



## **A guide to giving feedback on our services**

This booklet is designed to give you guidance on how to give us your feedback.

Please ask us if you would like this document in other languages, in large print or on audio tape.

العربية (Arabic) বাংলা (Bengali) български (Bulgarian)  
(中文 (繁體字)) (Cantonese) čeština (Czech) हिन्दी (Hindi) Magyar (Hungarian)  
Latviešu (Latvian) Lietuviškai (Lithuanian) polski (Polish) ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi)  
Slovenčina (Slovak) Español (Spanish) தமிழ் (Tamil) اردو (Urdu)



*Living*

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## 6 Anonymous complaints

The best way to raise a complaint is to do so openly, however all complaints raised, including anonymous one, will be considered. Complaints expressed anonymously are more difficult to investigate and will be considered at the discretion of the Executive Director of Housing and Operations and will only progress to the investigation stage where evidence is provided and the complaint is substantiated. In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the complaint; and
- The likelihood of confirming the complaint through attributable sources

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can ask for your complaint to be investigated further, however you must do this within 14 calendar days of the date on your Stage 1 closing letter.

Please note: We will not escalate your complaint if you simply do not agree with the stage 1 decision.

## **Stage 2**

We will ask you why you think that your complaint has not been handled in accordance with procedure and for any other information to support your request. The Customer Voice Manager will review your request within 10 working days and if your reasons are not considered valid we will write to you and let you know. If your reasons are considered valid your complaint will be passed to one of our managers working in a service area unrelated to the one you are complaining about. They will visit you (with your permissions) to investigate your complaint and aim to contact you with their findings within 10 working days. If the investigation will take longer than this, we will update you in writing every 10 working days.

Once the Stage 2 investigation is concluded we will write to you with our findings. If you do not consider the matter has been handled in accordance with our Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy you can ask a 'designated person' to review the way the complaint has been handled on your behalf. However you should do this within 14 calendar days of the date of your stage 2 decision.

## **1 Introduction**

We have introduced this booklet to tell you what to do when you want to give us your feedback about the services we provide. This can include compliments, complaints, service requests and general comments to give us suggestions about how we can improve the services we give you.

## **2 What type of feedback can I give?**

### **Compliments & positive feedback**

We really would like to hear from you if you are happy with our services. If there is a particular person you have spoken to, or a service you think that we are really good at, or you may just want to say thank you, please let us know. Any compliment you give us will be forwarded to the person or service team you are praising.

### **Complaints**

We always try to provide you with an excellent service but recognise that sometimes things can go wrong. We regard your comments as an opportunity to look at if our services are meeting your needs or not.

Don't be afraid to tell us what you think we are doing wrong.

Your right to services will not be affected if you make a complaint. We need to know so that we can make changes and stop these problems happening again. Your complaint is the first step in helping us put matters right.

### **What is not a complaint?**

A complaint, is not any of the following:

- A request for service (for example, reporting a repair)
- A request for information, or explanation of Livin's policies
- Any matter for which there is a right of appeal or redress
- Something which happened or which the customer knew of more than six months before contacting Livin

- An issue that is currently subject to legal proceedings
- Complaints regarding any of the following services or issues are not dealt with as part of this procedure. A complaint relating to antisocial behaviour (ASB), which would normally be dealt with under Livin's ASB policy. Explanations on the ASB policy or procedure will be dealt with as a service request, with discretion to open a complaint if appropriate.
- A complaint relating to financial services. We are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) for provision of credit broking, debt counselling and credit information services. This process outlines Livin's approach to handling complaints relation to financial services. It differs from the standard Livin Customer Feedback and Complaints Procedure as it relates specifically to financial advice services that are regulated by the FCA
- A complaint relating to Durham Key Options (DKO)
- A complaint relating to Health & Safety which would normally be dealt with under Livin's Health & Safety Policy. Any complaints received by the Customer Feedback Team in relation to health or safety will be reported to the Health & Safety Team immediately via telephone and the Accident and Incident Reporting Portal.

### **General comments and suggestions to improve services**

Your comments may not be a compliment or complaint, but they are still important to us. They can help us to plan future services and give us ideas on how to improve the services we provide.

### **Service Request**

A service request is an enquiry requesting an explanation of a repair process, rent process, housing application process. or an explanation of Livin's policies and procedures. Service requests are dealt with by the Customer Feedback Team within 10 working days.

complaint has been formally closed at Stage 2 of Livin's procedure.

## **5 What happens next?**

### **Informal**

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days. This will be either verbally, in writing or by email, confirming the complaint you made, when we received it, and who will be responsible for handling and monitoring your complaint. We will aim to resolve informal complaints within four working days. If the investigation will take longer than this, we will update you. Once the informal investigation is concluded we will inform you of our findings. If you do not consider the matter has been handled satisfactorily you can ask for your complaint to be escalated to Stage 1, however you must do this within 14 calendar days. The Customer Voice Manager will review your request within 10 working days and if your reasons are not considered valid we will write to you and let you know. If your reasons are considered valid your complaint will be passed to one of our managers working in a service area unrelated to the one you are complaining about.

Please note: We will not escalate your complaint if you simply do not agree with the informal decision.

### **Stage 1**

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days. This will be either verbally, in writing or by email, confirming the complaint you made, when we received it, and who will be responsible for handling and monitoring your complaint. We will aim to visit you (with your permission) to resolve Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days. If the investigation will take longer than this, we will update you in writing every 10 working days. Once the Stage 1 investigation is concluded we will write to you with our findings. If you do not consider the matter has been handled in accordance with our Customer Complaints, Feedback and Compensation Policy you

## **Stage 1**

If you are not satisfied with the way we have dealt with your informal complaint, you can ask to escalate to Stage 1. We will ask you why you think that your complaint has not been handled satisfactorily and for any other information or evidence to support your request. If this is considered valid this will then be reviewed by an alternative investigator. This is Stage 1 of our internal complaints procedure. (For details of how your complaint will be dealt with see 'What happens next?')

## **Stage 2**

If you do not consider the matter has been dealt with in accordance with our Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy, or you have any other information or evidence to support that your complaint has not been investigated satisfactorily you can ask us to consider your request to escalate to Stage 2.

### **Designated person**

Following completion of a complaints investigation at Stage 1 and 2, Livin's internal complaints handling process is complete. If you feel that your complaint has not been handled in accordance with Livin's policy you have the option of asking a 'designated person' to review the way the complaint has been handled on your behalf. The designated person(s) may be a Member of Parliament (MP) or local County Councillor.

The designated person may choose to: review the way that the complaint was handled by Livin; act as advocate and advise you of the next course of action (if any); refuse to review the matter and refer it to the Housing Ombudsman Service in writing. In these circumstances there is no requirement to observe the eight week delay for referrals.

### **Housing Ombudsman Service**

If the complaint is about Livin's management of your home or quality of service, you may contact the Housing Ombudsman Service directly without approaching a designated person. However, you must wait for a period of eight weeks after the

## **3 How to give us your feedback**

You can give us your feedback:

- By completing the online enquiry form at [www.Livin.co.uk](http://www.Livin.co.uk)
- In person at our office at Farrell House, Arlington Way, DurhamGate, Spennymoor, Durham, DL16 6NL
- By telephoning us on 0800 5874538
- In writing via letter or email at [feedback@Livin.co.uk](mailto:feedback@Livin.co.uk) or [contactus@Livin.co.uk](mailto:contactus@Livin.co.uk)
- By completing a satisfaction survey - we send these to customers using our services
- Website (My Livin space and Livin's "live web chat" facility)
- The Livin app download for your smartphone
- Through our social media pages on Twitter and Facebook

You can give us your comments yourself or you can ask someone to do this on your behalf. If you would like someone to deal with this on your behalf please tell us on the comments form. You can also ask our staff to help you. If you wish to refer a complaint to us via a Councillor, Board Member or MP an authorisation form must be completed before your complaint can be discussed with your representative.

You can get independent advice on making a complaint from the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

## **4 Our complaints procedure**

If you require the services of an interpreter or translator in making your complaint, please let us know.

### **Standard Complaint stages:**

#### **Informal**

This is an opportunity for us to resolve your issues at the first point of contact. As a guide we aim to deal with informal complaints within four working days.