



How can we make things better?

Making a comment or complaint

Customer leaflet (England)

We don't always get things right, and that's frustrating for you. Making a formal complaint means we will look into what's gone wrong and sort it out.

What can I complain about?

We define a complaint as:

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made. It could be about the standard of service, actions or lack of action. Whether that be by Home Group, our colleagues, or those acting on our behalf. And it could affect an individual customer or group of customers.

This means you can complain about things like:

- Failure to provide a service
- Our standard of service
- Treatment by or attitude of a colleague
- Our failure to follow Home Group's policies and procedures

Your complaint may involve more than one of our services or be about someone working on Home Group's behalf.

How can I give feedback?

You can give us feedback in the following ways:

- Speak to any Home Group colleague
- Visit our website: homegroup.org.uk/contactus
- Email us at contactus@homegroup.org.uk
- Write to The Complaints Team, Home Group, One Strawberry Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4BX
- Phone our customer service centre on **0345 141 4663**

If you're unhappy with any aspect of our service, the easiest way to deal with a problem is to talk about it. A Home Group colleague at our customer service centre will be more than happy to help. To talk through your concerns, give us a call on **0345 141 4663**.

Our colleagues are trained to handle concerns or feedback about our services, and can sort some problems over the phone.

Anyone can make a complaint to us, including a representative of someone who is not happy with our service. You can also seek advice from your local Citizens Advice or Housing Advice Centre throughout your complaint with Home Group.

We treat all complaints very seriously. If you do make a complaint, we promise that we will never treat you less favourably in the future.

If you are a victim of anti-social behaviour (ASB) we will take your report seriously. We have a specialist team trained to help you.

However, if you are not happy with how we've handled your report of ASB we will look into this as part of our formal complaints process.

What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint, and our complaints procedure is made up of two key stages:

Stage one

Contact us with your complaint **within 12 months** of it happening. We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, and at first point of contact if we can.

We will:

- Log and acknowledge receipt of your complaint within **five working days**
- Send you a response letter addressing your complaint within **10 working days**

In complicated cases, this can take longer. If this is the case, we will give you an explanation and a timeframe for when you will receive the response. This will not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason.

If you are unhappy with the response provided, you can ask for your complaint to be escalated to the next stage for review. You will need to do this within 10 working days of us writing to you with your response.

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service, (HOS), and although the HOS may be unable to carry out an investigation at this time, they may be able to provide you with impartial advice.

Stage two

During stage two a senior colleague will look at:

- The actions taken at stage one
- Any outstanding actions

It's not a repeat of the full investigation. We check the actions and decisions taken at stage one were thorough, reasonable and fair.

How long will this take?

We will confirm your complaint is being reviewed, give you timeframes and let you know which senior colleague is looking after you.

We aim to:

- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within **five working days**
- Provide a response addressing your complaint within **20 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged

In more complicated cases this can take longer to provide. If this is the case we will let you know when you will receive it. This should not exceed a further 20 days without good reason.

If you remain unhappy with our response, you can escalate your case to the Housing Ombudsman Service to request an external review.

This is the final stage of our complaint handling process.

Unfortunately, you can't take your complaint to stage two if:

- Your reasons are unrelated to the original complaint. If you have an unrelated issue about something that has gone wrong, let us know by making a new complaint. That way we can properly investigate it for you
- The complaint should not be looked at further because it would compromise legal proceedings to do so
- It has become clear that this complaint has previously fully exhausted the complaints process.

Discretionary compensation

If you ask for compensation as part of your complaint, this will be considered as part of our complaints handling process. If compensation is awarded and you have outstanding arrears and/or housing related debt, it will be offset against either or both. Any remaining balance will be paid to you in full.

There may be occasions, such as in the event of personal injury or damage to personal belongings where it is not appropriate to make an offer of compensation. These instances would be referred to our insurance team for consideration and handled outside of the complaints process.

Further steps if you are not happy

You may feel unhappy with our 20 day final response. If that's the case you can:

- **Refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service.** They look at complaints between customers and housing providers, like us. You can contact them if you have been through both stages of our complaints process and are still unhappy. You can ask that they conduct a full investigation into your complaint
- **Ask a local councillor or Member of Parliament** to consider the complaint for you
- **First tier tribunals** can resolve disputes between homeowners and ourselves. Find out more about First Tier Tribunals on the Government's website can also support homeowners

Some complaints fall outside our normal complaints process

- Our insurance team may handle reports about injuries or damage to property
- An appeal relating to the outcome of an insurance claim may be considered to see if there was a service failure not considered by the insurance claims process

- If you have a complaint about an event that took place longer than 12 months ago we wouldn't normally consider it. If you feel there are exceptional circumstances, please get in touch to discuss it further
- We are here to help. But we may refuse to deal with a complaint or deal with it differently if you act unreasonably
- A first time service request like a request for repair, or a complaint about anti-social behaviour. Of course, if you're not happy with how we've dealt with your repair or ASB report then please let us know by making a complaint
- Some policies and procedures have their own right to appeal. For example, if you aren't happy with your level of priority when applying for a home, you have the right to appeal outside our complaints process
- Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision at stage two

Translation service

Afghani (Pushto)

که اړتیا لری چې د دې کومه برخه وژباړئ ،
هیله ده زموږ له مرکزي دفتر سره اړیکې ونیسئ

Hindi

यदि आप इसमें से किसी अंश का हिन्दी अनुवाद चाहते हैं तो कृपया प्रकाशक से संपर्क करें।

Mandarin

如果您希望得到该文件任何部分的译文，
请与我们的总部联系

Somali

-haddii aad rabtid in qeyb ka mid ah
kan la tarjumo, fadlan la xiriir
daabacaha

Gujarati

જો તમારે આમાંના કોઈપણ ભાગનું ભાષાંતર કરવું
હોય, તો કૃપા કરી પ્રકાશકનો સંપર્ક કરો.

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس کے کسی حصے کے ترجمے کی ضرورت ہو تو براہ
کرم تاثر سے رابطہ قائم کریں۔

If you require any part of this document to be translated, please contact our registered office. Please let us know if you would like an audio tape or large print version of this document.

Contacts

Home Group
One Strawberry Lane
Newcastle upon Tyne,
NE1 4BX

Telephone: 0345 141 4663

Email: contactus@homegroup.org.uk
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