



**Stockton-on-Tees**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council**

# **Housing**

**Dealing with concerns or complaints regarding  
Registered Social Landlords in the Borough**

**A Guide for Ward Councillors**

**Housing Strategy & Development Service**

# **CONTENTS**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Complaints Process**
- 3. Communication**
- 4. Useful Contacts**

## **Dealing with Complaints / Concerns regarding Registered Social Landlords**

**1. Introduction** - Registered Social Landlords (RSL), commonly known as Housing Associations, provide a significant contribution towards the provision of social housing in the Borough. They are key partners with the LA through management of existing housing, development of new affordable housing and wider social and community investment activities in local neighbourhoods.

The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) is responsible for the regulation of RSLs but will not normally investigate disputes between an RSL and an individual or group of complainants. The exception may be where it is concerned that staff are deliberately acting in a way that is leading to serious mismanagement or fraud.

### **2. Complaints Process**

This briefing explains the procedure for dealing with complaints / concerns about RSLs and the 'informal' support the Housing Strategy Service can offer Members to resolve issues in their wards.

**Step 1:** If a constituent has a problem or complaint related to the service provided by an RSL, then that organisation should be approached first. Many problems can be resolved by talking directly with RSL staff. They may not be aware that there is a problem and should be given every opportunity to resolve the situation. An issue or complaint should always be raised with them as soon as possible after the issue has occurred.

**Step 2:** If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the RSL's formal complaints procedure should be used. All associations registered with the (TSA) must have an effective complaints and compensation policy for their tenants, leaseholders, shared owners and housing applicants. It should provide information about how to complain, who to complain to and what is involved.

All RSLs should make copies of their complaints policy available on request. They should treat the complaint seriously, listen to the complainant's views and let the complainant know how long they will take to respond.

**Step 3: Contact the Council's Strategic Housing Service**

Where complaints / concerns are specifically related to the service provided by the RSL the first point of contact should always be the RSL. However the Council's Strategic Housing Service may be able to assist Members perhaps where there are multiple concerns.

Staff may be able to arrange and facilitate a meeting between ward Members and appropriate representative(s) from the RSL, or link Members to other council service staff who have an 'interest' in the issue. This may, for example, be where there are issues of health and safety, breaches of regulations, concerns regarding housing support provision, fire safety issues etc. See over-leaf for useful contacts.

**Step 4: Housing Ombudsman** - All associations registered with the TSA must also be members of the Housing Ombudsman Service – an independent organisation that has been appointed under law to deal with complaints against housing organisations registered with the Service.

The Housing Ombudsman can consider different ways to deal with complaints and disputes and make orders or recommendations when it finds RSLs are not doing things right. It can also step in if an RSL is taking too long to deal with a complaint.

***Note:-** If the complaint is in relation to a service provided by the council, the corporate complaints procedure should be followed and the appropriate service will investigate the matter. See 'useful contacts' attached.*



## Useful Contacts

<p><b>Housing Strategy &amp; Development Service</b>          16 Church Road          Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TX</p> <p>Tel: 01642 526527          Email: <a href="mailto:housing.strategy@stockton.gov.uk">housing.strategy@stockton.gov.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.stockton.gov.uk/housing">www.stockton.gov.uk/housing</a></p>	<p><b>Private Sector Housing</b>          16 Church Road          Stockton-on-Tees          TS18 1TX</p> <p>Tel: (01642) 527797          Email:  <a href="mailto:privatesectorhousing@stockton.gov.uk">privatesectorhousing@stockton.gov.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.stockton.gov.uk/housing">www.stockton.gov.uk/housing</a></p>
<p><b>Benefits - Housing &amp; Council Tax</b>          16 Church Road          Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TX</p> <p>Tel: (01642) 393829          Email: <a href="mailto:benefits.section@stockton.gov.uk">benefits.section@stockton.gov.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.stockton.gov.uk/hsgben">www.stockton.gov.uk/hsgben</a></p>	<p><b>Housing Advice and Homelessness Advice</b>          Stratford House,          Ramsgate,          Stockton-on-Tees</p> <p>Tel: (01642) 528389          Email:  <a href="mailto:housing.options@stockton.gov.uk">housing.options@stockton.gov.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.stockton.gov.uk/housing">www.stockton.gov.uk/housing</a></p>
<p><b>Housing Regeneration</b>          P.O.Box 34,          Municipal Buildings,          Church Road,          Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LE</p> <p>Tel: 01642 526078 or 526077          Email:<a href="mailto:housingregeneration@stockton.gov.uk">housingregeneration@stockton.gov.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.stockton.gov.uk/housing">www.stockton.gov.uk/housing</a></p>	<p><b>Affordable Home Ownership Team</b>          Municipal Buildings          Church Road,          Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LE</p> <p>Tel: 01642 528352 / 6077          Fax: 01642 526027          Email:  <a href="mailto:homeownership@stockton.gov.uk">homeownership@stockton.gov.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.stockton.gov.uk/housing">www.stockton.gov.uk/housing</a></p>
<p><b>Anti Social Behaviour Team</b></p> <p>Tel: (01642) 527615          Email: <a href="mailto:asbteam@stockton.gov.uk">asbteam@stockton.gov.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.saferstockton.com">www.saferstockton.com</a></p>	<p><b>Supporting People</b></p> <p>Tel: (01642) 528450          Email:  <a href="mailto:supporting.people@stockton.gov.uk">supporting.people@stockton.gov.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.stockton.gov.uk/supportingpeople">www.stockton.gov.uk/supportingpeople</a></p>

If you would like any further information please contact J. Higgins, Housing Strategy & Development Service, Tel: 01642 526662 or email: [julie.higgins@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:julie.higgins@stockton.gov.uk)