

# Complaints Policy

Miles Platting, Manchester



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# 1 Aims

1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Jigsaw Homes Group customers (or their authorised representatives) and any person or group of people who are affected by an activity or service carried out by the Group can raise their complaint and have it thoroughly and effectively investigated and resolved in a timely manner. This policy outlines the way in which complaints are to be managed. It also sets clear guidelines and timeframes, helping you to understand the process when raising your complaint and what you can expect from us whilst we deal with your complaint. We follow the Housing Ombudsman Service's dispute resolution principles in our approach to resolving complaints; the principles are to put it right, be fair, and learn from the outcomes.

# 2 Scope

2. This Policy applies to all members of Jigsaw Homes Group.
3. Some services we carry out are contracted to or by us to deliver with partnership organisations; complaints about these particular services may go through different complaints processes.
4. We have specialist debt advisors for our customers as part of our Money Advice Teams. If you wish to make a complaint about money or debt advice services please refer to our separate policy - Complaints - Money/Debt Advice Policy.

# 3 Policy Statement

5. Here at Jigsaw Homes Group we are committed to providing an excellent service to our customers. However, we realise that things can occasionally go wrong. If this happens to you or if you feel our service is not up to scratch in any way then we want you to let us know and we will always try to resolve your problem as quickly as possible.
6. Customer feedback, including complaints, is very important as it helps us to learn and grow as a company, so that we can improve the service we provide to all our customers.

## 3.1. What Is a Complaint?

7. Complaints are different to everyday enquiries such as reporting repairs, rent enquiries or reporting anti-social behaviour issues. Everyday enquiries are not covered by this policy, but are covered by individual service areas' policies and procedures and these are available on request.
8. A complaint within this policy is defined as:
9. *'An expression of dissatisfaction about a Jigsaw Homes Group action, lack of action, or standards of service; where an initial response has not proven satisfactory'*.

### 3.2. Who Can Make a Complaint?

10. A complaint can be raised to Jigsaw Homes Group by any person or group of people affected by an activity or service provided by the Group including:
  - Current tenants/licensees and members of their households
  - Former tenants/licensees
  - Housing applicants
  - Leaseholders
  - MPs and Councillors
  - Advocates of the complainant such as friends, relatives or other representatives (prior written consent from the complainant is required)
  - Residents of Group neighbourhoods/those who have been affected by Group activities and services in the locality
  - Clients/customers for some contracted services (some contracted services are not covered by this policy)
  - This policy applies to customers living in properties let through the Homes for All Scheme. It does not apply to landlords who let homes through the scheme. Landlord disputes should be initially directed to Aksa Homes and where a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, to our Group Legal Services Team.
11. This Policy applies to complaints against external contractors and external service providers acting on our behalf.

### 3.3. Exceptions

12. There are some circumstances where we will not accept a formal complaint. However, in some of these circumstances we may internally investigate to ensure we continue to provide the best possible service. Such circumstances include:
  - Anonymous complaints
  - Complaints raised on behalf of a customer without their authority
  - Complaints that have previously been fully investigated in-line with this policy
  - Where you are telling us about a problem for the very first time (except where the complaint concerns the behaviour of a member of staff)
  - Where you are asking for clarity of our policies and procedures
  - Where you wish to complain about a company policy; we can investigate whether a policy has been followed, but we will not accept a complaint about the policy itself

- Insurance claims, these will be handed to our insurers or our Insurance Team
- Where the issue took place more than 6 months ago
- Reports of anti-social behaviour (please refer to our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy instead)
- Reporting a repair for the first time
- Service charges/rent (We will accept complaints about the quality or frequency of work paid for via service charges)
- Complaints concerning the level of rent or service charge or the amount of the rent or service charge increase
- Where we have special arrangements in place with a customer, in line with our Unreasonable Behaviour Policy
- Complaints which are being pursued in an unreasonable manner including frivolous or vexatious complaints
- Where the complainant has stated they intend to seek legal advice, or have been the subject of legal proceedings and has had the opportunity to raise the subject matter of the complaint as part of those proceedings
- Demoted tenancy appeals
- Temporary business or service closures/outages (including digital services) due to unforeseen circumstances or logistical reasons
- There are separate complaints policies for certain specific services

13. There may be other circumstances where it is not appropriate to follow this complaints policy - for example, where a complaint relates to a Right to Buy or Right to Acquire process. In these circumstances the Chief Executive's Department will contact you in writing to explain why the complaint cannot be considered under this policy; they will also signpost you to the most appropriate service or team to progress the matter in the suitable way.

### **3.4. How a Complaint Can Be Made**

14. We are happy to receive your complaint in a variety of ways to suit you. You can log a complaint by:

- Calling us
- Visiting us in person
- Emailing or writing to us
- Our online website contact form
- Social media

### 3.5. Help in Making a Complaint

15. If you are struggling to make your complaint and would like some help to do so, we have specific procedures and support measures which have been developed with our customers, to ensure that it's easy to make a complaint and extra support is provided where needed. Please contact the Chief Executive's Department for more information.

### 3.6. Complaint Timescales

16. We aim to respond to complaints promptly; our timescales are explained further in this policy under the relevant headings. Sometimes it may not be possible to respond fully to a complaint within these timescales, but we will always keep you informed of any changes and advise you when you can expect a reply.

### 3.7. Complaints Process

17. Here at Jigsaw Homes Group all our frontline staff are able to help customers who want to make a complaint, if they can't help a customer themselves they will help the customer find someone who can. We have developed a simple three-step process for resolving customer complaints with the emphasis on putting things right.

#### 'Put It Right'

18. When you first tell us that you are unhappy with Jigsaw Homes Group, our priority is to put things right for you. Our 'Put It Right' step is about finding a quick and effective solution without the need for lengthy investigations, we take this approach first as our customers have told us they prefer us resolving problems in this way. We will agree with you reasonable outcomes and always inform you of any associated timescale.
19. If we are able to Put It Right for you at this point we will class your complaint as resolved and therefore no further action will be required.
20. As this is the first opportunity for us to resolve your complaint we expect the majority of complaints to be resolved at this stage. However if you tell us we haven't Put It Right to your satisfaction, we will inform you of the next steps in-line with this policy.

#### 'Investigate It'

21. If we have been unable to put your complaint right, you can ask us to move your complaint to the next step. This step is a full investigation and will be carried out by our Chief Executive's Department. They will work with a senior manager in the relevant department to try to resolve your complaint. They will acknowledge your complaint in writing, then investigate and respond to you within ten working days. If they need more time to investigate your complaint they will always keep you informed along with the reason why and when you can expect an update.

## ‘Review It’

22. If after your complaint has been investigated, you are unhappy with how your complaint has been investigated, you can request a formal review of your complaint. In order for us to move your complaint to this step you must explain how you meet one or more of the three criteria below. You will also be expected to provide us with any evidence to support your ‘Review It’ request; this may be photographic evidence or written correspondence. You will need to make this request within one month of your final ‘Investigate it’ response letter being sent to you.
23. ‘Review It’ Criteria:
1. All or some of the points raised as part of your complaint have not been investigated or, responded to as part of the ‘Investigate It’ step
  2. All or some of the agreed actions have not been carried out, or carried out to a less than satisfactory standard within the agreed timescales
  3. Jigsaw Homes Group have failed to respond to your complaint within the agreed timescale set by our policy; or agreed by the investigating manager where additional time was required
24. In addition the Group reserves the right not to hold a meeting to review a case where the agreed actions to put things right have been completed or if the complaint is vexatious.
25. Your request will initially be handled by the Chief Executive’s Department who will consider whether your request qualifies to be moved to the ‘Review It’ step. They will respond to you within five working days of receiving your request. However, there may be some times when we can quickly resolve the issue without the need for a full review; we will take this approach where appropriate.
26. If your request for a ‘Review It’ is rejected we will write to you within five working days of receiving your request and provide you with an explanation for our decision. This will be the final response from Jigsaw Homes Group and the end our internal complaints process.
27. If your request is accepted two Executive Directors will be assigned to review the details of your complaint and why you were unhappy with our previous response. We aim for the review to take place within 1 month from accepting your review. The review panel will aim to respond to you within ten working days of the review with their findings and final decision, unless agreed otherwise.
28. ‘Review It’ is the end of our internal complaints process. If you are still not happy with the response you have received, information about further independent options are available on our website, or by contacting the Chief Executive’s Department.

### 3.8. Designated Persons and the Housing Ombudsman Service

29. You have a right to ask your complaint is considered by a ‘designated person’ when our internal complaints procedure is complete. A designated person may help

resolve your complaint in one of two ways; they can try and resolve the complaint themselves or they may refer the complaint straight to the Housing Ombudsman Service. Designated persons usually only consider complaints which are within the remit of Housing Ombudsman Service, so some of the services we carry out might not be considered by a designated person - an example of this would be some services we deliver as a contractor. Designated persons include:

30. • Members of Parliament
31. • Local Councillors
32. • The Jigsaw Rewards Designated Tenants' Panel
33. Our Chief Executive's Department can provide further information about Designated Persons on request.
34. Alternatively you can wait eight weeks from the date of your final complaint response from Jigsaw Homes Group and contact the Housing Ombudsman Service directly.

## **4 Monitoring and Delivery**

35. The Chief Executive's Department will monitor the delivery of this policy and it will be reviewed annually. We may review this policy sooner if appropriate, for example, if there are changes to legislation or business requirements.

## **5 Learning from Complaints**

36. Customer satisfaction is a key measure of our performance and throughout the Group we take a proactive approach to learning from any customer feedback, including complaints and compliments. We use feedback to shape our staff training programmes, policies and procedures. We do this to drive standards up and provide you with an excellent customer experience.

## **6 Legislation and Regulation**

37. Data Protection Act 1998
38. Equality Act 2010
39. Localism Act 2011
40. The Regulator of Social Housing
41. General Data Protection Regulation
42. Housing Ombudsman Service
43. Financial Ombudsman service
44. HCA's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard



## 7 Related Policies and Procedures

45. This policy has links with all Group Policies and Procedures.

## 8 Glossary

46. N/A.

## 9 Document Control

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Responsible Officer/s:	Sarah Chilton, Head of Customer Experience Adrian Felton, Head of Internal Affairs
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Approved by:	Jigsaw Homes Group Board
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## Creating homes. Building lives.

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