

YOUR GUIDE TO

Complaints



Community Gateway Association (CGA) is committed to providing an excellent service by treating tenants fairly and with respect. We recognise that sometimes things don't go as planned, and when this happens, we want to hear from you so that we can do our best to resolve the issues as quickly as possible.

We have a robust, comprehensive Complaints Policy in place to guide us, and guide you, through the process of submitting your complaint, so that you can be clear what's involved and what to expect. The Complaints Policy is available on our website, or we can mail you a hard copy upon request.

What you can expect from us

We respect our tenants' right to complain when we fail to provide a service that meets your expectations and our own high standards. We will always:

- Follow CGA's clear Complaints Policy
- Value tenant feedback
- Make the complaints process fair and easy to access
- Use feedback to improve our services
- Take urgent action where necessary
- Follow the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code
- Follow the Regulator of Social Housing's guidance

Is there a difference between informal feedback and a formal complaint?

Yes. When you contact us with feedback, you can either leave this with us informally as feedback, or we can raise your concerns formally as part of the complaints process.

A formal complaint will be thoroughly investigated in line our Complaints Policy and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code; you will be kept informed of the process, with clear deadlines; and given the opportunity to contest the first stage resolution if you remain unhappy.

Informal feedback does not follow this strict process; however, we will put things right and the recommendations you give us will be factored into the way we deliver our services.

Who will deal with my complaint?

Your complaint will be assigned to an Investigating Officer by our Service Improvement Team who oversee the full process – right from the receipt of the complaint through to learning the lessons of what went wrong.

How do I make a complaint?

You can make a complaint in the following ways:

- On our website: www.communitygateway.co.uk/complaints-and-compliments
- Email us: complaints@communitygateway.co.uk
- Phone: **0800 953 0213 (option 6)**
- Face to face at our offices: **Harbour House, Port Way, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston, PR2 2DW**
- In person when you're speaking to one of our employees at your address – they will escalate it appropriately
- By post (to the above address; make it out to the Service Improvement Team)

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community gateway

www.communitygateway.co.uk

What will we do with your complaint, once received?

We will follow our thorough Complaints Policy which sets out what we must do to handle your complaint fairly and promptly, making sure you're given all the opportunities you need to explain the problems to us in detail to an impartial Service Improvement Officer who is not connected to the CGA service or personnel to which your complaint relates. You will also be given further options to escalate your complaint, if you are not satisfied with the initial response.

1. If this is the first complaint you've made on this issue, then it is known as a Stage 1 complaint, and it will be acknowledged within two working days
2. The complaint is then assigned to an Investigating Officer
3. A response to your complaint will be issued within ten working days – if it's likely to take longer than this, we will let you know at the earliest opportunity, explaining why this has happened
4. You can either accept the findings detailed in our response, or you can challenge them by requesting (within 15 working days) that your complaint is escalated to Stage 2
5. A Stage 2 complaint will be dealt with by an independent Senior Manager who has not previously been involved in the complaint and is not connected to the service area your complaint relates to. They will review your complaint and notify you within 15 working days of their decision. If it's likely to take longer than this, we will let you know at the earliest opportunity, explaining why this has happened
6. If you are still not satisfied after Stage 1 and Stage 2, you can refer your complaint to The Housing Ombudsman:

- Online form: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/
- Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- Phone: 0300 111 3000
- Write to: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

The Housing Ombudsman advises that it can deal more quickly with emails and online submissions than it can with written letters.

You can also contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage of the process for advice and information.

Are there any scenarios where CGA won't accept my complaint?

We aim to try and resolve as many complaints as possible; however, there are a limited number of situations where it's not possible to pursue a complaint, for example, we cannot investigate complaints that are:

- 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 our 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)
- Reports that raise a safeguarding concern - these will be referred to the Tenancy Management Team and handled in accordance with CGA's Safeguarding Policy

We will review each request on a case-by-case basis, and we will explain our reasoning for refusing a complaint.

For more guidance and information about the complaints process visit our web page: www.communitygateway.co.uk/complaints-and-compliments


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