



Bield Housing & Care Guide to Making a Complaint



What you will find inside

We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.	3
What is a complaint?	3
What can I complain about?	4
What can't I complain about?	5
Who can complain?	6
How do I complain?	6
How to contact us	7
How long do I have to make a complaint?	7
What happens when I have complained?	7
Stage 1: Frontline response	8
Stage 2: Investigation	9
What if I'm still dissatisfied?	10-11
Care complaints	12
Reporting a significant performance failure to the Scottish Housing Regulator	13
Getting help to make your complaint	14
Data Protection and Freedom of Information Requests	15
Quick guide to our complaints procedure	16-17
Making a Complaint – Your Notes	18-19

Bield Housing & Care is committed to providing high-quality customer services

We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, *please tell us*. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about how we will handle your complaint and what you can expect from us.



What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

Failure to provide a service

Inadequate standard of service

Dissatisfaction with Bield policy

Disagreement with a decision where the customer cannot use another procedure (eg an appeal) to resolve the matter

Treatment by or attitude of a Bield Colleague

Bield's failure to follow the appropriate administrative process

Delays in responding to enquiries and requests

Unfairness, bias or prejudice in service delivery

Failure to follow procedures

Lack of provision, or the provision of misleading, unsuitable or incorrect advice or information

A repair that has not been carried out properly

Unacceptable behaviour by a Bield colleague, a committee member or a contractor

Your complaint may involve more than one Bield service or be about someone working on our behalf.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

Routine first-time request for a service

Request for compensation only

Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal

Disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (eg freedom of information and subject access requests), or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector

Request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts

Grievance by a staff member or a grievance relating to employment or staff recruitment

Concern raised internally by a member of staff (which was not about a service they received, such as a whistleblowing concern)

An Adult or Child Protection issue - ie concern about someone's safety.

Attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision

Abuse or unsubstantiated allegations about our organisation or staff where such actions would be covered by our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

A concern about the actions or service of a different organisation, where we have no involvement in the issue (except where the other organisation is delivering services on our behalf).

A dispute or disagreement with your neighbour

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by our services can make a complaint to us. This includes the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service (for example, a relative, friend, advocate or adviser). If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf, you will normally need their written consent. Please also read the section on **Getting help to make your complaint** on **page 14**.

How do I complain?

You can complain in person at any of our locations or offices, by phone, in writing, by email or via our complaints form on our website.

It is easier for us to address complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff at the service you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve the issue.

When complaining, please tell us:

- your full name, address, and contact details
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong; and
- what outcome you are seeking.



How to contact us

	Talk to us	Talk to colleagues at your scheme
	Call us	0131 273 4000
	Use our online form	www.bield.co.uk/compliments-complaints/make-complaint
	Email us	hello@bield.co.uk
	Write to us	Edinburgh 79 Hopetoun Street Edinburgh EH7 4QF

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about; or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two stages.

Stage 1: Frontline response

We aim to respond to complaints quickly (where possible, when you first tell us about the issue). This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you are not satisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to stage 2. You must normally ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2 either:

- within six months of the event you want to complain about or finding out that you have a reason to complain; or
- within two months of receiving your stage 1 response (if this is later).

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a stage 2 complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

Stage 2: Investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: where the customer remains dissatisfied after stage 1 and those that clearly require investigation, and so are handled directly at this stage. If you do not wish your complaint to be handled at stage 1, you can ask us to handle it at stage 2 instead.

When using stage 2:

- we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- we will confirm our understanding of the complaint we will investigate and what outcome you are looking for
- we will try to resolve your complaint where we can (in some cases we may suggest using an alternative complaint resolution approach, such as mediation); and
- where we cannot resolve your complaint, we will give you a full response as soon as possible, normally within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will tell you our revised time limits and keep you updated on progress.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have given you our final decision, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO are an independent organisation that investigates complaints. They are not an advocacy or support service (but there are other organisations who can help you with advocacy or support).

You can ask the SPSO to look at your complaint if:

- you have gone all the way through the Bield Housing and Care's complaints handling procedure
- it is less than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about; and
- the matter has not been (and is not being) considered in court.



The SPSO will ask you to complete a complaint form and provide a copy of our final response to your complaint. You can do this online at **www.spsso.org.uk/complain/form** or call them on Freephone **0800 377 7330**.

You may wish to get independent support or advocacy to help you progress your complaint. See the section on **Getting help to make your complaint** on **page 14**.

The SPSO's contact details are:

**SPSO
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS**

(if you would like to visit in person, you must make an appointment first)

Their freepost address is: FREEPOST SPSO
Freephone: **0800 377 7330**
Online contact **www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us**
Website: **www.spsso.org.uk**

There are some complaints about housing that have an alternative route for independent review. We will tell you how to seek independent review when we give you our final response on your complaint.

Care complaints

If your complaint relates to a care service we provide, you can choose whether to complain to us or the Care Inspectorate. You can find out more about their complaints procedure, or make a complaint, by contacting them.

The Care Inspectorate has several offices around Scotland. Please refer to: www.careinspectorate.com

Reporting a significant performance failure to the Scottish Housing Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues raised with them about 'significant performance failures'. A significant performance failure is defined by the SHR as something that a landlord does or fails to do that puts the interests of its tenants at risk, and which the landlord has not resolved. This is something that is a systemic problem that does, or could, affect all of a landlord's tenants. If you are affected by a problem like this, you should first report it to us. If you have told us about it but we have not resolved it, you can report it directly to the SHR.

A complaint between an individual tenant and a landlord is not a significant performance failure. Significant performance failures are not, therefore, dealt with through this complaints handling procedure. You can ask us for more information about significant performance failures. The SHR also has more information on their website: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/

Reporting a Complaint to the First Tier Tribunal Housing and Property Chamber

If you are a home owner and Bield Housing and Care provides property factoring and management services, you can complain to the First Tier Tribunal Housing and Property Chamber if you have exhausted the Bield complaint process. The First Tier Tribunal will ask for information on what Section(s) of the Code of Conduct for Property Factors your complaint relates to. A copy of the Code of Conduct is available online, from your local Manager or by e-mailing ownerservices@bield.co.uk.

www.housingandpropertychamber.scot



Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you. You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance:

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Tel: 0131 510 9410
Website: www.siaa.org.uk

You can find out about advisers in your area through Citizens Advice Scotland:

Citizens Advice Scotland

Website: www.cas.org.uk
or check your phone book for your local citizens advice bureau.

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille, please tell us in person, contact us on **0141 270 7200**, or email us at hello@biel.co.uk.



Data Protection and Freedom of Information Requests

Visit our website to find out how to:

- access your personal information
- access environmental information
- access information under the Freedom of Information Act



[www.bield.co.uk/
access-information](http://www.bield.co.uk/access-information)



Quick guide to our complaints procedure

Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by email or in writing.

We have a two-stage complaints procedure.

We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

If your complaint relates to a care service you can choose to complain to us or to the Care Inspectorate.

Stage 1: Frontline response

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on our complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it.

There are some complaints about housing that have an alternative route for independent review. We will tell you how to seek independent review when we give you our final response on your complaint.

Stage 2: Investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they need investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**.

We will confirm the points of complaint to be investigated and what you want to achieve.

We will investigate the complaint and give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.



Making a Complaint – Your Notes

Date	
What is your complaint?	
What do you want the outcome to be?	
How did you contact Bield?	
Who did you talk to?	
What did they say?	
Did they give you a reference number?	
When will they get back to you?	

For your notes



Bield Housing & Care

Registered Office
79 Hopetoun Street
Edinburgh EH7 4QF
Tel: 0131 273 4000

Craighall Business Park
7 Eagle Street
Glasgow G4 9XA
Tel: 0141 270 7200

1 Bonneathill Gardens
1 Caldrum Terrace
Dundee DD3 7HB
Tel: 01382 228911

Email: info@bield.co.uk
Website: www.bield.co.uk
Scottish Charity SC006878
Property Factor Registration
PF000146

