

The Scheme

Complaints Procedure

Statement of Policy

It is the aim of The Scheme to provide the highest possible standard of service to its clients. However, if for any reason a client is dissatisfied with the quality of service provided it is important for The Scheme to be aware of the specific problem in order that they can be addressed, and in order to avoid any repetition. It is the Policy of The Scheme to respond to and investigate all complaints and to ensure that the complainant is fully informed of the outcome in each case.

The following Complaint Procedure details how complaints should be made and how they will then be addressed. Information will be available from The Scheme Administrator on the subject.

Introduction

This Policy outlines the action The Scheme will take when it receives a complaint from a client. The procedure will help resolve complaints in all areas, but it is likely that most complaints will arise in the following areas:

- Dissatisfaction with the service, for example as a result of inadequate work, unacceptable delay or failure to deliver a service.
- Dissatisfaction regarding complaints from or about an accredited landlord.
- Disputes between a client and The Scheme Administrator regarding policy, procedures or activities.
- Discourtesy or unhelpfulness on the part of The Scheme Administrator.

The complaints panel will be made up from existing members of the Executive Committee and will include the Chair/Vice Chair and two others.

For students who have a complaint regarding repairs please see 'The Quick Guide to Repairs' on the Scheme Website www.the-scheme.com. This gives timescales for repairs to be done. If the guidelines are not being adhered to the following procedures will be put in to place.

When a client or member wishes to register a complaint, the following procedure should be adopted.

Complaint by a Student with Regards to a Breach of the Code of Standards by their Landlord

If you feel that a landlord has breached the code of standards please fill in a complaint form giving details of the breach and any relevant dates.

Stage One

The complainant should follow their landlord's Complaint Procedure. The complaint should be made as quickly as possible after the event and followed up in writing. If, after the appropriate time has elapsed and the complaint has not been satisfied, the tenant should bring the matter to the attention of The Scheme Administrator.

Stage Two

The complainant should put his/her complaint to The Scheme Administrator either by completing a Complaint Form or by letter. The Scheme Administrator will arrange to discuss the matter with the complainant, either by way of a meeting or by telephone, with a view to resolving the matter informally. If the matter is not resolved The Scheme Administrator will then consider the matter formally and respond in writing, where possible within 10 working days. A record of any conversation will be kept on a Complaint Monitoring Form.

Stage Three

Should The Scheme Administrator feel unable to resolve the matter, or if the complainant is dissatisfied with The Scheme Administrator's decision, he/she is entitled to put the matter to The Scheme Executive by letter, or via the Complaint Form. The Scheme Executive will obtain The Scheme Administrator's record of the complaint and will arrange a meeting to discuss the matter. The Scheme Executive will record any additional information before considering the matter. A decision will be given in writing to both complainant and The Scheme Administrator where possible within 5 working days of the meeting of The Scheme Executive. If the matter concerns an accredited landlord they should also have the opportunity to put forward any evidence in their defence.

Stage Four

If the complainant still remains dissatisfied he/she may request a meeting with members of The Scheme Executive committee. This meeting shall include requesting an accredited landlord to attend where applicable. Once the meeting has taken place the complainant, the landlord if applicable, and The Scheme Administrator will be informed in writing within 5 working days of the outcome.

Redress

Where the complaint is upheld, redress will be offered to the complainant. In deciding the level of redress The Scheme Administrator or The Scheme

Executive should make their decision based on the facts of each case and the loss or inconvenience incurred by the complainant.

Redress will be limited to the following:

- An apology written or verbal from The Scheme Administrator or accredited landlord where appropriate
- An undertaking and subsequent report on improving or developing policies / procedure where these appear to be at fault / absent
- Agreement to undertake specific work on behalf of a user
- In exceptional cases and where the matter involves an accredited landlord The Executive will decide on what course of action should be taken. In exceptional circumstances an accredited landlord will have their membership suspended.

Special Provisions

A person of his/her choice may at any stage accompany the complainant. This person may not speak for the complainant unless invited to do so by the person investigating the complaint, who will consider any special circumstances, which may make this appropriate. The Scheme can provide a list of potential services, which may be able to assist the complainant through the procedure.

Landlords Complaining with Regards to a Tenant

Stage 1

The landlord contacts the tenant(s) and follows up any concerns in writing.

Stage 2

If no satisfaction the landlord can contact The Scheme Administrator to act as an arbitrator to resolve any dispute before formal action is taken where applicable.

The Scheme Administrator will contact the student(s) concerned where possible and try and solve the situation amicably.

The landlords own procedures may be put in place at the same time i.e. legal proceedings in the case of non payment/breach of contract.

Complaints by a student/landlord against The Scheme Administrator

Where a landlord or student is dissatisfied with the service given by the Scheme Administrator or feel that they have not acted in a professional manner the following stages may apply.

Stage 1

Contact the Scheme Administrator and make an appointment to discuss the complaint. If still dissatisfied go to stage 2.

Stage 2

The referrer will be asked to put in writing their complaint. This will then be taken to the review panel. The review panel is made up from members of the Executive as aforementioned. The student/landlord and Scheme Administrator will be in attendance. The review panel will make a decision on what has occurred and may:

- agree there is no case to answer
- instruct the Scheme Administrator to write a letter of apology

The panels decision will be final.

Recording and Monitoring

All complaints will be recorded using the Complaint Monitoring Form and kept on file, including details of those resolved informally.

Confidentiality

All complaints and associated paperwork will be treated in accordance with The Scheme's Confidentiality Policy.

Ensuring the effectiveness of the procedure

All members of The Scheme Executive will receive a copy of the procedure, any new staff or Executive members will be introduced to the procedure via induction.

The procedure will be reviewed annually by The Scheme Administrator and The Scheme Executive must agree proposed amendments before their incorporation into the Policy.

Date procedure was agreed by The Scheme Executive:

Date of review:

Person responsible for review: The Scheme Administrator

CONFIDENTIAL
THE SCHEME
COMPLAINT FORM

NAME:	DATE:
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ADDRESS: _____ _____

CONTACT TEL NO: _____

<p>DETAILS OF COMPLAINT: Where appropriate / possible please enclose all relevant dates, names, or documentation</p>
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FOR SCHEME USE ONLY:		COMPLAINT NO:	<input type="text"/>
DATE RECEIVED	RECEIVED BY	APPOINTED PERSON	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	

Complaint No:

THE SCHEME

Confidential Complaint Monitoring Form

COMPLAINANT NAME: _____

BRIEF SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT

DETAILS OF RESPONSE / ACTION

Interviewed Response Stage Two Response Stage Three Response