

Complaints Policy



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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 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.
2. We follow the Housing Ombudsman Service's dispute resolution principles and in our approach to resolving complaints; the principles are to be fair, put it right, and learn from the outcomes.

2 Scope

3. This Policy applies to all members of Jigsaw Homes Group.
4. 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.
5. 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

6. 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 and you are unhappy about our service delivery, then we want you to let us know and we will always try to resolve your problem as quickly as possible.
7. Customer feedback, including complaints, is very important as it helps us to learn and develop as a company, so that we can improve the services we provide to all our customers.

3.1. What Is a Complaint?

8. 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.
9. Sometimes customers tell us they are unhappy with something and just want us to put things right. These will usually be smaller issues that can be quickly sorted out.

We will always agree with the customer how this will be handled and what the next steps are.

10. A complaint within this policy is defined as:
11. 'An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents; where an initial informal response has not proven satisfactory'.

3.2. Who Can Make a Complaint?

12. 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:
 13. • Current tenants/licenseses and members of their households
 14. • Former tenants/licenseses
 15. • Housing applicants
 16. • Leaseholders
 17. • MPs and Councillors
 18. • Advocates of the complainant such as friends, relatives or other representatives (prior written consent from the complainant is required)
 19. • Residents of Group neighbourhoods/those who have been affected by Group activities and services in the locality
 20. • Clients/customers for some contracted services (some contracted services are not covered by this policy)
 21. • 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 Jigsaw Support.
22. This Policy applies to complaints against external contractors and external service providers acting on our behalf.

3.3. Exclusions

23. There are some circumstances where we will not normally accept a formal complaint (or parts of a 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 including petitions.
 - 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. We try to resolve first expressions of dissatisfaction quickly as informal complaints outside of this Policy 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.
- Where you have exhausted another Group Policy and had the opportunity for independent review through appeal. For example, Unreasonable Behaviour Policy, Data Protection Policy.
- Where you wish to complain about the terms of your tenancy agreement. We can investigate if the terms have been correctly interpreted, but we are unable to change the terms as this is a legal contract. For example, Right to Acquire eligibility.
- Insurance claims. These are handled by our Insurers or our Insurance Team.
- In some cases which relate to Health & Safety concerns. These may be passed to our Health & Safety team for investigation.
- Where the issue took place more than 6 months ago (it may not be appropriate to rely on this exclusion where complaints concern safeguarding or health and safety issue).
- 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. For examples of what we consider to be Unreasonable Behaviour, please refer to the Group's Unreasonable Behaviour Policy.
- We will suspend any complaint where legal proceedings have commenced. Once the legal proceedings have been concluded we will consider the complaint.
- 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.

24. There may be other circumstances where it is not appropriate to follow this complaints policy. If we do, for any reason, refuse to consider a matter as a formal complaint, we will always explain our decisions and signpost you to an appropriate service or team to progress the matter in the suitable way.

3.4. How a Complaint Can Be Made

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

- 26. • Calling us
- 27. • Visiting us in person
- 28. • Emailing or writing to us
- 29. • Social media

3.5. Help in Making a Complaint

30. If you are struggling to make your complaint and would like some help to do so, please contact us and ask for the Chief Executive's Department.

3.6. Complaint Timescales

31. 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

- 32. 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.
- 33. In most situations, the quickest and most effective way to resolve complaints or dissatisfaction for a customer is for us to work with managers in the relevant department to find an informal solution outside the formal complaints process.
- 34. If you remain unhappy with how your complaint has been handled, you can ask for your complaint to be escalated to the formal process under this Policy.
- 35. We have developed a simple two-step process for resolving formal customer complaints.

‘Investigation’

36. This step is a formal investigation and we will assign an independent investigating officer to work with managers from the relevant team to investigate your complaint for you. The investigating officer will investigate and provide you with a full written response, which will normally be sent within ten working days from the formal acknowledgment of your complaint. 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’

37. If after your complaint has been investigated, you are unhappy with how your complaint has been dealt with, you can request a review. You will need to make this request within one month of your ‘Investigation’ response being sent to you.
38. Your request to escalate to the Review step will be handled by a manager from the Chief Executive’s Department who will review the complaint handling and consider the reasons for your escalation request. Your request for Review will be responded to either by a manager from the Chief Executive’s Department or by a member of our Executive Management Team. The reviewing manager(s) will not have previously been involved in the investigation of your complaint.
39. We aim for the review to take place within 20 working days from accepting your review. The reviewing manager(s) will aim to respond to you within ten working days of completing the review (unless they contact you to agree otherwise) with their findings and final decision.
40. Our response at the ‘Review’ step is our final response to your complaint and 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 detailed below and also available on our websites.

4 Designated Persons and the Housing Ombudsman Service

41. You can ask for your complaint to be considered by a ‘designated person’ when our internal complaints process 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:
 42. • Members of Parliament
 43. • Local Councillors
 44. • The Jigsaw Rewards Designated Tenants’ Panel

45. 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.
46. Our Chief Executive's Department can provide further information about Designated Persons on request.

5 Complaint Remedies

47. There are a number of ways in which we may consider resolving customer complaints. These remedies include but are not limited to:
 - An apology and explanation
 - A specific action or correction of an error within timescales
 - A review of policy and procedures
 - Additional training for colleagues
 - Offering compensation, where appropriate, through our Group Compensation Policy

6 Learning from Complaints

48. Customer satisfaction is a key measure of our performance and we take a proactive approach to learning from any customer feedback, including complaints and compliments. We use feedback to help shape our policies and procedures and to continually improve the services we deliver to our customers.

7 Monitoring and Delivery

49. 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.

8 Legislation and Regulation

50. Data Protection Act 2018
51. Equality Act 2010
52. Localism Act 2011
53. The Regulator of Social Housing
54. General Data Protection Regulation

- 55. The Housing Ombudsman Service
- 56. The Financial Ombudsman service
- 57. Consumer standards - Tenant Involvement and Empowerment

9 Related Policies and Procedures

- 58. This policy has links with all Group Policies and Procedures

10 Glossary

- 59. N/A

11 Document Control

Responsible Officer/s:	Hilary Roberts, Group Chief Executive Sarah Chilton, Head of Chief Executive's Department
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