

Golden Lane Housing



Complaints Policy

June 2024

Complaints Policy

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1. The purpose of this policy

1.1 This policy sets out how Golden Lane Housing manages complaints upholds our values, of caring, honesty, listening, reliable and creative. This policy will be published on our website and is aimed at our tenants and 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 improving the way we do things. If we have made a mistake we will apologise and try to put things right.

Golden Lane Housing's objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties is:

- a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;
- b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and
- c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.

1.2 This policy provides that Golden Lane Housing will follow the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code which can be found on the website: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/> and be compliant with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards.

1.3 Policy statement:

We will offer a range of ways for customers to express a complaint or a compliment and we set out clear service standards for responding to complaints, as well as details of what tenants and customers can do if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint.

1.4 To support transparency and better outcomes we will publish information on our website to inform tenants and customers about how we have used complaints to improve services including a statement on the number and nature, and the outcome of complaints in our annual report.

1.5 The complaints policy, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme will be publicised to tenants and customers in multiple formats and as part of relevant correspondence.

2 Definition of a service request and a complaint

2.1 We use the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a service request: "A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints but must be recorded"

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 the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

2.2 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 twelve 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 We will deal with complaints promptly, politely and fairly. We will always have a positive and friendly approach to all complaints and we will ensure any conflict of interest is addressed.

3.2 We will make sure you have the chance to explain your position and reason for complaining.

3.3 We will consider the individual circumstances of each complaint throughout our review and before we make any decisions.

3.4 We will base 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

Our Tenant Experience team are the point of contact for all complaints:

- **Telephone: 0300 003 7007**
- **Email: enquiries@glh.org.uk**
- Send a letter to:
Head of Tenant Experience
Golden Lane Housing
Parkway Four
Parkway Business Centre

**Princess Road
Manchester
M14 7HR**

Whenever you express dissatisfaction, we will make sure you are given the choice to make a complaint if you wish. 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:

- Clarify the complaint points and our understanding of the complaint. We will also set out the outcomes that you are seeking.
- 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 we have received your complaint.
- Appoint a colleague to assess and look into your complaint in an impartial and balanced way.
- Respond to you in full and in writing within a further 10 working days.
- Agree an extension with you if circumstances mean that our response to your complaint will fall outside of the above timescales.
- 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 to put things right.
- Manage expectations with you.
- Set out our understanding of any legal obligations and seek clarification if needed.
- Include any additional complaint points that relate to your complaint whilst the investigation is still ongoing. If the additional points do not relate, if the response has already been issued or if it will delay the response then we will ask you to log a new complaint.
- Seek to find solutions for all parties and maintain a positive relationship.
- Offer compensation, on an evidential basis, where appropriate and in accordance with our compensation policy.
- Agree and make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010.
- Try to provide opportunities for tenants or customers to challenge adverse findings before a final decision is made.
- Learn from our mistakes and make changes to the way we do things to improve our services.

4.5 Stage 2 - Senior colleague review

If you feel your complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily, you can ask for the complaint to be reviewed at Stage 2.

- Stage 2 will be dealt with by a 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.
- They will review and assess why the complaint has not been resolved.
- A written response will normally be provided to you within 20 working days.

5. Housing Ombudsman review

5.1 We will provide details of how to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service following a stage 2 response and if we decide not to accept a complaint.

5.2 You can:

- Contact the Ombudsman for help if you do not receive a response to your complaint by sending a copy or providing details of the complaint you raised.
- Refer the complaint to the Ombudsman for formal investigation if you are unhappy with Golden Lane Housing Stage 2 final response.
- Refer the complaint to the Ombudsman for them to review if you are unhappy with our decision not to accept a complaint.

For a complaint to be investigated, the complaint must be referred to the Ombudsman within 12 months from the date of Golden Lane Housing's final response. Once the Ombudsman has completed their investigation, they will issue findings, known as a determination.

5.3 Visit the Housing Ombudsman's website or write to the Housing Ombudsman.

Housing Ombudsman Service

PO Box 152

Liverpool

L33 7WQ

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

6. Learning from the outcome of complaints

We aim to learn from the outcome and use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and 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 back on wider learning and improvements to our Board, Executive team and Tenant group, More Voices, More Choices.
- The Chair of the Housing and Property Service committee will have lead responsibility for complaints.
- Publishing useful information on our website.
- Carrying out an annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code to ensure our complaint handling remains in line with the Codes requirements and publish the outcome on our website.

7. Compliments

Compliments and positive feedback is an expression of satisfaction with the standard of service received from Golden Lane Housing, one of our employees or contractors. Golden Lane Housing aims 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 so we can do more. 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:
Head of Tenant Experience
Golden Lane Housing
Parkway Four
Parkway Business Centre
Princess Road
Manchester
M14 7HR

8. Training

8.1 All employees will receive training on managing feedback as and when appropriate in addition to general refresher training. The Head of Tenant Experience, supported by People and Culture Team, will provide ongoing guidance, support, and additional training.

9. Legislative or other Guidelines

- Complaints Procedure
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Unreasonable Behaviour policy
- Allocations Policy
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Golden Lane Housing Code of Conduct

- Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code
- GDPR Data Protection Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards

10. Roles and Responsibilities

The Director of Housing and Tenant Experience has overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this Policy and reporting on progress regarding assurance against the Complaint Handling Code and other information.

MONITORING, APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Lead Officer / Author	Director of Housing and Tenant Experience
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