

Tell us what you think



How to give us your
comments and suggestions
or make a complaint

We are always looking for ways to improve our services. To do this properly, we need your comments and suggestions, whether they are positive or negative.

If you think we have done something well, you should tell us about it so that we can carry on doing it, both for you and for other people. We always try to get things right first time but we know that sometimes this doesn't happen. If we get something wrong, we would like you to tell us about it so that we can put it right.

We want you to tell us when:

- we have done something well;
- you are unhappy with our service to you;
- we have failed to do something that we should have done;
- we were slow or late in doing something; or
- you have been treated badly by us or one of our contractors.

We also welcome any general comments or suggestions about our services.

You can tell us about these things by:

- writing to us at Westlea Housing Association, Methuen Park, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 0GU;
- phoning us on 01249 465465;
- e-mailing us at enquiries@westlea.co.uk; or

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- visiting us at our offices in Chippenham.

You can also find this information on our website at www.westlea.co.uk, where you can print off a complaints form or fill one in on-line to send back to us.

Who can complain?

Anyone can make a complaint about our services, whether you are:

- a Westlea resident;
- a leaseholder (where you own your home but pay us a service charge);
- a shared owner (where you own part of your home and pay us rent on the other part);
- an owner or occupier who is affected by our service;
- a supplier; or
- a partner.

How do I make a complaint

We hope that we can solve most problems quickly and easily by talking them through with you. We will tell you what we are going to do and if we cannot help you there and then, we will explain what you should do next. If we cannot solve your problem at this stage, you can make a formal complaint.

If you want to make a formal complaint, please contact the Customer Services Co-ordinator. You will need to give us as much information as possible about the problem – this will help us to deal with it



more quickly. Tell us what happened and when, if there were any other people involved and what you want us to do to put things right.

We will treat the details of your complaint confidentially. You do not have to fill in the complaints form if you don't want to. You can make a complaint by e-mail, by phone or in person.

Our formal complaints procedure

Stage 1

We will write to you straight away to tell you we have received your complaint and tell you who will be dealing with it. We will then write to you again within 10 working days to tell you what we are going to do to put things right. If the complaint takes longer than 10 days to deal with, we will keep you updated.

Stage 2

If you are not happy with our reply at stage 1, you can ask for your complaint to go to the Managing Director and Group Chief Executive. They will look at your complaint and reply to you within 10 working days.

Stage 3

If you are still not happy with our reply, you can ask for your complaint to go to the complaints panel. This panel is made up of three board members, who will make a

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decision about your complaint. Board members are not our paid staff, and some are our residents. We will invite you to the meeting and you can bring a friend or representative (for example, someone from Citizens Advice) with you if you want to. The panel will write to you to let you know their decision within 10 working days of the meeting.

What if I am not happy with the outcome?

At the end of stage 3, if we have not managed to sort out your complaint, you can ask the Independent Housing Ombudsman to look at it for you. The ombudsman is completely independent and will investigate complaints that we have not sorted out. They will decide what should happen next and we must do what they recommend.

You can contact the ombudsman at:
Housing Ombudsman Service,
81 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HN.
Phone: 0207 421 3800
Low-rate phone: 0845 712 5973
Fax: 0207 831 1942
Minicom: 0207 404 7092
E-mail: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

We can help you to contact the ombudsman if you want us to. You should follow our formal complaints procedure first, because the ombudsman will ask you if you have



done this before looking at your complaint.

What happens if my complaint is upheld?

If the ombudsman agrees with your complaint (this is called upholding it), we will apologise to you and make sure that we put things right. We will also learn from your complaint and make sure that we don't make the same mistakes again in the future.

How will you treat me if I complain?

We understand that we can learn from complaints, and want you to tell us if things aren't working. We promise to:

- respond positively to your complaint;
- investigate your complaint in a fair, sensitive and confidential way;
- take all complaints seriously;
- write to you to tell you what is happening and what we are going to do; and
- never treat you negatively in the future because you have made a complaint.

How you think we dealt with your complaint

We check how we deal with all complaints that we receive so that we can make sure we are getting it right. If you complain, we will send you a survey in the post so that you can tell us how well we dealt with your complaint. We use this information to improve our services further.

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