

What is a Designated Person? – taken from Housing Ombudsman website

Members of parliament (MPs), local councillors or Tenant Panels may receive housing-related complaints from tenants or leaseholders of a registered provider of social housing such as a housing association or local authority. They may then act as a 'designated person'.

This designated person role officially begins when a complaint has been responded to at the final stage of a landlord's complaints procedure, although MPs and local councillors can often be involved prior to this stage.

The role of the designated person is to help resolve the complaint in one of two ways:

- try and resolve the complaint themselves in any way they see fit
- refer the complaint straight to the Ombudsman if it has exhausted a landlord's complaints procedure.

The law (Localism Act 2011) says that when the designated person refers a complaint to the Ombudsman, it must be in writing. A designated person may also refuse to refer a complaint; however, we can still accept the complaint if this refusal is made in writing.

A resident does not have to contact a designated person or obtain a written referral or refusal of their complaint. They can refer the complaint to us themselves, but the law says that eight weeks must have passed from the date of the landlord's final response to the complaint before we can consider the case.

Although we can advise designated persons on good practice in complaint handling, we have no jurisdiction over designated persons and no authority to regulate or produce guidance for their selection, activity or conduct. If the problem is still not resolved following the intervention of the designated person either they or the resident can refer the complaint to us.

If you are an MP or local councillor and one of your constituents has contacted you regarding a housing complaint, you may find our fact sheet useful - see Helpful links. If you are a member of a Tenant Panel, you may find guidance from CIH and Tpas useful (see Helpful links).