



Policies: Complaints & Suggestions

1. Introduction

1.1 A CHISEL tenant who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the service provided by CHISEL or one of our agents is entitled to lodge an official complaint using the CHISEL complaints procedure. The complaint will then be fully investigated and appropriate action taken.

1.2 The way the complaint is dealt with will depend on whether the home is managed by CHISEL, or by one of our managing agents, LFSA and Three Boroughs Housing Co-op. Tenants in a CHISEL co-op with management responsibilities can also complain to CHISEL if they have a legitimate grievance against the co-op or one of its decisions.

1.3 CHISEL also welcomes suggestions for improvement to our services.

1.4 The complaints procedures are set out below.

2. Complaints against CHISEL

2.1 A complaint should be made in writing using the CHISEL Complaint Form, a copy of which can be supplied by the CHISEL office.

2.2 The complaint should be sent to the Company Secretary at the CHISEL office. We will acknowledge receipt, in writing, within five working days.

2.3 If the complaint is about a service provided directly by CHISEL, or by someone acting on our behalf, it will be investigated by the Company Secretary (or by the ECD Manager if the complaint is about the Company Secretary). You will be notified of the outcome within 10 working days of its receipt.

2.4 If the complaint is not written on one of our Complaint Forms, we will still investigate and reply to you, as set out above. However, if you want to appeal against our decision, you will need to complete one of the forms and a copy will be sent to you with our reply.

2.5 If you are unhappy with our decision about your complaint, you can appeal by writing to the Chair of CHISEL's Housing Management Sub-Committee. The Chair will refer the complaint for discussion at the next meeting. The meeting will receive a copy of your Complaint Form plus any other information you supply. You will be notified of the date of the meeting at least one week in advance (other than in emergencies) and will be given the opportunity to attend the meeting and put forward your case. However, the committee reserves the right to request you to leave the room while it makes a decision.



2.6 You are entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by one person of your own choice.

2.7 The committee's decision will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. CHISEL will write to you within ten days after the meeting to advise you of its decision.

2.8 If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Housing Management Sub-Committee, you can appeal to the CHISEL Management Committee. To do this, you should write to the Chair of the Management Committee at the CHISEL office, explaining why you think the Housing Management Sub-Committee's decision was wrong. The Chair will refer your complaint to the next meeting of the Management Committee. The meeting will receive a copy of your Complaint Form plus any other information you supply. You will be notified of the date of the meeting at least one week in advance (other than in emergencies) and given the opportunity to attend the meeting and put forward your case. However, the committee reserves the right to request you to leave the room while it makes a decision.

2.9 You are entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by one person of your own choice.

2.10 The committee's decision will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. CHISEL will write to you within ten days after the meeting to advise you of its decision.

2.11 If you wish, you can ask for your complaint to be treated confidentially, in which case the relevant minute of any meetings at which it is discussed will be stored in a special confidential file. For further information, please request a copy of the CHISEL Tenants' Confidentiality Policy.

2.12 If you wish to talk about your appeal but are unable to attend meetings because of a disability, family responsibilities or other serious reason, we can arrange a home visit from a member of the relevant committee. The committee member will be accompanied by a member of staff, although that member of staff can be excluded from the discussion at your request.

2.13 All complaints to CHISEL are recorded in a Complaints Register. Complaints are divided into two categories, as follows:

- Category 1 - complaints which are resolved by the CHISEL staff.
- Category 2 - complaints which are referred to a committee meeting for resolution.

2.14 Under no circumstances will any tenant be victimised or discriminated against because they have made a complaint.

3. Homes managed by Managing Agents

3.1 CHISEL's managing agents, LFSA and Three Boroughs Housing Co-op have their own procedures for dealing with complaints.



3.2 A complaint should be made using the CHISEL Complaint Form, a copy of which can be supplied by the managing agent.

3.3 The complaint will be investigated by the staff of the managing agent and you will be notified of the outcome within 10 working days.

3.4 If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can write to the Chair of the managing agent who will investigate the complaint and inform you of the outcome within 10 working days.

3.5 If you are still not happy with the outcome, you can appeal to CHISEL's Management Committee, as set out in 2.8 to 2.11 above.

4. Co-op Homes

4.1 A tenant wishing to complain about their co-op should complete the CHISEL Complaint Form and send it to the Education and Community Development Manager at the CHISEL office. They will investigate the complaint and inform you of the outcome within 10 working days.

4.2 If you are still not satisfied, you can follow the appeals procedure as set out in 2.5 to 2.11 above.

5. The Independent Housing Ombudsman

5.1 If the tenant making the complaint feels that the CHISEL Management Committee has made a misinformed decision or the complaint has been dealt with incorrectly then you have the option of submitting the complaint to the Independent Housing Ombudsman.

5.2 All tenants will be informed at the outset of any complaint that this option is available to them. However, the Ombudsman will not investigate any complaint until it has passed through all stages of CHISEL's internal complaints procedure.

6. Independent Advice

6.1 All tenants at the outset of any complaint are encouraged to seek independent advice from organisations such as The Confederation of Co-operative Housing, The Citizens Advice Centres and Community Law Centres.

6.2 In certain circumstances, tenants may have legal remedies for complaints against the association. Tenants are advised to seek professional legal advice if they believe this to be the case.

