



# Complaints & compliments policy

## 1.0 Purpose & Scope

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This policy sets out Notting Hill Genesis' (NHG's) approach to receiving and handling complaints and compliments, ensuring that they are dealt with in a consistent and transparent way.

We aim to give excellent customer service. We welcome both positive and negative feedback to help improve our services.

This policy applies to all complaints and compliments received from residents and other customers (including prospective residents), and third parties making a complaint on their behalf. This policy also applies to MP's and local councillor queries.

The policy does not apply to corporate services such as finance and HR, although we will follow the principles of the policy in responding to these.

## 2.0 Definitions

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- **Complaint** - 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.
- **Compliment** - an expression of gratitude for a positive experience.
- **Quick Fix** – a complaint which can be resolved quickly, usually within 48 hours and without the need for a formal response.

## 3.0 Making a compliment or complaint

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Anyone is able to express gratitude or dissatisfaction at services we provide.

Compliments and complaints can be made to any member of NHG staff in a range of ways including:

- in person
- by telephone
- by email
- by logging a complaints and praise case via My Account [www.nhg.org.uk/residents/my-account/](http://www.nhg.org.uk/residents/my-account/)
- by letter to Bruce Kenrick House, 2 Killick Street, London N1 9FL, or any other office

If you express dissatisfaction on social media we will contact you privately for further details and treat this as a complaint.

Anyone can make a complaint on your behalf. If a third party making a complaint on your behalf

is not an MP, local councillor or a person with power of attorney, we will require written permission from you before corresponding with them.

If you report, or we suspect, that abuse or neglect is taking place, we will refer to our Safeguarding policies and procedures. You can also report allegations of abuse and neglect directly to the local authority.

If we receive an anonymous complaint that raises a safeguarding or whistleblowing issue, this will be dealt with under the relevant policy. Our ability to fully explore and feedback on the issue may be limited due to the nature of anonymous complaints. We will record, investigate and monitor anonymous complaints in the same way that we treat other feedback.

Complaints should be made within a reasonable period which would normally be within six months of the matter occurring. In exceptional circumstances we may decide to respond to a complaint outside of this timescale.

Making a complaint will not result in any adverse changes to the services that you receive from us.

## **4.0 Exclusions to this policy**

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There are some instances where the issue that you raise will not be dealt with via the complaints process, these are:

- A complaint relating to an ongoing legal matter
- A first request for service, information or an explanation of our policies and procedures
- Reported cases of neighbour disputes, anti-social behaviour, hate crime or domestic abuse, unless you are complaining about how we have handled your reports
- A claim is being dealt with by our insurers. Liability claims should be referred directly to the NHG insurance team at [insurance@nhg.org.uk](mailto:insurance@nhg.org.uk). All decisions made by insurers are final and any complaint in relation to an insurance claim should be made to the insurers through their complaint process rather than to NHG
- A complaint about a Subject Access Request (SAR). This is dealt with under our SAR policy
- We have already responded to the complaint
- The complaint is being pursued in an unreasonable manner in line with our unacceptable behaviour policy.

## **5.0 Dealing with complaints**

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We will listen to your complaint and carefully consider your expectations and desired outcomes.

We will aim to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.

Where appropriate, compensation may be awarded in line with our compensation and goodwill gestures policy.

Where possible complaint responses will be made via your preferred method, followed by a written response. The written response will detail any follow up actions that are required to

resolve the complaint and a timescale given for when these are expected to be complete.

Written responses can be translated into a preferred form or language on request.

At any stage during your complaint, you can approach the Housing Ombudsman for independent advice around your complaint. Once your complaint has exhausted our internal procedure, you can contact the Ombudsman for a further investigation should you remain unhappy.

We are committed to ensuring that our staff are treated with respect. To protect our staff, we will not engage with any threatening or abusive behaviour. We will deal with any unacceptable behaviour under the relevant policies.

At Notting Hill Genesis we have a two stage complaints process.

## **Stage one**

At stage one, your complaint will be handled by your local officer. If your complaint is about your local officer, it will be handled by their manager.

We will contact you to acknowledge your complaint within two working days and will discuss with you the outcome you are seeking.

Where we can resolve your complaint within two working days we may, if you agree, close it as a Quick Fix.

We will investigate your complaint and respond to you with a formal written response within 10 working days.

If we are not able to resolve all of your issues in this time, we will send you an action plan within 10 working days detailing the timescales for completing any outstanding actions.

In exceptional circumstances the timescales may need to be changed, in these cases we will agree a new timescale with you.

If you are unhappy with the outcome at stage one, you can request a review of our response at stage 2.

## **Stage two review**

A request for a review should be made within a reasonable timeframe of either receiving the response to your complaint, or the end of the timescales for any actions detailed in the action plan. This would normally be within 20 working days.

If a change in the case means that it is now covered by the exclusions laid out in Section 4 we will explain to you why you are not able to escalate your complaint.

The review will be carried out by a manager who wasn't involved in the original decision. They will contact you to discuss your complaint, and the resolution that you are seeking, within two working days.

Your complaint will also be reviewed by at least one independent manager from another part of NHG who was not involved in the original decision.

In addition, you have the option to have your complaint reviewed by an independent reviewer from a pool of residents.

We will respond to you with a formal written response within 20 working days. The manager carrying out the review will also contact you to discuss the outcome and give you the opportunity to respond and ask questions.

In exceptional circumstances the timescales may need to be changed, in these cases we will agree a new timescale with you.

## External review

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint you have the option of asking an external body to review how we have handled your complaint.

This will usually be the Housing Ombudsman

We will co-operate fully with the Ombudsman during any investigation and comply fully with the resulting decision, which will be binding on us.

Where we are providing services on behalf of a local authority you can also complain to your local authority or consult the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This will apply to some residents in temporary housing and customers in receipt of services such as floating support or domiciliary care.

If your complaint relates to one of our financial products you can contact the Financial Services Authority.

If you are receiving services from a charitable foundation, you can refer your complaint to the Charity Commission.

If your complaint relates to service charges or rent adjustments, you can refer the issue to the First Tier Tribunal at any stage.

## 6.0 Our approach

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In writing this policy we have carried out a diversity and inclusion impact assessment. The assessment has identified a number of opportunities to improve access to the complaints policy which have been built into this review.

## 7.0 Reference

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The following NHG policies, procedures and documents

- Compensation and goodwill gesture policy and procedure
- Complaints procedure
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy
- Whistle blowing policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Unacceptable behaviour policy
- Subject Access Request policy
- The Housing Ombudsman Code of Practice and our self-assessment against this

Policies are available on our website [www.nhg.org.uk/publications/policies/](http://www.nhg.org.uk/publications/policies/) or by emailing [policy@nhg.org.uk](mailto:policy@nhg.org.uk)

<b>Approval date:</b>	09 December 2020
<b>Effective date:</b>	01 January 2021
<b>Approved by:</b>	Policy Group
<b>Policy owner:</b>	Head of Policy and Customer Experience
<b>Accountable Director:</b>	Business Improvement Director

### Version control

<b>Date</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Version</b>
April 2018	New Notting Hill Genesis policy created.	1.0
December 2020	Full review of policy in line with the Housing Ombudsman Code of practice	2.0