



# Complaint Handling Toolkit

## England, Wales & Northern Ireland

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APPROVED BY:

**OMBUDSMAN**  
ASSOCIATION

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Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

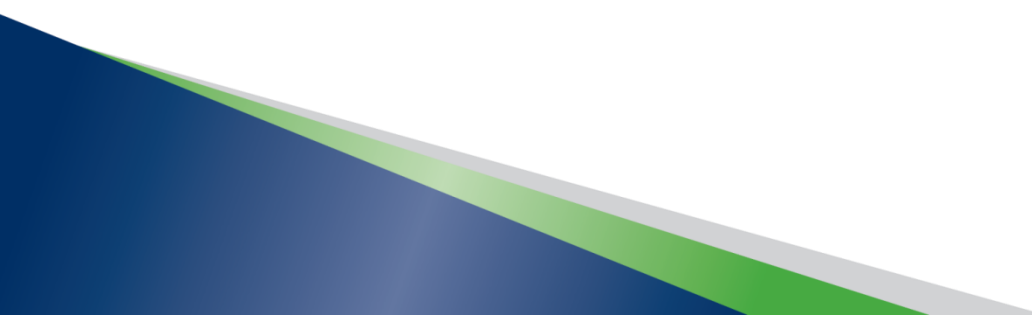
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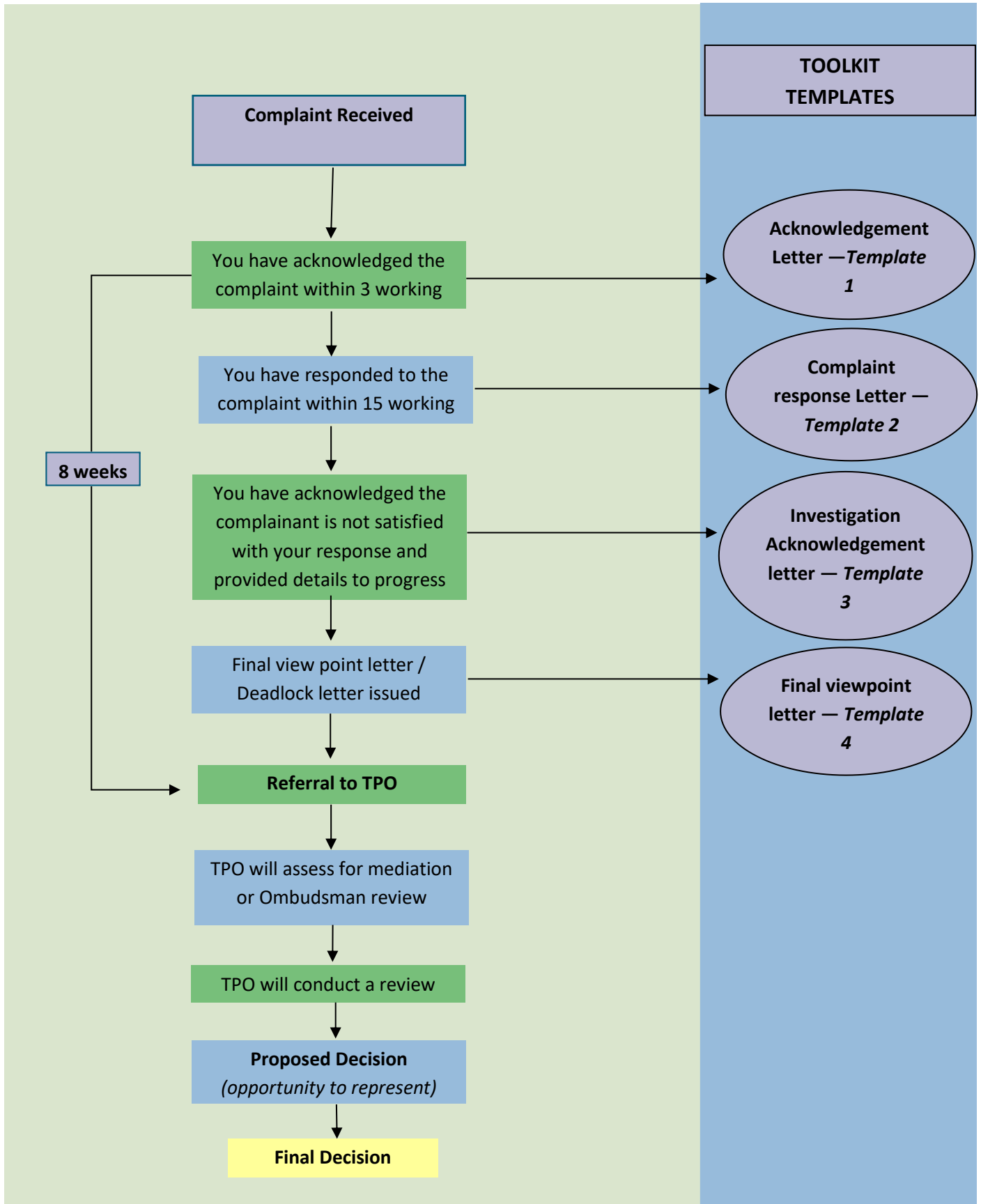
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## The Complaints Process – Timeline



## How to Handle Complaints...and Resolve Them

TPO has been dealing with disputes between consumers and property agents for 27 years. In that time, we have seen many complaints referred to us that could have been resolved by the agent had the agent acted differently. The following tips are based on that experience.

**Remember:** *Handling a complaint properly will reduce the chance of referral to the Ombudsman or the courts, save you time and maintain (and sometimes even enhance) your reputation.*

### ***Acknowledge the complaint***

Whether you think the complaint is justified or not, the consumer will always consider that it is. Acknowledge the complaint and explain what you will do next and by when. NEVER, EVER IGNORE A COMPLAINT

### ***Understand the complaint***

Take the time to make sure you fully understand the issues being raised. If you address all the issues at the outset you are more likely to resolve matters there and then.

### ***Be honest***

Everyone knows that everyone makes mistakes. If you have made a mistake, acknowledge and apologise for the error. Do not attempt to avoid, gloss over or omit issues central to the complaint.

### ***Be thorough***

Spend the time investigating the issues. Complainants will know when you have not investigated their concerns properly - this will cause further dissatisfaction and the dispute to escalate.

### ***Be polite and professional***

Regardless of the complainant's manner always be polite and professional when responding. Never use inappropriate or provocative language, or make personal allegations.

### ***Take complaints off-line***

Consumers may complain via social media platforms. Regularly check your social accounts and always take complaints off-line by acknowledging the contact and then directly contacting the consumer.

### ***Don't be afraid of complaints***

If you want to grow as a business, you need to know when you get it wrong! Make it easy for consumers to contact you and take active steps to change processes or behaviour where shortcomings are found.

# ADD COMPANY NAME AND/OR LOGO

## In-house complaints procedure -

We are committed to providing a professional service to all our clients and customers. If things go wrong we need you to tell us about them. This will help us to improve our service going forward and resolve issues as soon as possible.

If you have a complaint, please put this in writing (letter or email) to us. We will then acknowledge and respond in line with the timescales and stages set out below.

### Stage 1—Your Complaint

Please put your complaint in writing either by letter or email and address it to **xxxx** (including role). Please include as much detail as possible, including dates, names of any members of staff you dealt with, and where you are able to enclosing/attaching any supporting evidence.

Xxxx

Xxx

Xxx

Xxx

Email: xxxxx

*Remember to include details for complaints from a 3rd party or contractor if they differ from your usual complaints procedure*

### Stage 2—Our Acknowledgement

Your complaint will be acknowledged and we will start our in house complaints process

#### Timescale

Within 3 working days of receiving your complaint

### Stage 3—Our Investigation

Your complaint will be investigated and **xxxx** (relevant member of staff if applicable) will provide a formal written response addressing your specific complaints and proposing resolutions where appropriate

#### Timescale

Within 15 working days of receiving your complaint

### Stage 4—Final Viewpoint

If you remain dissatisfied, you should contact us again and we will conduct a separate review to take place by **[xxxxx relevant member of staff if applicable]**. This will outline our final viewpoint on the matter.

#### Timescale

Within 15 working days of receiving your request for a further review

### Stage 5—The Property Ombudsman

If our final viewpoint letter does not resolve matters (or more than 8 weeks has elapsed since the complaint was first made) you can request an independent review from The Property Ombudsman without charge.

#### Timescale

You must refer your complaint to the Ombudsman within 12 months of receiving our final viewpoint letter

The Property Ombudsman

Milford House

43-55 Milford Street

Salisbury

SP1 2BP

01722 333306

[www.tpos.co.uk](http://www.tpos.co.uk) [admin@tpos.co.uk](mailto:admin@tpos.co.uk)

If we have not addressed your complaints within eight weeks, you can refer your complaint to the Ombudsman.

*No charge will be made for any complaint we handle.*

Company details etc



# ADD COMPANY NAME AND/OR LOGO

## In-house complaints procedure

Template 1

Dear **[Complainants name]**

RE: **[Property Address]**

Thank you for your email/letter dated **[date]**. I acknowledge receipt of your complaint and **[company name/member of staff]** will provide a formal written response to your complaints by **[date]**. Should I need more time to investigate the issues raised I will contact you to explain why.

Yours sincerely

**[Name]**

**[Job title]**

Company details etc



# ADD COMPANY NAME AND/OR LOGO

## In-house complaints procedure

Template 2

Dear **[Complainants name]**,

**RE: [Property Address]**

Thank you for your email/letter of **[date]**, raising your complaint to us.

Having considered your complaint letter, I understand your specific complaints to be;

- A
- B
- C
- D

Based on the evidence available to me, I have concluded that....

***Please explain the company's position with regard to the complaints listed above. Include any resolution where possible.***

***You may like to enclose supporting evidence of your argument if appropriate.***

I hope this resolves the issues above. Should it be the case you are dissatisfied with this response you may escalate your response to **[member of staff name]** who will conduct a separate review of your complaint within 15 working days of your escalating this to us.

Yours sincerely

**[Name]**

**[Job Title]**

Company details etc



# ADD COMPANY NAME AND/OR LOGO

## In-house complaints procedure

Template 3

Dear **[Complainants name]**

RE: **[Property Address]**

Thank you for your email/letter of **[date]**, in response to our initial investigation into your complaint. We are sorry you are not satisfied with the outcome of our initial investigation. Your complaint will be independently investigated by **[name of member of staff]**. This review will result in a final viewpoint letter/deadlock letter. **[delete if not the final stage]**. This will be provided to you by **[date]**.

Yours sincerely

**[Name]**

**[Job Title]**

Company details etc





# ADD COMPANY NAME AND/OR LOGO

## In-house complaints procedure

Template 4

Dear **[Complainants name]**,

**RE: [Property Address]**

Thank you for your email/letter of **[date]**, in response to our initial investigation into your complaint.

I understand that you remain dissatisfied with our position. Having thoroughly considered the correspondence to date, I understand your specific complaints to be;

- A
- B
- C
- D

Based on the evidence available to me, I have concluded that....

*Please explain the company's final position with regard to the complaints listed above.  
You may like to enclose supporting evidence of your argument if appropriate.*

This represents the final viewpoint of **[Company]**. I hope that I have been able to resolve the matter to your satisfaction. If, however, you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to refer your complaint to The Property Ombudsman, details of which can be found below.

The Property Ombudsman  
Milford House  
43-55 Milford Street  
Salisbury  
SP1 2BP  
01722 333 306  
[admin@tpos.co.uk](mailto:admin@tpos.co.uk)  
[www.tpos.co.uk](http://www.tpos.co.uk)

Please be aware that you have up to **12 months** from the date of this email/letter to refer your complaint to the Ombudsman in writing, although it is preferable that you do so as soon as possible if you wish to pursue this matter further. I have enclosed The Property Ombudsman's Consumer Guide leaflet for your information.

Yours sincerely

**[Name]**

**[Job Title]**

Company details etc

