



Information for tenants

What you can do

If you are unhappy with the way the council has handled your complaint

▲ Photo

Getting results: a tenant's reconfigured kitchen after contacting the Designated Tenant Complaint Panel (see page 2)

East Devon – an outstanding place





Front page photo

A tenant's kitchen after contacting the Designated Tenant Complaint Panel. The tenant's personal circumstances and health meant that they needed their new kitchen's layout to be designed around their needs. They felt that the contractors hadn't consulted them fully. Their 'thank you' letter is below.

Handling complaints: a 'thank you' letter from a tenant

In 2013 we were informed we were having our kitchen modernised. You can imagine I was quite excited. I was able to pick colours but no one asked me about the design. I must admit I didn't know I had a say, so when the kitchen was finished, I had a cooker at one end and a sink at the other which was not suitable and a dining table in the middle.

I was reading the magazine and saw the telephone number for the Designated Tenant Complaint Panel, so I rang not feeling fully confident that I had reason to complain. I met with the panel and they helped me to decide, so wheels were put in motion and a year on I now have a kitchen I can work in safely.

I would like to thank the Designated Tenant Complaint Panel for all their support and also Councillor Phil Twiss for listening.

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1. What you can do

If you remain dissatisfied with our response following stages one and two of our formal complaints procedure you have the right to take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

You can do this by either:

- waiting eight weeks from the date of our final response letter and then approaching the Housing Ombudsman yourself
- contacting a 'designated' person'. These are:
 - the council's Designated Tenant Complaints Panel
 - a local district councillor
 - a Member of Parliament

2. About the designated person

There are three categories of designated person, listed on these pages.

The Designated Tenant Complaints Panel for East Devon District Council

This is a panel of tenants set up by the Tenant Representative Group and recognised by the Housing Review Board and Housing Ombudsman. To contact the panel please email dtcp@eastdevon.gov.uk or phone 01395 517453.

Any local district councillor for the district you live in

Here in East Devon there are 59 district councillors. However the Council has agreed that three will act as designated persons.

These are currently:

- Councillor Ian Hall
- Councillor Jack Rowland
- Councillor Paul Millar

You can approach them directly or you can approach your own local district councillor who will contact them for you. Contact details for all councillors are available at eastdevon.gov.uk or by phoning 01395 516551 and asking for Democratic Services.

Members of Parliament

All MPs are automatically designated persons and you can approach any or all of them. You do not have to approach a local MP but should you wish to do so the local MPs for East Devon are:

- For the East Devon Constituency:
Hugo Swire MP (Conservative)
www.hugoswire.org.uk
- For Tiverton and Honiton Constituency:
Neil Parish MP (Conservative)
www.neilparish.co.uk

Both can be contacted by:

Post: House of Commons
London, SW1 0AA

Phone: 0207 219 8173

Fax: 0207 219 1895

You can approach them directly or you can approach your own local district councillor who will contact them for you. Contact details for all councillors are available at eastdevon.gov.uk or by phoning 01395 516551 and asking for the member services team.

3. The role of the designated person

A designated person will help resolve the complaint in one of two ways; they can try and resolve the complaint themselves or they can refer the complaint straight to the Ombudsman. If they refuse to do either the complainant can contact the Ombudsman directly.

The designated person can try to put things right in which ever way they think may work best, but please note that a designated person has no legal authority over a landlord's policy or procedure.

Having looked at the complaint the designated person may either:

- consider that the complaint has been through all the proper stages, that it has been properly handled and the nature of the complaint suggests that there is little to be gained by pursuing it further
- consider that the landlord has not followed procedures correctly or that the procedures are inappropriate and it should acknowledge this and do something to rectify this as soon as possible
- consider that, even if the tenant or landlord is right or wrong about the facts of a complaint, they could have handled it better

They will let you know what they decide. If the problem is still not resolved following the intervention of the designated person either they or the complainant can refer the complaint to the Ombudsman. The law says that when the designated person refers a complaint to the Ombudsman, it must be in writing.

4. About the Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman is set up by law to look at complaints about the housing organisations that are registered with them. The service is free, independent and impartial.

On 1 April 2013 the new Housing Ombudsman Service was launched with an extended jurisdiction covering all housing associations and local authorities. A new Housing Ombudsman Scheme (setting out the Ombudsman's terms of reference) also came into effect on 1 April.

The Housing Ombudsman considers complaints using dispute resolution principles and encourages their use by both landlords and tenants so they can resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity. There is a lot of helpful advice on their website at www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman by:

Post: The Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HN

Phone: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

5. For further information

Please contact the complaints officer at
East Devon District Council.

Post: The Complaints Officer
 Blackdown House, Border Road
 Heathpark Industrial Estate
 Honiton, EX14 1EJ

Phone: 01395 517417

Email: complaints@eastdevon.gov.uk

To request this information in an alternative
format or language please phone 01395 517417
or email complaints@eastdevon.gov.uk



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