

The word "Livin" is written in a vibrant pink, cursive script font. The letters are thick and rounded, with a playful, handwritten feel. The 'L' is particularly large and loops around the start of the word.

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

Contact:

Email: feedback@Livin.co.uk or
contactus@Livin.co.uk

Telephone: 0800 5874538 or 0845 505 5500

Visit: www.Livin.co.uk

Submit complaint via the Livin smartphone app (Android or iOS)

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

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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 and 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.

Anti-social behaviour

A complaint relating to anti-social 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.

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

Allocations and Lettings

These matters are handled as part of the Durham Key Options (DKO) Policy and procedure.

Health and Safety complaints / incidents

Health and Safety complaints and incidents are handled by Livin's Health and Safety team in accordance with Livin's Accidents and Incidents Procedure and prescribed timescales.

However, Livin may consider complaints regarding the handling of a health and safety incident. Contact Livin's Customer Feedback Team for details.

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 Requests

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. We aim to deal with service requests within 10 working days.

3 How to give us your feedback

You can give us your feedback:

- By completing the online enquiry form at 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 or 0845 505 5500
- In writing via letter or email at feedback@Livin.co.uk or contactus@Livin.co.uk
- By completing a satisfaction survey - we send these to customers using our services
- Via any Livin employee visiting your home
- Via Livin's website (Livin's "live web chat" facility)
- Via the Livin app download for your smartphone (android and iOS)
- 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 you must give us your permission either verbally or in writing 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

Livin handles complaints under the following 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**.*

Stage 1

This is the first formal stage of Livin's internal complaints procedure. Your complaint will be investigated by a manager and we will aim to resolve **within 10 working days**.*

Stage 2

This is the final stage of Livin's internal complaints procedure. The handling of your complaint at Stage 1 will be investigated by a different manager and we will aim to resolve **within 10 working days**.

Livin reserves the right to manage and investigate a complaint outside of normal timescales where it would be beneficial to liaise with external support agencies such as the Housing Ombudsman to resolve the issue.

*Requests to escalate a complaint

*If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your complaint at the first point of contact or at Stage 1 you can ask to escalate to the next stage. You must contact the Customer Feedback Team and provide reasons why you think that your complaint has not been handled satisfactorily and provide information or evidence to support your request. This must be submitted within 14 calendar days of the date your complaint was closed. The Customer Voice Manager will review your request within 10 working days. If your request is **not approved** we will write to you and let you know the reasons why. If your request **is approved**, your complaint will be reviewed by a manager at the next stage of the process.

If new evidence is provided that was not presented during the original complaint and this substantially changes the nature of the complaint, Livin reserves the right to open and investigate this as a new complaint.

We will not escalate your complaint if you simply do not agree with the outcome of your complaint.

5 What happens when you make a complaint?

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 (see 'requests to escalate a complaint').

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 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 (see 'requests to escalate a complaint').

Stage 2

At Stage 2 a manager will visit you (with your permission) to discuss your complaint and investigate the handling of the complaint at Stage 1. The investigator will 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 contact your MP or County Councillor to act as 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.

Alternatively, you could waive this stage and contact the Housing Ombudsman. If you choose this route then you must wait for a period of eight weeks after the complaint has been formally closed by Livin.

Designated person

The designated person may agree to accept your case and review the way that the complaint was handled by Livin or act as advocate and advise you of the next course of action (if any).

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of their intervention, you may take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

If the designated person refuses to accept your case, they should refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman on your behalf. This will mean that you don't have to wait

Housing Ombudsman Service

You may contact the Housing Ombudsman in the following ways:

Telephone: 0300 111 3000.

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Write: Complaint correspondence,
Housing Ombudsman Service,
PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ.

Fax: 020 7831 1942

6 Anonymous complaints

The best way to raise a complaint is to do so openly, however all complaints raised, including anonymous ones, will be considered. Complaints expressed anonymously are more difficult to investigate and will be considered at the discretion of the Strategic Head of Housing and will only progress to the investigation stage where evidence is provided and can be verified. 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 complaint can be verified by a reliable source

7 Unacceptable complainant behaviour

Livin has adopted an 'Unacceptable complainant behaviour' procedure in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's 'Fair Service' guidance.

Livin recognises that complainants may act out of character in times of trouble or distress and does not automatically view forceful or determined behaviour as unacceptable. However, customers that are rude, demanding, vexatious and consistently place unreasonable demands on Livin staff will not be tolerated and risk having access to the service restricted.

Behaviour from complainants that is verbally or physically threatening may be reported to the police or will be treated as anti-social behaviour and dealt with in accordance with Livin's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

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