



Golden Lane Housing

working in partnership with menCap

Complaints policy and process

September 2020

Policy owner: director of operations

Quality services, healthy business, and new homes

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1. The purpose of this policy

- 1.1 This policy sets out how Golden Lane Housing addresses complaints and upholds its values, in particular those of inclusiveness and trust. This policy will be published on our website and is aimed at our customers. It sets out our approach to handling their complaints: which is to have a clear, simple and accessible process that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly. We aim to provide a high-level framework to support effective handling and prevention alongside learning and development. Complaints allow us to resolve an issue before it becomes worse.
- 1.2 This policy has regard to the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and the Regulator of Social Housing's Regulatory Framework.

1.3 Policy statement

We offer a range of ways for customers to express a complaint and we set out clear service standards for responding to complaints, as well as details of what customers can do if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint. To support transparency and better outcomes we will publish information on our website to inform customers about how we have used complaints to improve services including a statement on the number and nature, and the outcome of complaints.

2. Definition of complaint

We use the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint: 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Golden Lane Housing, its staff, or those acting on our behalf, affecting an individual customer or group of customers'.

2.1 Exclusions

We will accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so, examples are set out below:

- We will not usually consider a matter where the issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over six months ago. However, where the problem is a recurring issue, we will usually consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint as we feel that this will help to resolve the issue for the customer and provide a better outcome.
- We will not usually consider a complaint where legal proceedings have been started or are pending. However, we will ensure compliance with any pre action court protocols that require us to respond in a certain time frame.

- We will not usually deal with a matter that has already been considered under the complaints policy, or that is considered as vexatious or unreasonably persistent.

If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will provide an explanation as to why that is the case with reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process.

3. How we deal with complaints

3.1 Having a positive and friendly approach to complaints

We will deal with complaints promptly, politely and fairly. Basing our decisions on evidence and the facts of the particular complaint. Giving clear information on how decisions have been made and how they may be challenged.

4. Making a complaint

4.1 We have a customer services team who you can accept complaints:

- Telephone: 0300 003 7007
- Email: enquiries@glh.org.uk
- Send a letter to:
Customer services team
3rd Floor
Parkway Four
Parkway Business Centre
Princess Road
Manchester
M14 7HR

If you cannot make a complaint yourself, we can accept a complaint from someone you have appointed such as a friend, relative, advocate, appointed deputy or legal representative.

4.2 Stage 1- Make it right

We recognise that sometimes we get things wrong or don't meet the high levels of service that our customers expect.

4.3 We will:

- Try to resolve your complaint by telephoning you to see if we can put it right on the day we receive it.
- If we need time to look into it, we will write to you within 5 working days and let you know received your complaint.
- Appoint a colleague to assess and look into your complaint.
- Respond to you in full and in writing within a further 10 working days, or otherwise tell you when we will be able to have a response with you.
- Aim to conclude Stage 1 within 3 weeks, (15 working days).

4.4 We will also:

- Acknowledge where things have gone wrong and apologise for failures.
- Take action if there has been a delay.

- Manage expectations.
- Set out our understanding of any legal obligations and seek clarification if needed.
- Seek to find solutions for all parties and maintain a positive relationship.
- Offer compensation, on an evidential basis, where appropriate.
- Try to provide opportunities for customers to challenge adverse findings before a final decision is made.
- Learn from our mistakes.

4.5 **Stage 2 - Senior colleague review**

If you feel your complaint has not been resolved, you can ask to progress your complaint to **Stage 2**.

- Stage 2 will be dealt with by a more senior member of staff to the colleague who has dealt with the complaint at Stage 1.
- This will usually be a Manager or a senior colleague we determine as the most appropriate person to review your complaint. We will tell you who that is.
- Review and assess why the complaint has not been resolved.
- A written response will normally be provided to you within 20 working days and we will aim not to exceed 30 working days in total.

5. **Housing Ombudsman review**

5.1 If you remain dissatisfied with the way we have handled your complaint after **Stage 2**, you can ask a designated person to assist you in referring your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. Designated persons have no direct impact on our internal complaints procedure. Their role is to assist to resolve your complaint themselves or they can refer the complaint on your behalf to the Housing Ombudsman (which must be made in writing). A designated person can be an MP, a Local Councillor, or a tenant panel. We do not currently have a recognised tenant panel that acts as a designated person; however, you can find your local MP or Councillor on your local authority website. More information can be found in the factsheet for designated persons on the Housing Ombudsman Website

5.2 Alternatively, you can escalate your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman service eight weeks after you have exhausted our internal complaints procedure.

5.3 Visit the Housing Ombudsman's website or write to the Housing Ombudsman. Details are below:

[Housing Ombudsman Service](#)

81 Aldwych

London

WC2B 4HN

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

A list of MPs and councillors can be found at:

www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps

6. Learning from the outcome of complaints

We aim to learn from the outcome of complaints in order to improve the services we provide to our customers. We will do this by:

- Having systems in place to record and analyse complaints and their outcomes.
- Capturing and recording satisfaction levels on our complaints process and how complaints have been handled.
- Reporting to our board of trustees, leadership team and tenant group, More Voices, More Choices.
- Publishing useful information on our website.

7. Compliments

Golden Lane Housing colleagues aim to provide the best possible customer experience to you and when we get it right we would like to know what worked well or who was excelling.

If you want to compliment or praise anyone at Golden Lane Housing, you can contact us by:

Telephone: 0300 003 7007

Email: enquiries@glh.org.uk

Send a letter to:

Customer services team

3rd Floor

Parkway Four

Parkway Business Centre

Princess Road

Manchester

M14 7HR

8. Associated policies and processes

Colleague guidance on compensation
Equality Act 2010

MONITORING, APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Lead/author	Director of operations/director of legal and governance
Version number/date	Version 1 - 14 September 2020
Version notes	This is a new policy taking into consideration the Housing Ombudsman Code
Consultation	Colleagues/leadership
Equality analysis	None required - fully reflects Ombudsman Code - Customer Panel will be consulted on accessibility
Approved by/date	Leadership August/board of trustees September 2020
Policy review date	June 2023
Electronic file location	Current policies folder
Copy available from	Website/Intranet director of legal and governance