

# 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) 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.
2. This policy sets out what customers can expect when they complain, and information about how to make a complaint and how to progress it through the Association's complaints procedure.
3. We follow The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code in our approach to handling complaints; the principles are to be fair, put it right, and learn from outcomes.

# 2 Scope

4. This Policy applies to all customers of Jigsaw Homes Group and its members - Jigsaw Homes North, Jigsaw Homes Tameside, Jigsaw Homes Tameside and Jigsaw Support.
5. 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.
6. We have specialist debt advisors for our customers as part of our Money Advice Teams. If you wish to make a complaint specifically about debt advice services, please refer to our separate policy - Complaints - Debt Advice Policy.

# 3 Policy Statement

7. 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.
8. Customer feedback, including complaints, is important as it helps us to learn and develop as a company, so that we can review and improve the services we provide to our customers.

## 3.1. What Is a Complaint?

9. Complaints are different to everyday enquiries such as reporting repairs, rent enquiries or reporting anti-social behaviour issues. These are considered as service requests and will be handled in accordance with the policies in place for an escalated service request. Issues resolved in this way will still be logged for tenancy management and learning purposes.

10. Where substantial further enquiries or actions are needed to resolve the matter (such as looking into why a repair request was not actioned), or the customer requests it, the issue can become a complaint and will be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Policy. This does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be then addressed quickly if that is the appropriate way to respond to the issue.
11. A complaint within this policy is defined as:
12. *'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'.*

### **3.2. Who Can Make a Complaint?**

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

### **3.3. Exclusions**

23. The Policy will not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints. Consideration will be given to the individual circumstances of each complaint. There are however some circumstances where we will not normally accept a formal complaint (or parts of a complaint). In some of these circumstances we may still 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.
  - The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over 12 months ago (we will not exclude any complaints that concern safeguarding or health and safety issues).

- Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- 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 we have special arrangements in place with a customer in line with our Unreasonable Behaviour Policy. We will consider on a case-by-case basis whether it would be appropriate for us to accept a complaint. If the complaint is accepted, the terms of the Unreasonable Behaviour arrangements will be reflected in the way we respond.
- Temporary business or service closures/outages (including digital services) due to unforeseen circumstances or logistical reasons.

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 complaint, we will always explain our decisions and signpost you to an appropriate service or team to progress the matter in the suitable way including your right to take our decisions to The Housing Ombudsman.

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

25. We are happy to receive complaints in a variety of ways. You can raise a complaint by:
- 26. • Calling us
  - 27. • Visiting us in person
  - 28. • Emailing or writing to us
  - 29. • Social media.
30. Where a complaint is received via social media, it will be acknowledged using the same channel and referred to an appropriate person or team to help the customer make a complaint. If the complaint is made publicly - either via a comment on one of our posts, or on an individual's own post, we may ask the customer to send any confidential or sensitive information via private message. We may then also remove posts or comments that contain private or sensitive information or that could potentially put a customer at risk, such as publicly posting an address or phone number for data protection.

### **3.5. Help in Making a Complaint**

- 31. If you require support to raise your complaint please contact us and ask for the Chief Executive's Department. We will assess customer needs on the specific circumstances of each case taking account of the Equality Act 2010 and the Groups Service Adjustment Policy.
- 32. We will accept complaints from a representative dealing with a complaint on behalf of a customer providing appropriate consent is obtained. Appropriate consent will take account of the Group Data Protection Policy and General Data Protection Regulation.

### **3.6. Complaint Timescales**

- 33. We will respond to complaints within the timescales set out by The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. 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 agree with you any required extensions and when you can expect a reply.

### **3.7. Complaints Process**

- 34. The complaints process is a two-stage process designed to comply with The Housing Ombudsman Statutory Complaint Handling Code.
- 35. Customers can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any point during the complaint process. It cannot investigate the complaint whilst the complaint is going through our internal complaints procedure, however The Housing Ombudsman may be able to help the customer and the landlord reach a resolution.
- 36. Contact information for The Housing Ombudsman is provided under heading 'The Housing Ombudsman'.
- 37. All our staff will try to help customers who want to make a complaint, however if they cannot help a customer themselves, they will help the customer find someone who can.

#### **Stage 1 - Investigation**

- 38. We will acknowledge your stage one complaint within five working days of receiving your complaint.
- 39. Stage one complaints will be investigated by a service area manager or an officer from the Complaints Team within the Chief Executive's Department. The investigating officer will investigate and provide you with a written response, which will normally be sent within ten working days from the formal acknowledgment of your complaint. If we need more time to investigate your complaint, we will always keep you informed and agree any extensions with you along with the reason why and when you can expect

a response. The maximum extension time to your stage one complaint will be a further ten working days.

- 40. Where customers raise additional complaints during the investigation, these will be incorporated into the stage one response if they are related and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues will be logged as a new complaint.

## Stage 2 - Review

- 41. If after your complaint has been investigated, you remain unhappy with our response, you can request a review.
- 42. The person considering the complaint at stage two, will not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage one.
- 43. We will acknowledge your stage two review within five working days of receipt. The investigating officer will review the complaint handling and provide you with a final response to your complaint. We will normally send you a final response within 20 working days from the acknowledgement of your stage two escalation. If we need more time to investigate your complaint, we will always keep you informed and agree any extensions with you along with the reason why and when you can expect a response. The maximum extension time to your stage two complaint will be a further 20 working days.
- 44. Our response at stage two is our final response to your complaint and the end of the internal complaints process. If you are still not happy with the response you have received, you can refer your complaint to The Housing Ombudsman.

## 4 The Housing Ombudsman

- 45. The Housing Ombudsman service investigate complaints and resolve disputes involving the tenants and leaseholders of social landlords. Investigating these complaints is a free, independent, and impartial service.
- 46. The Housing Ombudsman contact information is detailed below.
- 47. Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET
- 48. 0300 111 3000
- 49. [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
- 50. <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us/>

## 5 Complaint Remedies

- 51. 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
- Changing policies, procedures or practices.
- Additional staff training
- Providing a financial remedy where appropriate, taking account of The Group's Compensation Policy and Housing Ombudsman Guidance on Remedies.

## 6 Learning from Complaints

52. 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.
53. We will publish an annual complaints performance and service improvement report on our websites to provide customers with information about the Association's complaint handling performance including any findings of non-compliance by The Housing Ombudsman and the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints.

## 7 Monitoring and Delivery

54. 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.
55. Complaints handling performance is reported weekly to the Group Chief Executive and quarterly to Senior Management Teams and Board.

## 8 Legislation and Regulation

56. Data Protection Act 2018
57. General Data Protection Regulation
58. Equality Act 2010
59. Regulatory Standards
60. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
61. The Housing Ombudsman Service
62. Consumer standards



## 9 Related Policies and Procedures

63. This policy has links with all customer facing Policies and Procedures

## 10 Glossary

64. N/A

## 11 Document Control

Responsible Officer/s:	Sarah Chilton, Head of Chief Executive's Department
Date of Review & Approval:	6th March 2025
Reviewed & Approved by:	Group Board
To be Reviewed Every:	Year

## Creating homes. Building lives.

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