

Complaints Policy V11 – Accessible Version

What this policy is about

This policy explains how you can make a formal complaint to EPIC, how we will respond, and what we can do to fix the problem. We want to:

- Listen to your concerns
- Fix problems quickly and fairly
- Learn from complaints and improve our services.

Who this policy applies to

This policy is for tenants, leaseholders, applicants, contractors, staff, volunteers and residents.

The policy covers complaints about EPIC services and contractors. Reports of Anti-Social Behaviour and repairs are not classed as complaints, unless you have reported these and are unhappy with how EPIC or our contractors have responded.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is when you tell us you're unhappy with:

- Our service
- Something we did or didn't do
- How a member of staff or contractor acted.

You do not have to use the word "complaint" for it to be treated as one.

How to make a complaint

You can make a complaint by:

- Visiting us online: www.epichousing.co.uk
- Emailing mailbox@epichousing.co.uk
- Calling 01782 252575 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 4 pm)
- Visiting our offices or by post: 131-141 Ubberley Road, Bentilee, Stoke-on-Trent, ST2 0EF (Office opening hours Monday to Friday, 9 am to 4 pm)

You can ask someone you trust to make the complaint for you, but we will need your permission to do this.

What happens when you complain

Stage 1 – First Response

- We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days.
- We will provide a full written response within 10 working days of the acknowledgment
- If its more complicated, we may ask you for more time to investigate (up to 10 more days).

Stage 2 – If you're still unhappy

- You can ask us to look at your complaint again, and this will be done by a more senior person within EPIC
- We will acknowledge receipt of your request within five working days
- We will respond within 20 working days of acknowledging your request.
- We may ask for more time if your complaint is more complicated (up to 20 more days).

What we might do to fix things

We might:

- Say sorry for what has happened
- Explain what went wrong
- Fix the problem
- Offer compensation
- Change how we do things

If you're still unhappy with our response

If you're still unhappy with our response after a Stage 2 complaint, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service to ask for an independent review:

- Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- Phone: 0300 111 3000
- Post: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

Exclusions

We might not be able to look at your complaint if:

- What you're telling us about happened more than 12 months ago
- What you're telling us about is part of legal action (e.g. something that is being heard in court)
- What you're telling us about isn't EPIC's responsibility to fix
- We have already investigated your complaint and you are not giving us any new information

Unacceptable Behaviour

- EPIC has a "Managing Unacceptable Behaviour" policy which can be used where people make persistent complaints about the same issue without providing new evidence

- We will only consider limiting contact after we have looked carefully at the situation, investigated it fairly and explained our decision.

Other important information

- We will treat everyone fairly and with respect
- We will provide support if English isn't your first language, or you need information in a different format such as large print
- We take all complaints seriously, even if they come from someone who has complained before
- All our staff receive training in handling complaints
- Information from complaints is reviewed regularly to monitor services and improve performance
- If your complaint is about how we have handled your personal data, this follows a separate complaints process. This is because personal data complaints are monitored by a different regulatory body