



# SustainukLtd

## COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMMENTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Sustain (UK) Limited  
2a Albert Road  
Birmingham  
B17 0AN

**The policy:**

At Sustain (UK) Ltd the needs of our tenants are paramount, also the employment fairness for staff and reasonable expectations of visitors. The Company recognizes the value of complaints (and comments/compliments) as an important tool for monitoring and responding to tenants, employees, managing agents/partners and visitor's expectations. To assist the company to respond appropriately, all forms of complaint need to be documented and assessed as part of an on-going process. All comments/compliments will similarly be examined and acted on accordingly (inc. feedback to staff concerned). We follow the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and Dispute Resolution principles.

[The Housing ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](http://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

***Aims of the policy (regarding complaints)***

- To recognize, promote and protect the Tenant's, employees, managing agents/partners and visitor's rights to complaint
- To recognize that effective complaint handling enables residents to be heard and understood
- Ensure accessible and well published complaints procedures are in place
- Recognise the need to be fair to both the complainant and the person/s complained about
- Provide a mechanism for responding to complaints in a timely, courteous, and objective manner
- Determine and implement remedies
- Record, assess and review complaints on a regular basis to ensure responsible and ongoing commitments to service improvement.

***Aims of the Policy (regarding comments/compliments)***

- To recognize that comments/compliments received are equally valid feedback
- To ensure that staff concerned are made aware and thanked accordingly.

**Definitions:**

- A complaint is defined as: 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.
- Sustain (UK) Ltd recognizes that a tenant does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted to us via a third party or representative will still be handled in line with our complaints policy.
- We recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. A service request is a request from a tenant to Sustain (UK) Ltd, requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests will be recorded, monitored, and reviewed regularly.
- A complaint should be raised when the tenant raises dissatisfaction with the response to their service request.



- Comments of dissatisfaction on our tenant survey feedback forms, may not necessarily need to be treated as a complaint, though, where possible, the tenant completing the survey will be made aware of how they can pursue their dissatisfaction as a complaint if they wish to.

Chasing a service request, such as a missed appointment, can often be resolved 'there and then' with an apology and the provision of another appointment and may not need to enter our complaints system. However, if further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the tenant requests it, the issue will be logged as a complaint. We will keep you informed of this decision.

**Who can use our complaints, compliments, and comments procedure?**

- A person who is or has been in a landlord/tenant relationship with Sustain (UK) Limited
- Ex-tenants of Sustain (UK) Ltd can do so, if the issues giving rise to the complaint occurred within 6 months of the date the complaint is brought to our attention.
- Any member of staff who is a direct employee of any Managing agent that we work with
- An employee of Sustain (UK) Ltd
- A representative of any of the people above, if they have gained the consent of the person to make the complaint on their behalf
- A representative of any of the people above who do not have the capacity to give their consent to someone, to act on their behalf. Sustain (UK) Ltd must be satisfied that the representative has the legitimate authority to act on the person's behalf or a person with the legal capacity to make a complaint on behalf of any of the people above who are deceased.
- A local community member, that could be directly affected by any tenant of Sustain (UK) Ltd
- A member of the Local Authority and any other member of our partnership teams including, but not limited, Hospital staff, GPs, Mental Health teams, Social Work team etc.

**Exclusions for accepting a complaint:**

Sustain (UK) Ltd must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. Sustain (UK) Ltd can reasonable not consider complaints under the following circumstances:

- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over six months ago. However, it may not be appropriate to exclude any complaints that concern safeguarding or health and safety issues so each situation will depend on the individual circumstances reported.
- Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy and the process was followed accordingly.
- The matter has previously been referred to the Housing Ombudsmen and they have provided their response, to which Sustain (UK) Ltd has implemented any suggested actions or the Housing Ombudsmen did not take the matter on for their own investigations.



- At the time the complaint is received, it is already being investigated by the Housing Ombudsman and as such, Sustain (UK) Ltd and yourself are awaiting their outcome.

In cases where your complaint will not be accepted, Sustain (UK) Ltd will write to you within 7 working days of receiving your complaint and provide a detailed explanation why. Where appropriate, we will advise you of your right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman. If the Housing Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, they may instruct Sustain (UK) Ltd to take on the complaint.

### **Procedures:**

**Procedure for direct employees of Sustain (UK) Ltd** – Employees wishing to register a complaint should speak directly to their manager who will deal with the complaint in an effective and timely manner. Individuals, as always, have the right to nominate a representative or advocate on their behalf. Complaints can be made:

- In writing either via email or in a letter
- Verbally (in person or over the telephone)
- In comments, feedbacks, appraisals, supervisions, or surveys

**Procedure for tenants** – If a tenant has a concern, they should initially be encouraged to try and resolve this issue/difficulty with their support worker or with the Head Office of the support provider (Managing Agent) at the property they reside in. The support provider (Managing Agent) will try their best to resolve the issue. Should the tenant have done this already and remains dissatisfied with their response or feels unable to contact them for any reason, they can then make a complaint to Sustain (UK) Ltd. Complaints can be made in the following ways:

- In an email to [info@sustainuk.org](mailto:info@sustainuk.org)
- In a letter to our Head Office – 2a Albert Road, Harborne, Birmingham, B17 0AN
- By Telephone to 0121 428 2221
- Online at our website [www.sustainuk.org](http://www.sustainuk.org) using the online feedback form
- In comments on our tenant surveys issued
- Verbally/face to face to a member of our inspections team, who visits the property

Complaints made by tenants MUST be allocated an individual complaint number and recorded using the following key headings:

1. Lack of support
2. Poor property conditions
3. Unsuitable home/area
4. Other tenant issues



5. Breach of TA
6. Tenant ASB/Police interest
7. Safeguarding issue
8. Staff/MA poor practice

Tenants are also able to contact the Housing Ombudsman during any stage of their complaint to us. This will ensure that they are able to gain impartial advice from their dedicated dispute resolution team. You will find their contact details on Page 5 of this policy.

**Procedure for external agencies/individuals** – Sustain (UK) Ltd recognises that visitors, healthcare professionals, stakeholders, neighbours of our tenants, Local Authorities, or anyone else directly affected by our business, may wish to complain. It is the aim of this policy to identify the channels that these individuals should follow to lodge their complaint. Any external individual who wishes to complain about the service, the conduct of its employees, stakeholders or indeed any other aspect of the company should lodge their complaint in the following ways:

- In an email to [info@sustainuk.org](mailto:info@sustainuk.org)
- In a letter to our Head Office – 2a Albert Road, Harborne, Birmingham, B17 0AN
- By Telephone to 0121 428 2221
- Online at our website [www.sustainuk.org](http://www.sustainuk.org) using the online feedback form
- Verbally/face to face to a member of our inspections team, who visits the property

Any reports received about Anti-Social Behaviour will be dealt with following our ASB Policy and procedure and NOT our complaints policy. We will contact the person who made the report to us and explain this further, where needed.

### **Confidentiality:**

All complaints will be treated sensitively by the member of staff that is dealing with them. Individual rights, dignity and respect will always be upheld. Information will only be shared with relevant people in connection with the complaint however, this information will be always used with discretion and will not be shared without due consideration.

### **Advocacy:**

All tenants have the right to have any person advocate the complaint on their behalf and should be aware of this right before they register a complaint. An advocate can be any person a Tenant chooses, for example, Key worker, CPN, Support Worker, friend, family member, Social worker etc. Tenants must tell us that they have given their consent for this person to act on their behalf and the tenant must confirm they are happy for us to share their personal information with this person.

### **Stages of a formal complaint:**

#### **Stage 1**

- We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of the date that we receive your



complaint

- Our complaints Officer will then be appointed to document and commence an investigation



Our complaints officer may contact you to clarify any further details required to investigate sufficiently and will establish the outcome you are looking for

- Our complaints officer will provide a full and detailed response to your complaint within 10 working days. In exceptional circumstances we may require up to an additional 10 days however this will be communicated to the complainant.
- If for any reason, they are not going to be able to provide this response in the specified time, they will contact you explaining why and will provide you with an update of the investigation so far.
- If you do not receive a response within the correct timeframe and have not received an explanation as to why this has been delayed, please contact our Head Office to request this
- There could be several reasons why a complaint response may have to be delayed such as: Staff absences due to sickness and/or annual leave or waiting for further information from external agencies/advocates or any other unforeseeable circumstances. We will only extend where we do not have any other choice however, this is not something that we wish to do and, in all cases, we will seek a response to you within the correct timeframe

If you are not satisfied with our initial response at Stage 1, you have the right to request that your complaint is moved to Stage 2 within 10 working days of the date of your Stage 1 response

## **Stage 2**

- As stated, if you are dissatisfied with our Stage 1 response, you must put your request to move to a stage 2 complaint in writing to us, within 10 working days of the date of your Stage 1 response
- In your request to move to Stage 2, you must explain your reasons for this. Explaining why you are dissatisfied with your response and the satisfactory outcome that you are looking for
- We will send you acknowledgement that we have received this, within 3 working days of the date that we receive your request to escalate your original complaint
- An investigation at this stage, will usually be handled by a manager and this person will be appointed to review and investigate the complaint
- The appointed person may contact you to clarify any further details that they need to sufficiently investigate further and to gain a better understanding of the satisfactory outcome that you are looking for, where needed
- The appointed person at this stage 2, will provide you with a full and detailed response within 20 working days of the date that we had received your request to escalate your original complaint to this stage 2
- If it will not be possible to provide a full response within 20 working days, we will contact you to agree an extension of this and will explain our reasons for this
- If you remain dissatisfied with our response at Stage 2, you have the right to refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman

## Housing Ombudsman

If you do decide to refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsmen, The Housing Ombudsman will consider whether your complaint comes within their jurisdiction, investigate as appropriate and come to a decision on your complaint. Following the Housing Ombudsman's consideration of your complaint, Sustain (UK) Ltd will not consider the matter further. The Housing Ombudsman's contact information is

Housing Ombudsman Service  
81 Aldwych  
London  
WC2B 4HN  
Telephone: 0300 111 3000  
Fax: 020 7831 1942  
Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)  
Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

[Residents](#) | [Social housing](#) | [Housing Ombudsman Service \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](#)

## **Unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants**

Sustain (UK) Ltd understands that people may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to someone contacting us. We also understand that some tenants may find it difficult to express themselves or communicate clearly, especially when they are anxious or upset.

To try to minimise as many barriers as possible to effective communication that we can, we ask that the person approaching us explains what reasonable adjustments they're looking for in communicating with us. For example, Large print, face to face meetings, additional time etc. There is no one set list of the reasonable adjustments we will be able to make, the adjustment depends entirely upon the person's needs.

However, Sustain (UK) Ltd will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as abusive, offensive or threatening behaviour towards our staff (or those working on our behalf) nor will we tolerate actions that result in unacceptable or excessive demands, so significant, that it prevents our staff from carrying out their duties effectively and safely.

### **Actions we may take:**

- Warning the person about their behaviour and requesting that they modify their behaviour in future contact with us.
- Appointing a specific point of contact for the person at Sustain (UK) Ltd.
- Communicating only in writing or via a representative.
- Limiting your direct contact with Sustain (UK) Ltd.



### **Putting things right again:**

Complaints can be resolved in several ways and Sustain (UK) Ltd is dedicated to putting things right when they have gone wrong. This policy is designed to improve, repair or rebuild our landlord and tenant relationship. To do this, we follow the Dispute Resolution Principles recommended by the Housing Ombudsman Service, these principles are:

- Be Fair – treat people fairly and follow fair processes.
- Put Things Right
- Learn From Outcomes

[Principles of Dispute Resolution - Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](http://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

### **Compensation**

One of the ways that Sustain (UK) Ltd will consider to put things right again, is compensation. Regarding this policy, we define compensation as “To make amends for the loss, injury, service failure, breach of contract, inconvenience, or offence. Compensation does not have to be of a financial nature, it can also be made by way of a gesture of goodwill or replacement”.

We will look at each case at its own merits and will offer any compensation that we consider to be fair. We do not have any minimum or maximum limits set to what we will consider when awarding compensation, it will all depend upon the circumstances of each case, what went wrong and for how long etc. We will consider any inconvenience or loss that a tenant has incurred and seek to put our tenants back into the position they would have been in if there was no service failure.

### **Satisfaction surveys**

For Sustain (UK) Ltd to continuously improve our processes and learn from any mistakes made, we would like to ask that, upon completion of us dealing with your complaint, that you would kindly complete a satisfaction survey. This survey is designed to ask your opinion on how we handled your complaint and any suggestions that you may have for us to improve upon next time. For example, did we keep you informed, were our staff professional/polite/understanding/fair, did we meet our timescales set etc.

We would greatly appreciate any feedback that you can provide and would appreciate you taking the time to complete our satisfaction survey.

### **Compliments and comments**

Sustain (UK) Limited recognises that comments and compliments received are equally valid feedback as complaints. We have a system in place to record, assess and review all complaints, compliments, and comments for service improvement but also to identify any patterns of concern or trends that we may need to act on accordingly.



Similarly, we recognise the need to provide positive feedback in areas that are working well, to ensure that good work is continued and encouraged. We record, assess, review, and monitor compliments/comments received in a similar fashion to identify any positive trends that we need to learn from and encourage across the board too.



**Concerns about our Policy and/or how your complaint was handled**

If you have any concerns with our Policy and as such, you feel it gives way to generic poor practice for handling complaints. Please put your concerns in writing to us, via the contact details provided. We will not handle this in the same way that we would as a formal complaint however, we will acknowledge receipt of your comments within 3 working days and take your comments on board.

If you have any concerns solely about the attitude of the staff member/s that handled your complaint, please put your concerns in writing to us either via post or email. Alternatively, you could leave these comments/concerns on the satisfaction survey sent to you.



[The Housing ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](http://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)



This document is also available in large print, Braille and audio tape

ENGLISH	This organisation is fully committed to equal opportunities. Therefore, if requested, this document can be provided in the languages listed below.
ARABIC	تسركم تيعمجلا دمامامت تئفاكتم صرف عاطعلا . وبعلع، تبلط اذا تبيرعلا تغلاب تقيثولا هذه ،دوزنا عيطتسناهيك
KURDISH	ر م ه ت ه ي هوارك ناخر ه ب ه ت ه رد و ب ك و ا و ه ي ي ت ف ي ناسك . ه و ه ل ه ب ه ز ر ه و ، ه ز ه ا گ ر ي اواده ز ه د م ه ف ه نيسوونه ز ه وارخك . ئ ، ك دروك ي نامز ه ئ ي نيباد نيناوتهك ب ن يت و به ب درك ت ه م
SOMALI	Ururkani wuxuu aad ugu dadaalaa sinaanta. Sidaa awgeed hadaad u baahan tahay warbixintan, waxa laguugu diyaarin karaa.
PUNJABI	éh s^sWA brAbrwA fI nIwI õÚwe k^m krn lÉ vcnb&F hE# és lÉ je és fswAvez fI p^jAbI boÚlI ivYÚc m^g kIwI gÉ w@ éh pUrI kIwI jA skfI hE#
FRENCH	Cette organisation s’est entièrement engagée à respecter l’égalité des chances. Par conséquent, ce document peut être fourni en français, sur demande.
GUJARATI	`YeT aA¶ #eU]e #e `pAQe `pUnOqUOf ]FTWÍ Gfl. PfQh z]pTpPh A¶[[eYep #e]f Pef #e R¶ÀPe]fHì CmHì[ePh Xe_eYep Un[mp UeM¶¶I ^A¶eZ Gfl.
POLISH	Nasza organizacja ściśle przestrzega zasady jednakowych możliwości dla wszystkich. Dlatego też na żądanie dokument ten możemy dostarczyć w języku polskim.
VIETNAMESE	Toà chöüc naøy hoàøn toaøn cam keát ñeà bình ñaúng caùc cô hoài. Vì theá, neáu coù yeâu caàu, hoà sô naøy coù theá ñöõic cung caáp baèng tieáng Vieät Nam.

本機構完全致力於機會平等。因此，若有需要的話這份文件可用中文提供。