

SOUTHEND YMCA COMPLAINTS POLICY

APPLIES TO	HOUSING and OTHER SERVICES
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AUTHOR	Syrie Cox
POLICY OWNER	Board Member for Complaints (BMC) and Complaints Officer

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0. INTRODUCTION – POLICY PRINCIPLES

Southend YMCA is committed to delivering safe and effective services, which provide public benefit. To this end, it is our Policy (responsibility) to comply with the Inspection Frameworks, Quality Standards and the regulatory requirements which shape our work. We have made an organisational commitment to continuous improvement driven through reflective practice, informed by research and performance data.

In order to provide the best possible service, we listen to the views of our residents, service beneficiaries (who are children, young people, their families and carers) and third parties (such as our stakeholders, associated professionals and representatives). These views may be expressed in many ways: from involvement in the co-design and co-evaluation of our projects; providing informal and formal feedback through focus groups and surveys, through to making service requests and complaints which follow the provisions of this Complaints Policy.

We believe residents, service beneficiaries and third parties must be freely able to outline concerns and make complaints without reprisal, punishment, or fear of being treated differently. Southend YMCA regards feedback constructively, in a solution-focussed way, to inform continuous improvement.

Our ethically minded team operate principles of fairness, and empowerment when dealing with service requests and complaints. They should receive relevant training to support complaints facilitation and be aware of how unconscious bias and presumption may impede judgement and the fair resolution of concerns and complaints.

Implicit in this Complaints Policy is the need to safeguard children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Where a concern or complaint relates to a safeguarding disclosure Southend YMCA's Safeguarding Policies apply.

Trustees take reasonable steps to protect the charity's beneficiaries, staff, and those connected with the activities of the charity, from harm or discrimination. They have current policies in place that promote equality, diversity, inclusion, and safe and effective service delivery in line with legislation and regulation.

Charity personnel (whether paid, volunteer, or contractors) are aware of their responsibilities for operating within the spirit and the practice of the law, and for promoting a culture where respect and dignity is upheld.

Every day Southend YMCA makes decisions with staff in order to work diligently to provide the best possible service; however, sometimes we may not get it right. Therefore, we have a Complaints Policy and processes, which are time-bound. These policies involve 2 stages to take the complaint further, and all aiming for prompt resolution to the satisfaction of the complainant.

This Complaints Policy is a working document, and will be reviewed to ensure that is fit for purpose, represents the charity's ethos, furthers the requirements of regulators such as the Housing Ombudsman and enables consistency of operation and quality across the organisation.

1. DEFINITION of a COMPLAINT

1.1 Effective complaint handling enables our residents, service beneficiaries and third parties to be heard and understood. The starting point for this rests in a shared understanding of what constitutes a complaint.

1.2 A complaint regarding the provision of social housing is defined by the Housing Ombudsman in its 'Complaints Handling Code' as:

'An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'

For the purposes of all other Southend YMCA services this definition is adapted to:

'An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the charity, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting service beneficiaries (children, young people, their families, and carers) and third parties'

1.3 It is noted that residents, service beneficiaries and third parties do not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. And so, whenever a person expresses dissatisfaction, we must as a landlord or service provider give them the choice to make a complaint.

1.4 A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with this Complaints Policy.

1.5 From a housing perspective the Housing Ombudsman's 'Complaints Handling Code' requires landlords to recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. The principle of recognising a service request as distinct from a complaint also applies to all other services. So, what is a service request?

1.6 A service request is defined as a: *'A request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right.'* In respect of non-housing services this is modified to 'A request from a service beneficiary or third-party requiring action to be taken to put something right'

1.7 It is our Policy to note that whilst a service request is not a complaint, it may become so:

- 'Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly'
- 'A complaint must be raised when the resident (or service beneficiary) expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing.'

Furthermore, we must not stop our efforts to address the service request if the resident or service beneficiary complains.

1.8 An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where Southend YMCA as a landlord (or service provider) asks for wider feedback about our services, we must also must provide details of how residents, service beneficiaries or third parties can complain

2. EXCLUSIONS

2.1 It is our Policy as a landlord and service provider that we must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If we decide not to accept a complaint, we must be able to evidence our reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits.

2.2 This Complaints Policy sets out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated. These circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents, service beneficiaries and third parties. Acceptable exclusions include and may not be limited to :

- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.
- Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.

2.3 It is our Policy as a landlord or service provider that we must accept complaints referred to us within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident, service beneficiary or third party becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. As a landlord and service provider we must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.

2.4 If as a landlord we decide not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident, setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint. For other services, beneficiaries and third parties can be directed to service commissioners and grant funders in line with their requirements as detailed in contracts and funding agreements.

2.5 It is our Policy that we must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; and that we must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. Anonymous Complaints will be investigated as far as it is practicable to do so. And section 5 of this Policy deals with unacceptable behaviour and vexatious complaints.

3. ACCESSIBILITY and AWARENESS

3.1 As a landlord and service provider it is our Policy to make it easy for residents, service beneficiaries and third parties to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. We will consider our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of those who may need to access the complaints process.

In order to progress an equitable and inclusive complaints system residents, service beneficiaries and third parties, may require additional time, support, and resources to fairly engage. Communication can be facilitated through written, verbal, or pictorial information, the use of translation services, and the presence of an advocate or representative. Residents, service beneficiaries and third parties can also be provided with documents presented in a format appropriate to age, ability, language, and cognition.

3.2 Our residents, service beneficiaries and third parties must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. The principle routes are by email or text, by phone, through our website and in person. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord. This being the housing division lead with their complaint handler or other service divisions within the charity.

3.3 High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents, service beneficiaries, or third parties are unable to complain.

3.4 As a landlord, we must make our complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This details the two-stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. As a provider of other services this obligation also applies.

3.5 It is our Policy to publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Housing Ombudsman and the Housing 'Complaints Handling Code' by publishing key documents on our landlord's website area. The Policy will also be published on our services website area (as it affects other areas of our work). There are interaction opportunities with residents and service beneficiaries such as: assessment, induction, during programme delivery and support/case-work sessions where complaints documents and processes can be explained as well as displaying materials in public areas.

3.6 It is our Policy that as a landlord we must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the Landlord. The same principles will apply for our other services. We have policies in place to address any unacceptable behaviour as detailed in Section 5.

3.7 Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.

4. COMPLAINTS HANDLING STAFF

4.1 It is our Policy as a landlord and service provider to assign a team to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the Board of Trustees. The roles and associated responsibilities of the team are set out below and comprise the Board with a 'Member for Complaints, a Complaints Officer, Complaint Leaders, and Complaints' Handlers

4.2 The Role of the Board - The Board of Trustees ensure the organisation complies with:

- The Equality Act 2010, updates, and wider equalities legislation
- The provisions and processes in the Housing Ombudsman's 'Complaint Handling Code.' Providing monitoring and challenge, scrutinising the annual self-assessment to ensure compliance and make a statutory return
- The provisions relating to complaints as detailed within our Service Contracts and Grant Funding Agreements, any escalation processes and meeting any return requirements

To this end key staff have delegated responsibilities to ensure complaints mechanisms are in place and upheld

A complaint may point to a serious failing and the Board must report certain matters (serious incidents) to the Charity Commission making prompt, full and frank disclosure and to other regulatory bodies including the Housing Ombudsman as well as commissioners and funders (in line with the Terms and conditions of contract/grant agreements).

The Board will ensure that funding is in place to support the implementation of this policy and that this policy is reviewed and updated regularly. Complaints are seen as a core service and so we must resource to handle complaints effectively - prioritising complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints.

The Board has appointed from amongst its number a Trustee to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC'). Their name and contact details are listed in the appendices. Deputising arrangements are also in place

4.3 The CEO /Complaints Officer and Complaints leaders

The Board has delegated powers and responsibilities to the CEO to ensure that the Complaints Policy is implemented. The CEO acts as the Complaints Officer because they have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.

The CEO/Complaints Officer will be supported by the Senior Leadership Board forming a team of Complaints Leaders for the management, resolution, and monitoring of Complaints across operational divisions. These relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling and can act as Complaint Handlers across divisions alongside delegated named staff in their teams

They will ensure that our Policy is accessible to residents, service beneficiaries and third parties. That all know how to and are supported make a complaint. They will ensure records of complaints are created, and complaints investigated to enable resolution or escalation.

4.4 The Role of Staff

All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the Landlord or charity. Some staff within divisions will be trained as complaint handlers to support their divisional leads as required.

To support staff to comply with this Policy - they will receive support to do so through training, and ongoing management supervision. They will act positively when dealing with complaints, furthering an ethos of respect and tolerance so we listen and act on concerns.

Named staff 'complaint handlers' have facilitation roles in the complaints process and may conduct stage 1 and stage 2 meetings on behalf of the Charity. Tasks could include meeting with the complainant to understand their concerns and formulate the 'complaint definition' meeting with related parties, gathering relevant data, through to reporting on the outcome clearly addressing the required points, outcomes and remedies as set out in section:5 below

5. THE COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS

5.1 The early and local resolution of issues is key to effective complaint handling. It is our policy to implement a two stage complaints process to ensure the process is not unduly long which then delays access to the Housing Ombudsman or commissioners and funders.

5.2 We do not consider it appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion. And Residents, service beneficiaries and third parties must not be treated differently if they complain.

5.3 From time to time a complaint may be handled by a contractor or adjudicator and where this is the case these parties must abide by our Complaints Policy and supporting codes including the Housing Ombudsman's 'Complaint Handling Code.' Their involvement must form part of the two stage complaints process as set out below and not comprise an additional stage.

5.4 When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, as a landlord or service provider we must set out our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident, service beneficiary or third

party is seeking. This is known as “the complaint definition.” If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the person must be asked for clarification.

5.5 When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, we must be clear which aspects of the complaint we are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.

5.6 At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:

- deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;
- give the resident, service beneficiary or third parties a fair chance to set out their position;
- take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and
- Consider all relevant information and evidence carefully

5.7 Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in the Housing Ombudsmen’s ‘Complaint Handling Code’ the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint. And with regard to our other services, where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in contracts or grant agreements service beneficiaries will be informed and commissioners and funders if required).

5.8 As a landlord we must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review. A similar approach will be adopted for service beneficiaries and third-party complaints.

5.9 We will not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless there are valid reasons to do so. We have clearly set out the reasons below and it is intended that these reasons comply with the provisions set out section 2 of the Code. They are set out in Section 2: of this Policy.

5.10 A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, service beneficiary or third-party complainant, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.

5.11 As a landlord, and service provider we have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of our complaints process. For this reason, appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.

5.12 As a landlord and service provider we have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives as amplified at 5.13. We will evidence the reasons for putting any restrictions in place and will keep restrictions under regular

review. Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

5.13 Southend YMCA does not expect its staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour by complainants, this means behaviour which is abusive, offensive, or threatening and will act to protect staff from that behaviour. In appropriate circumstances, action may be taken to limit the contact of such complainants with Southend YMCA. This decision, and the form of any limitations, will be taken by the Chief Executive in liason with the Complaints Officer and the Board of Trustees.

5.14 Unreasonably Persistent Complainants - There are a small number of complainants who, because of the frequency of their contact, hinder consideration of their, or other people's complaints. Exceptionally, action will be taken to limit the contact of such unreasonably persistent complainants with the YMCA. The decision to do so, and the form of such limitations, will be taken by the Chief Executive/Complaints Officer and/or with the Board of Trustees.

6. COMPLAINT STAGES

STAGE 1

6.1 As a landlord and service provider we must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. We consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident, service beneficiary or third party is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.

In practice this means complaint handlers are trained to use compliant documentation which supports consideration of the above factors, including the offer of reasonable adjustments and potential resolutions.

TIMESCALES

6.2 Complaints must be acknowledged, defined, and logged at stage 1 of the complaint's procedure within **five working days** of the complaint being received

6.3 We must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within **10 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.

6.4 As a landlord and service provider we must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be **no more than 10 working days** without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.

6.5 If we inform a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman. Service Beneficiaries and associated third parties must be provided with relevant contacts as set out in contracts or funding agreements.

6.6 A complaint response must be provided to the resident or service beneficiary when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident, service beneficiary or third party.

6.7 It is our policy as a landlord and service provider to address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law, and good practice where appropriate.

6.8 Where residents or service beneficiaries raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued.

Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.

6.9 Complaint handlers must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the **completion of stage 1** in clear, plain language:

- a. the complaint stage;
- b. the complaint definition;
- c. the decision on the complaint;
- d. the reasons for any decisions made;
- e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
- f. details of any outstanding actions; and

details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.

STAGE 2

6.10 If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's, service beneficiary or third party's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of this procedure. Stage 2 is our final response.

6.11 Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined, and logged at stage 2 of the complaint's procedure within **five working days** of the escalation request being received.

6.12 Residents, service beneficiaries and third parties must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. As a landlord and service provider our expectation is to

make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident, service beneficiary or third-party complainant remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.

- 6.13 The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.
- 6.14 As a landlord and service provider we must issue a final response to the stage 2 **within 20 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 6.15 As a landlord and service provider we must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident, service beneficiary or third-party complainant of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be **no more than 20 working days** without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained
- 6.16 When we inform a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman. And when we inform a service beneficiary or third-party complainant they must be provided with relevant contacts as set out in contracts or funding agreements.
- 6.17 A complaint response must be provided to the resident, service beneficiary or third- party when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident, service beneficiary or third- party
- 6.18 As a landlord and service provider we must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law, and good practice where appropriate.
- 6.19 As a landlord and service provider it is our Policy that we must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the **completion of stage 2** in clear, plain language:
- a. the complaint stage;
 - b. the complaint definition;
 - c. the decision on the complaint;
 - d. the reasons for any decisions made;
 - e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
 - f. details of any outstanding actions; and
 - g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.
- 6.20 **Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.**

7. PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

7.1 Where something has gone wrong, it is our Policy that we as a landlord or service provider must acknowledge this and set out the actions we have already taken, or intend to take, to put things right. These can include:

- Apologising;
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
- Providing an explanation, assistance, or reasons;
- Taking action if there has been delay;
- Reconsidering or changing a decision;
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
- Providing a financial remedy;
- Changing policies, procedures, or practices.

7.2 Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident, service beneficiary or third party as a result of any fault identified.

7.3 The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident, service beneficiary or third-party where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.

7.4 As a landlord we must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies. And any direction given by Commissioners or funders in respect of remedies for complaints.

8. PUTTING THINGS RIGHT through data

8.1 As a landlord we must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:

- a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
- b. qualitative and quantitative analysis of the Landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the Landlord has refused to accept;
- c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;
- d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;
- e. any annual report about the Landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and

- f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the Landlord.

8.2 The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to our Board of Trustees and published on the section of our website relating to complaints. The Trustees body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

8.3 As a landlord we recognise:

- That we must carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.
- That we may be asked to review and update any self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation. And that;
- If we are unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, we must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website including a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.

9. SCRUTINY AND OVERSIGHT – CONTINUOUS LEARNING and IMPROVEMENT

9.1 As a landlord and service provider it is our Policy to look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.

9.2 A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which Landlords and service providers resolve disputes. And so, as a landlord and service provider we will use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery

9.3 Accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture. And so, we will report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff, and relevant committees.

9.4 In order to further points 9.1-9.3, we will appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for complaint handling: to identify themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.

9.5 In addition, a member of the Trustee Board has been with lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC') is responsible for ensuring the Board receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the Landlord's complaint handling performance and our complaints performance as a service user. The MRC will be supported by the Complaints team to

have access to suitable information and staff to perform their role and report on their findings. As a minimum, the MRC and the Board of Trustees must receive:

- a. Regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;
- b. Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;
- c. Regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman’s investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and
- d. Annual complaints performance and service improvement report.
- e. As a landlord we have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties reflecting the need to:
 - Have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;
 - take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and
 - act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.

11. APPENDICES

Refer to the Complaint Handling flow chart Document

You can contact us by:

Landline	Head Office: 01702 301301
In writing Or in person	Southend YMCA Head Office Newlands, 85 Ambleside Drive Southend on Sea Essex SS1 2FY
By email or mobile to The Complaint Team comprised of	Complaints Officer - Syrie Cox syriecox@southendymca.org.uk Tel: 07867 333518 Divisional lead Housing and Factifies (Landlord) – John levy johnlevy@southendymca.org.uk Tel: 07918 923270 Divisional lead Youth and Community Work - Tom Eatherton tomeatherton@southendymca.org.uk Tel: 07918 882938

	Divisional lead Health and Wellbeing - Eleanor King eleanorking@southendymca.org.uk Tel: 07867 379614 The Board Member for Complaints (MRC) davidbland@southendymca.org.uk
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OTHER EXTERNAL ROUTES

Social Housing Complaints escalating to the **Housing Ombudsman**.

Here is the link to the Complaints Page where you will find an online form

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us/>

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

The ombudsman offers a live chat function on the page. Available via the 'chat to us' during phone line opening hours.

Phone: [0300 111 3000](tel:03001113000)

line opening hours are:

- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9am - 5pm
- Thursday 9am - 3.30pm
- Lines are closed for staff training every Thursday from 3.30pm to 5pm.
- Calls are recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

Write to:

Housing Ombudsman Service

PO Box 1484

Unit D

Preston

PR2 0ET

Commissioners and Grant Funders

As these change from time to time and their direction differs the relevant contact will be provided through the Complaints Officer

Fundraising complaints

Contact the **fundraising Regulator** to complain about: the way you've been asked for donations or how fundraisers have behaved

<https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/make-a-complaint/complaints/>

Advertising complaints

Contact the **Advertising Standards Authority** to complain about: an advertising campaign you think is offensive, deceptive, or inaccurate, the amount of emails or mail you get from the Southend YMCA charity

<https://www.asa.org.uk/make-a-complaint.html>

Data Protection Act & Freedom of Information Act complaints

If a complaint relating to either of these matters cannot be resolved by the YMCA, then your complaint would need to be made to the Information Commissioner's Office at:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/complaints/>

Other serious complaints

Report serious concerns to **the Charity Commission**, for example if Southend YMCA as a charity is: not doing what it claims to do; losing lots of money; harming people; using assets for personal profit or gain; or is involved in illegal activity

<https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/>