



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

We will:

- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within **five working days**
- Send you a decision or outcome letter addressing your complaint within **ten working days**

Sometimes, things can take a little longer to sort out. If that's the case we'll contact you with an action plan to put things right and keep you updated while we deliver that plan.

We want you to be happy with this action plan. This is why we will keep your complaint open until you are satisfied it has been sorted. When all the actions have been completed we will send you a stage one outcome letter.

We hope you'll be happy with our handling of your complaint. But if you do become unhappy, you can ask for your complaint to be escalated to the next stage. And/or you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice.

If you are unhappy with our plan to put things right, or the outcome of your stage one complaint, you can escalate your complaint to stage two (the final stage).

You will need to do this within eight weeks of us writing to you with your complaint decision or outcome letter.

We will ask you:

- What part of your stage one complaint remains unaddressed or outstanding
- What part of our response you disagree with and why
- What you would like the outcome of your complaint to be

You can let us know you want to go to stage two by:

- Telling the person who is dealing with your complaint

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 decision or outcome letter addressing your complaint within **20 working days**

More complicated cases can take longer than 20 days to sort. If this is the case, we'll be in touch with an updated action plan, and keep you up to date while we deliver it.

We will keep your complaint open until all actions have been completed. However, if you remain unhappy with our plan, 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
- You didn't let us know within eight weeks of receiving the complaint decision or outcome letter

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.

Further steps if you are not happy

You may feel unhappy with our 20 day decision response or our stage two final response (after the actions are completed). 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 councilor 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
- **Lease Advisory Service** can also support homeowners

Some complaints fall outside our normal complaints process

- We may need a little longer to look at your complaint. It could be because it's complicated or we need to work with other organisations. If there is a delay we'll explain why and when you can expect a full reply
- Our insurance team may handle complaints 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 six 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 xirii
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 ناشر 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
homegroup.org.uk/contactus