

APPEALS, COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK

FACT SHEET



SGCH encourages customers and stakeholders to let us know their opinions about our service at any time.

Appeals, complaints and feedback are valuable and are used to improve our service delivery and customer service. We are committed to handling them fairly and openly. Customers and stakeholders are not disadvantaged if they appeal, complain or give feedback. See our Appeals, Complaints and Feedback Policy for full details.

What is the difference between appeals, complaints and feedback?

An **appeal** is when someone asks us to review a decision we made.

A **complaint** is when someone tells us they are unhappy with our service or products and expects a response from us. **Please note**, for neighbour disputes see our Anti Social Behaviour fact sheet, or to report a repair for the first time see our Repairs & Maintenance fact sheet.

Feedback is any other way that customers and stakeholders let us know how they feel about our service and products, including compliments and suggestions.

How can I lodge an appeal, make a complaint or give feedback?

People can appeal a decision, make a complaint, or give feedback by email, letter, telephone, through a form on our website or in person at any of our offices.

The timeframe to appeal a decision or make a complaint is generally limited to three months from the date of the decision. Feedback can be given at any time.

You can make a complaint or give feedback anonymously, although we will not be able to respond to them if you don't provide a way for us to contact you.

What decisions can I appeal?

You **can appeal** the following types of decisions:

- decisions relating to eligibility for social or affordable housing or housing assistance

- property offers
- property entitlements
- rent calculations or rent subsidy cancellations
- transfer applications
- requests to modify properties
- requests for alterations
- succession of tenancy
- tenant charges.

Decisions that **may not** be appealable include:

- matters which are the responsibility of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (the tenancy tribunal)
- decisions that are not directly related to the person
- our policies
- internal administrative or funding matters
- matters not relating to our housing services (e.g. tenant participation, support and referral services).

Who can lodge an appeal?

Only the person affected by a decision can lodge an appeal (or their representative who has Authority to Act).

Who assesses my appeal?

The person who made the original decision will not be involved in an appeal decision.

Appeals are lodged and managed by the Manager, Customer Feedback, an independent role within SGCH's governance structure.

What if I'm not happy with the response to an appeal?

If you are unhappy with the decision made or SGCH's response to your appeal, you can lodge a Second Tier appeal with the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) to review our decision.

For affordable housing, HAC only review appeals about eligibility, allocation or rent setting.

Appeals to HAC should be lodged within three months of our appeal decision.

HAC reviews our decision then makes a recommendation to us. We consider recommendations from HAC, and if we don't support their recommendation, SGCH will advise the Presiding Chair or Director of HAC in writing.

You can contact HAC on 1800 629 794 (free call service).

Who investigates complaints?

Complaints are directed to the Manager Customer Feedback who will formally lodge the complaint and manage the complaints handling process.

Any complaints about a member of the Executive Management Team, the CEO or a Director will be directed to the relevant person as explained in our policy.

If a complaint is made about an SGCH employee, that employee will not be involved in investigating the complaint.

What if I'm not happy with the response to a complaint?

Please see the list below of other avenues for assistance or complaint.

OPTION FOR COMPLAINT

Member of Parliament

Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Services (TAAS)

For information on tenants' rights and obligations, and guidance on dealing with common tenancy issues.

Community Legal Centres NSW

For information and referral and advice on legal matters, including tenancy issues.

NSW Federation of Housing Associations (FHA)

SGCH is signed up to the FHA's Code of Practice. Claims that we have breached the Code of Practice can be investigated by the FHA if the issue could not be resolved through SGCH's complaints process.

The Registrar of Community Housing

SGCH is a Community Housing Provider registered under the National Regulatory System Community Housing (NRSCH). The Registrar can investigate complaints made about our performance against the National Regulatory Code.

NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT)

For tenants who believe the conditions of their tenancy agreement have been breached.

NSW Ombudsman

The Ombudsman can handle inquiries and complaints about a range of human service agencies.

Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW (ADB)

The ADB can investigate complaints about the types of discrimination covered by the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act.

CONTACT INFORMATION

A list of local Members of Parliament can be found at
www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members

A list of local TAAS can be found at
<https://beta.tenants.org.au>

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