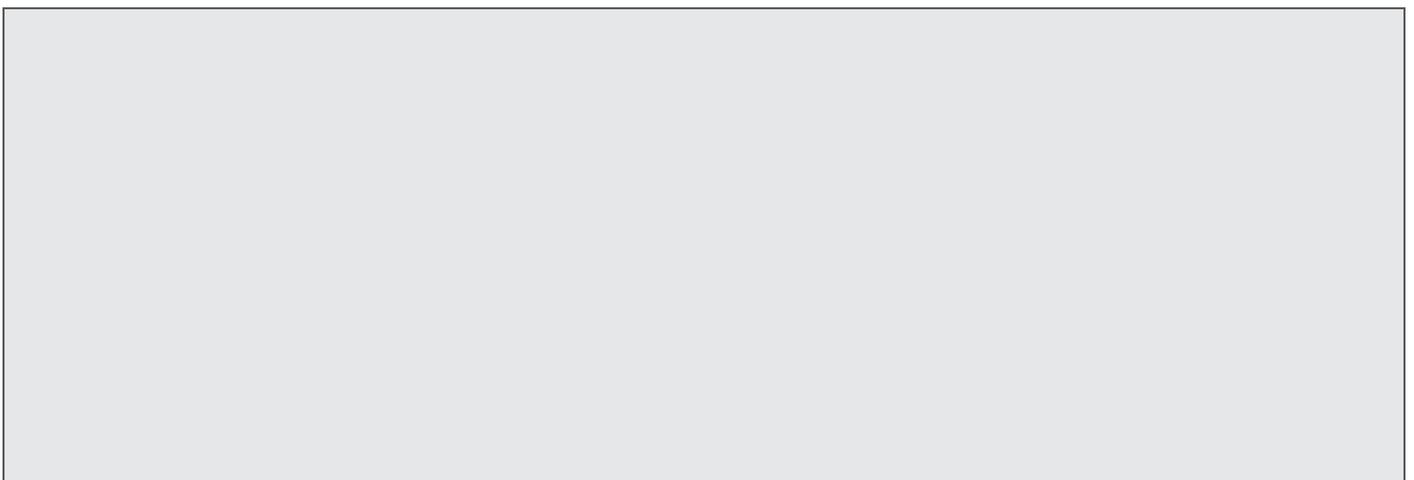
Please turn over to continue form.

Use the space below to explain the details of your suggestion/compliment/complaint.

(For example: dates, names of officers, what happened).

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write the details of their suggestion, compliment, or complaint.

What do you think we should do?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their suggestions or recommendations.

Signed:

Date: