

Policy for Designated Persons

(Tenant complaints to registered provider landlords)

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The policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) Provide more opportunities for complaints to be resolved at a local level and to reduce the number of complaints that are escalated to the ombudsman.
- b) Provide councillors, registered provider landlords and tenants with clarity about the role of designated person.
- c) Explain how and when landlords and tenants can identify a designated person

Resolving complaints at a local level

The designated person will use their wider powers of persuasion and constructive challenge to help landlords and tenants resolve complaints locally. They will try not to refer complaints to the ombudsman and must use their judgement to decide if referring a complaint to the ombudsman is in the best interests of the tenant.

(Generally the Housing Ombudsman will only consider complaints once the landlord's internal complaints procedure has been exhausted and which have been brought to the Ombudsman's attention within six months after the landlord's complaints procedure has been exhausted).

The role of facilitator

The Planning and Partnerships Manager (B&NES Council Housing Services) will facilitate the designated persons role by providing support for example by giving councillors an overview of registered provider services or giving complaints handling advice or contact information. The facilitator will not intervene or make recommendations on individual complaints.

The role of designated person

The role of the designated person is not to make a judgement on the complaint but to help the landlord and tenant find a resolution by providing a fresh and independent insight on complaints.

To help designated persons carry out their role effectively, the tenant sector, in collaboration with key housing partners, has produced a short, user-friendly guide. This free web-based guide clarifies roles and relationships and identifies helpful tips to support designated persons make the most of their new role. The guide, along with a list of frequently asked questions, can be found here: www.nationaltenants.org/designatedperson.

The designated person must handle the complaint with sensitivity to both landlord and tenant and use their wider powers of persuasion and constructive challenge to help landlords and tenants resolve complaints locally.

Where a designated person considers that they are unable to resolve a complaint locally and if a complainant wishes and authorises them to do so, they have the option to refer a complaint to the Ombudsman once the landlord complaints process has been exhausted.

Identifying a designated person

The council has identified councillors to be designated persons. The tenant can choose any councillor to act as their designated person. If the tenant does not have a preference for a particular councillor the tenant should contact their local ward councillor to act as their designated person. Councillors can be contacted by letter, phone or email [Ward Councillor Contact List](#). If the ward councillor has a conflict of interest or is otherwise unable to act as a designated person. The tenant may contact an alternative ward councillor however the tenant may not seek advice from more than one councillor at the same time.

When a designated person can be contacted.

The tenant can ask for the support of a designated person at any time during a complaint. The tenant will need to give their landlord the opportunity of resolving the complaint through their complaints process but can contact a designated person to assist them through the process.

For more information and advice please contact:

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