



COMPLAINTS POLICY

REVIEW DATE: APRIL 2026



1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Community Gateway Association (CGA) is committed to providing an excellent service and treating customers fairly and with respect. We recognise that sometimes things go wrong, and when this happens, we will do our best to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.
- 1.2 CGA welcome and value all feedback regarding our services. Listening to our customers and taking appropriate action will help us to continually learn and improve the services we provide.
- 1.3 This Policy sets out our approach to dealing with complaints, how to make a complaint, what customers can expect when they complain, and how to progress it through our complaints procedure.
- 1.4 The Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) "Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard" standard states that "Registered providers must ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively and promptly." This Policy endeavours to meet this requirement.
- 1.5 The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code provides a set of standards for complaint procedures that housing providers are required to comply with. CGA are committed to adhere to this code.
- 1.6 This Policy aims to deliver on these commitments and ensure that we engage and listen to our customers at every opportunity.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 This Policy is designed to make it easy for customers to provide CGA with feedback about the services they receive, by offering a variety of ways for customers to get in touch with us.
- 2.2 Where a customer advises that they are dissatisfied with our service, they will be given the option to raise their concerns as a complaint.
- 2.3 Customers who wish to make a complaint will be referred to the Service Improvement Team to allow a full investigation to take place.
- 2.4 The Service Improvement Team will administer the full complaints process from receipt of the complaint through to identifying areas of improvement in service delivery.
- 2.5 We are sensitive to the needs of our tenants and will ensure that individual needs are always considered, tailoring our approach, and making reasonable adjustments to ensure all customers have access to our complaints service.
- 2.6 We will set out clear timescales for responding to complaints and provide guidance to customers on the next steps should they not be satisfied with the first stage resolution.
- 2.7 We will ensure that the complaints process is clear, simple, and accessible and that we investigate and respond to complaints in a timely manner, and in line with our Complaints Procedure. We will ensure that our employees receive appropriate training to enable them to effectively handle complaints.
- 2.8 We will publicise this Policy, details of The Housing Ombudsman, and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code on our website at www.communitygateway.co.uk

2.9 We will use feedback from complaints to improve our ways of working, ensuring that our customers' voice shapes the services we provide.

2.10 We will inform our customers on how we have used complaints to improve our services via newsletters, our website, and an annual service improvement report.

3.0 What is a Complaint?

3.1 CGA has adopted the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint which is as follows:

'As 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.'

4.0 How to make a complaint

4.1 A complaint can be made in person, via phone, email, letter, through CGA's social media channels or via CGA's website.

5.0 How complaints will be handled – Stage 1

5.1 When a complaint is received, a member of the Service Improvement Team will acknowledge the complaint within 2 working days, (working days are Monday to Friday 9am-5pm, excluding bank holidays).

5.2 The complaint will be assigned to an Investigating Manager who will respond to the complaint within 10 working days.

- 5.3 In some cases, this may take a little longer, but if it does we will advise of the reasons why and the timescale involved.
- 5.4 If a customer disagrees with our findings, a request can be made for the complaint to be escalated to Stage 2, which means the complaint will be reviewed by an independent Head of Service (Senior Manager).

6.0 How complaints will be handled – Stage 2

- 6.1 CGA aims to resolve complaints at Stage 1, however if the customer is dissatisfied with the response, they can request a review within 15 working days of the Stage 1 response.
- 6.2 The request for the complaint to progress to stage 2 will be acknowledged within 2 working days and passed to an independent Head of Service to investigate.
- 6.3 The Head of Service will provide a response within 15 working days.
- 6.4 In some cases, this may take a little longer, but if it does we will advise of the reasons why and the timescale involved.

7.0 The Housing Ombudsman

- 7.1 CGA are committed to working with customers to solve issues raised and we will try our best to find a resolution. Unfortunately, there may be occasions where the customer is not happy with the resolution provided, and in these cases the customer can refer their complaint to The Housing Ombudsman.

- 7.2 The Housing Ombudsman is an independent and impartial organisation which is set up to help resolve disputes between tenants and social landlords.
- 7.3 Customers can ask the Housing Ombudsman to investigate their complaint if we have been unable to resolve the issue/s raised during our two stage complaints process.
- 7.4 CGA will ensure customers are aware of The Housing Ombudsman Service, and their contact details during the complaints process.

8.0 Exclusions

- 8.1 There are some circumstances where we may not accept a complaint or progress a complaint through our process. These are as follows:
- Anonymous complaints;
 - Complaints raised on behalf of a customer without their authority (*We will make all available efforts to seek authority from the customer*);
 - Complaints that have previously been fully investigated in line with this Policy (*these will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis*);
 - Where a customer is making a service request. A service request is when a customer is telling us about a problem for the very first time such as a repair (*except where the complaint concerns the behaviour of a member of staff*);
 - Legal proceedings have started in relation to the matter being complained about. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court;
 - Where the issue took place more than 12 months ago (*unless the complaint relates to a health and safety or safeguarding matter*);

- Reports of anti-social behaviour – these will be referred to the Tenancy Management Team and handled in accordance with CGA’s Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (*except where the complaint is regarding the handling of the case*); and
- Reports that raise a safeguarding concern - these will be referred to the Tenancy Management Team and handled in accordance with CGA’s Safeguarding Policy.

8.2 Should CGA decide not to accept a complaint, we will provide an explanation of the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process, details of The Housing Ombudsman service and the right to take the decision to The Housing Ombudsman.

9.0 Responsibilities

9.1 The CGA Board and Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for the provision of adequate resources to enable full implementation of the Complaints Policy.

9.2 CGA will ensure that a member of the Board holds the role of ‘Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)’, and that detailed information is provided to the MRC to allow effective scrutiny of all aspects of CGA’s complaint handling. The MRC will be responsible for providing assurance to the Board that CGA is handling complaints appropriately and in accordance with the Policy.

9.3 CGA will ensure that a member of the Corporate Management Team is accountable for the organisation’s complaint handling service. This person will assess themes and/or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.

9.4 The Head of Service Improvement will be responsible for:

- Ensuring our approach to complaints is clear, simple, and accessible for customers.
- Appropriate management arrangements and procedures are in place to deliver the requirements of the Complaints Policy.

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1 The Corporate Management Team, CGA's Tenant Committee (Gateway Central) and the CGA Board will be provided with regular oversight of complaints received and their outcomes, including any decisions made by the Housing Ombudsman (where applicable), and any actions or decisions arising.

10.2 This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, with a full review taking place every 2 years, to ensure accuracy and that CGA complies with relevant legislation.

11.0 Data Protection

11.1 Personal data collected as part of the complaints process will be stored for 7 years.

11.2 Stored data will be reviewed monthly, and all personal data will be removed after 7 years unless the complaint is subject to an ongoing legal claim. In these circumstances the personal data will not be deleted and will be held on our systems until the matter has been fully resolved.

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