



# 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 welcome both positive and negative feedback to help improve our services.

We aim to always give excellent customer service but know that we don't always get things right. This policy outlines what our residents can do to let us know when they think something has gone wrong, and what they can expect from us in response.

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 queries from MPs and local councillors.

The policy does not apply to complaints about corporate services such as finance, IT and HR, unless it is directly related to the delivery of a service to a resident, 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. An expression of dissatisfaction does not need to include the word complaint to be handled in line with this policy.
- **Compliment** - an expression of gratitude for a positive experience.
- **Quick Fix** a low-level, single-issue which we have identified has the opportunity to be resolved to the residents satisfaction within 5 days without being logged as a complaint.

## 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 deal with the matter in line with this policy.

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.

We are committed to ensuring that no one is at a disadvantage when accessing our services, including making a complaint, and provide reasonable adjustments to assist residents to make a complaint, in line with our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy](#).

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.

In order for us to be able to fully investigate and resolve complaints they should be made within a reasonable period. This will normally be within six months of the matter occurring, although in exceptional circumstances we may consider a complaint outside of this timescale.

Where your complaint relates to services provided by a third-party managing agent, including housing co-ops or third-party freeholders, we may not be able to resolve your complaint but we will log this and support you to pursue this with the managing agent.

At any stage during your complaint, you can approach the Housing Ombudsman (or other relevant 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.

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 under this policy:

- A complaint relating to ongoing court proceedings where a Claim Form or Particulars of Claim have been filed
- A first request for service, including an initial enquiry about the cost or reasonableness of service charges or heating charges
- 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.

- A complaint about the content of our policies or procedures, these will be fed into future reviews of the relevant policy
- We have already responded to the complaint at stage 2 in line with our policy
- The complaint is being pursued in an unreasonable manner, including complaints containing offensive or abusive language, in line with our [unacceptable behaviour policy](#).

Where the issue you raised is excluded under this policy, we will confirm this in writing to you, with information about your next options.

## 5.0 Dealing with complaints

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When dealing with complaints we will follow the Ombudsmans principles of complaint handling, we will:

- deal with complaints on their merits
- act independently and have an open mind
- take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest
- keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter.

We will listen to your complaint and carefully consider your expectations and desired outcomes, taking into account your individual circumstances, and any service adjustments you need in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

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 for when these are expected to be complete.

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

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.

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

We will aim to resolve the issues raised in your complaint as quickly as possible. Where we can resolve the issues raised to your satisfaction within five days, we may, if you agree, log this as a Quick Fix case rather than a complaint.

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

### 5.1 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 investigate your complaint, considering all the information and evidence carefully, and respond to you with a formal written response within 10 working days. We will also contact you to discuss the outcome and give you the opportunity to respond and ask questions.

If we are not able to resolve all of your issues in this time, we will send you an action plan as part

of your formal response, within 10 working days, detailing the timescales for completing any outstanding actions. We will provide you with regular updates at agreed times on progress until these are completed.

In exceptional circumstances the timescales for responding may need to be changed. In such cases we will agree a new timescale with you, which will not usually exceed a further 10 days. If we cannot agree an extension period with you then you can contact the Ombudsman to challenge our proposed plan for responding.

If you raise additional issues during the course of the stage 1 investigation prior to us sending a response we will agree with you to either incorporate them into the ongoing complaint and address this in our response, or raise a new complaint.

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

## **5.2 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 stage 1 action plan. In order for us to be able to investigate and resolve any outstanding issues this would normally be within 20 working days.

Ideally, your request should set out why you remain unhappy and what you are looking for as a result of the review that wasn't provided at stage 1.

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 of receiving the review request.

Where we can resolve the outstanding issues raised to your satisfaction, we may, if you agree, respond to your stage 2 without carrying out a full review of your complaint. You will receive a formal written response confirming this.

As part of a full review 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 also have your complaint reviewed as part of the review by an independent resident reviewer from a pool of residents.

We will respond to you with a formal written response within 20 working days. This response will include feedback from any independent or resident reviewers. The manager carrying out the review will also contact you to discuss the outcome and give you the opportunity to respond and ask questions.

If we are not able to resolve all of your issues in this time, we will send you an action plan as part of your formal response, within 20 working days, detailing the timescales for completing any outstanding actions. We will provide you with regular updates at agreed times on progress until these are completed.

In exceptional circumstances, the timescales for responding may need to be changed. In such cases we will agree a new timescale with you, which will not usually exceed a further 10 days. If we cannot agree an extension period with you then you can contact the Ombudsman to challenge our proposed plan for responding.

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 and confirm this in writing.

## 5.3 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 extra care 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 Conduct 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 in your dispute.

## 6.0 Our approach

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In writing this policy we have carried out a diversity and inclusion impact assessment. There have been no changes as a result of this assessment.

## 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>Author:</b>	Customer Experience Manger
<b>Approval date:</b>	08 June 2022
<b>Effective date:</b>	1 September 2023
<b>Approved by:</b>	Policy Group
<b>Policy owner:</b>	Head of Policy and Customer Experience
<b>Accountable Director:</b>	Director of Customer Experience
<b>Contact:</b>	<a href="mailto:complaintsupport@nhg.org.uk">complaintsupport@nhg.org.uk</a>

### 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
January 2021	Clarification of external escalation for residents in Extra Care	2.1
July 2021	Further context for timeframes for making a complaint and requesting a review following feedback from ARCO	2.2
November 2021	Exclusion for legal proceedings changes to court proceedings	2.3
July 2022	Full review of policy in line with the Housing Ombudsman Code of Practice	3.0
June 2023	Minor additions for clarity following Ombudsman feedback, change of accountable director.	3.1
August 2023	Clarification of stage 2 process, quick fixes and extensions	3.2