

Complaints Policy

Updated: May 2023

Our Policy

At Co-operatives UK, we always seek to provide a high quality service and to work in a way which is open, builds trust and is respectful. In order to do this we need our service users to tell us when we get things wrong.

We also know that, whilst we always strive for excellence, sometimes we will fall short of expectations. Any expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a formal response, whether or not it is justified, will be dealt with as a complaint. We will listen to complaints, treat them seriously, resolve them as quickly as possible and learn from them so that we can continuously improve.

This policy and procedure sets out how Co-operatives UK's will deal with complaints it receives.

Scope

Our complaints policy covers complaints about:

- the standard of service you have received
- the behaviour of our staff
- any action, or lack of action, by our staff or others engaged on Co-operatives UK business

Our complaints policy does not cover:

- dissatisfaction, comments or complaints about our policies, decisions or approaches to our work
- complaints about people we do not either employ or have a service contract with, however, in some circumstances we may ensure complaints about partners or members we work with are passed on to the correct individual for investigation
- matters that have already been fully investigated through this complaints procedure
- complaints which are vexatious, obviously unreasonable or abusive
- hypothetical or anonymous complaints (although you can request that your complaint is treated confidentially)

Resolving concerns and complaints

As with many other organisations, most concerns that are raised can be quickly resolved through either a telephone call or email to one of the Co-operatives UK team. We prefer to receive complaints in writing so if you make a complaint in person or over the phone you may be asked to follow this up in an email.

We keep a record of all correspondence relating to complaints and the final outcome. We may report data on complaints to our Board of Directors and members.

Anyone making a complaint can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times. We expect that you will also treat our staff dealing with your complaint with the same courtesy, respect and fairness.

This policy complies with the requirements of The Equality Act (2010) and is in accordance with Co-operatives UK's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

If you feel your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction you will be provided with an opportunity to escalate the complaint within a reasonable timeframe. The process for escalation is provided in the Complaints Procedure below.

Concerns relating to our Members

Co-operatives UK is a trade association for co-operatives which provides a range of services and support to our members. We do not have regulatory role and are unable to get involved in the running of our member organisations.

If your concern relates to one of our members, this should be raised with that member either as a complaint or via the member's own procedures. Please note that many member organisations will have their own procedures through which you can raise your concern.

You may raise it with Co-operatives UK who may decide to approach a member if we receive complaints or questions about their operations. Depending on the nature of a concern regarding a member, or we may be able to signpost you to another organisation or agency who can provide support.

If you have a concern relating to a member, you may be able to find support at one of the following:

FCA Mutuals Registry - <https://www.fca.org.uk/firms/your-membership/report-concern-mutual-societies>

Housing Ombudsman - info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk, 0113 111 3000

Ofgem (the energy regulator) <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/about-us/contact-us>

Citizens Advice - [0808 223 1133](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/web-chat-service/), <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/web-chat-service/>

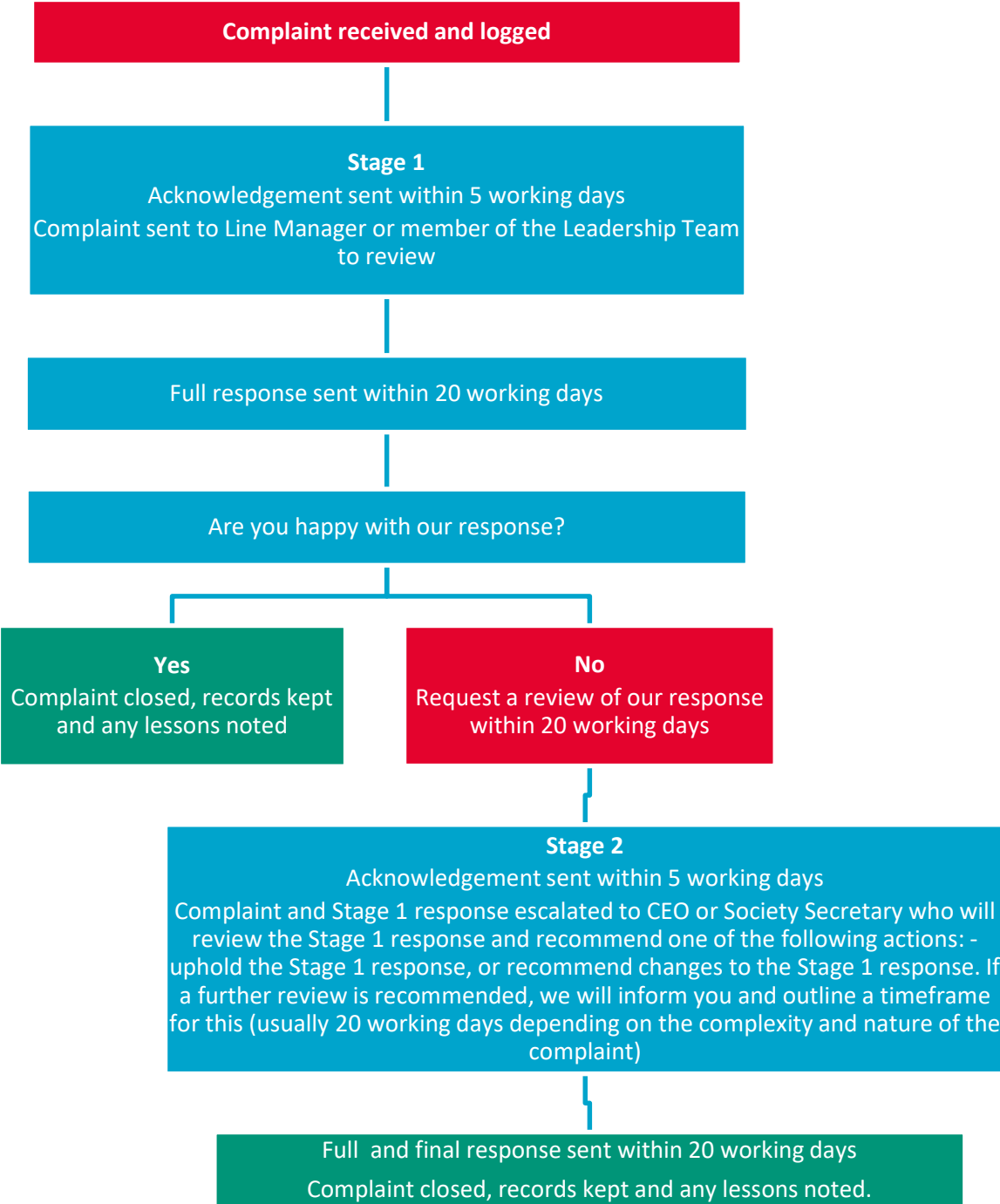
Advice Scotland - [0808 196 8660](https://energyadvice.scot/), <https://energyadvice.scot/>

Policy Owner

The current owner of this policy is the Membership Manager who is responsible for reviewing the policy at every three years from date of last approved version.

A central log of all complaints received will be kept by us and anyone involved in a complaint will retain all relevant correspondence until after all escalation routes have been exhausted, a final decision has been made and communicated (this is in line with our data retention policy).

Complaints Procedure Summary



Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

If you are unable to resolve your concern easily through a telephone call or email to one of the Co-operatives UK staff team you should email or write to the member of staff who dealt with you and their manager setting out the details of your complaint, the impact of the events and any resolution you would like to see.

In normal circumstances, you can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within five working days of receipt and to receive a response within 20 working days. If you are unsure which member of staff to write to, your complaint should be sent to the Membership Manager using the email address membership@uk.coop and making it clear in the subject line that the email relates to a complaint.

Our aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably, some issues will be more complex and, therefore, may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response within the above timescales describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint then you can indicate that you want the complaint escalating and for the response to be reviewed following our Stage 2 final procedure. The complaint will be escalated to either the Society Secretary or the CEO. You can escalate your complaint directly by contacting either the Society Secretary or the CEO and stating that you are escalating a complaint following an unsatisfactory response, or you can reply to the response you have received and request that it is escalated. You must ensure that your request for escalation is made within a reasonable time of the Stage 1 response being received; in normal circumstances a reasonable time would be deemed to be five working days and your request must state the reason why you are dissatisfied with the Stage 1 outcome.

In normal circumstances, you can expect your escalation to Stage 2 to be acknowledged by the Society Secretary or CEO within five working days of receipt and to receive a response within 20 working days. This decision will be final.

In a situation where your complaint is about the Society Secretary or the CEO, or they have provided the response at Stage 1 we may ask another member of the Leadership Team or Board of Directors to review the complaint and complete the Stage 2 procedure.