

## Complaints Policy

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<b>Approved by:</b>	Moat Homes Board
<b>Approved date:</b>	December 2023
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<b>Purpose of the policy</b>
The purpose of this policy is to assure you that we care about getting things right for our customers and have a structured process in place so that we consider complaints or service failures in a fair, consistent, open and impartial way in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and Health and Safety Executive. We will ensure that this Complaints Policy and information about the Housing Ombudsman is available on our website.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 We understand that complaints are a valuable form of customer feedback. Our aim is to resolve complaints quickly, and to use the data and learning from complaints to improve our services.
- 1.2 When you raise your complaint, you deserve the highest standards of service, so we make sure we meet the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and

the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards as they ensure we do right by you.

- 1.3 Our definition of a complaint is in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. The Ombudsman defines a complaint as:

*an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or a group of residents.*

- 1.4. You do not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. When you let us know that you are dissatisfied with our service we will ask you if you would like this to be treated as a complaint.

## **2. Scope of Policy and Exclusions**

- 2.1. This policy applies to anyone who has been affected by us, our homes or our services which includes:

- Current, former and potential customers (including shared owners and leaseholders) who live in our properties.
- Members of the public and anyone living in our communities
- Suppliers and contractors
- Partner agencies

- 2.2. Section 6 below explains the things we won't handle through our complaints policy.

## **3. Service Requests**

- 3.1. There may be times when an issue can be put right 'there and then'. This could be a missed appointment or repair delay, which can be resolved with an apology and by providing a new appointment. These won't be dealt with through our formal complaints process unless you ask us to do so or are dissatisfied with our response. We'll continue to address any service requests after we've logged a complaint.
- 3.2. Service requests will be recorded, monitored and reviewed so that we can identify any themes and make improvements to our services.

## **4. How to make a complaint**

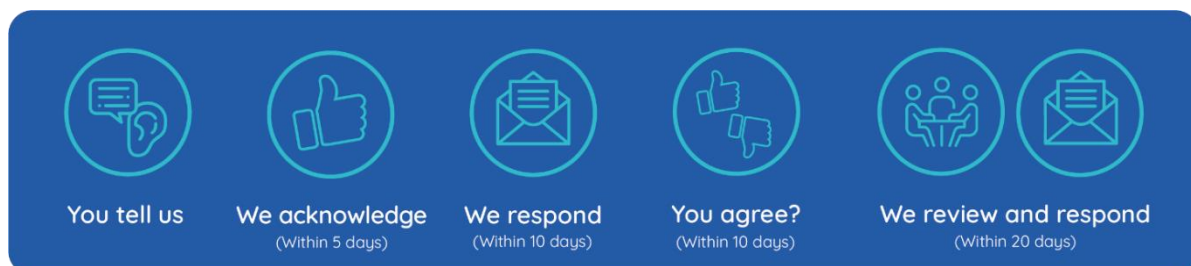
- 4.1. It would be great if you could let us know straight away when there's a problem, so we can get back on track quickly. You can contact us:
- By telephone: 0300 323 0011
  - By email: [complaints@moat.co.uk](mailto:complaints@moat.co.uk)
  - On our online portal: myMoat
  - On web chat [Moat | Contact us](#)
  - By making a complaint in person to any Moat employee

- Writing to us at: Moat, Mariner House, Galleon Boulevard, Dartford DA2 6QE

- 4.2. If you'd like to talk to us through social media, please remember that our pages are public. We want to keep your personal data safe so we might recommend that we switch to a safer channel. We'll still communicate digitally if that's what you prefer.
- 4.3. As long as you agree we'll accept complaints from anyone acting on your behalf and they can represent or accompany you to meetings. For example, this could be family members, MPs, the Health and Safety Executive and other organisations such as the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and Citizens Advice. It could also be someone with legal power of attorney, or acting as a Court of Protection appointed deputy, but we will need to see that you have authorised them to act for you.
- 4.4. We are happy to accept complaints from a group of customers, and to ensure we handle this efficiently, we'll ask for a single point of contact to be nominated.
- 4.5. If you don't want to tell us who you are that's fine. We'll treat anonymous complaints seriously too. We'll keep you updated as long as you tell us how to.
- 4.6. We want to hear from everyone. We'll make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your individual needs and comply with the Equality Act 2010. We'll provide an interpreter or British Sign Language interpreter if needed. Please tell us about any adjustments you need if we forget to ask.
- 4.7. We will regularly share information about your right to complain and access the Housing Ombudsman Service, through the website, leaflets, posters, newsletters and in relevant correspondence.

## 5. How we'll resolve your complaint

- 5.1. Moat has a two-stage complaint process. We'll start by listening to you to make sure we understand how the issue is affecting you and what you want us to do to put things right. We'll be clear, honest and committed to finding a resolution for you.
- 5.2. We'll make it easy for you to get a resolution to your complaint. Here's how it works:



- 5.3. When we receive a complaint, we'll send you an acknowledgment within five working days and confirm that we're working on a resolution. You'll have your

own dedicated Moat colleague keeping you up to date and they'll let you know the outcome within ten working days from our acknowledgement.

- 5.4. Our aim is to fully resolve your complaint. If you're not satisfied with the answer we've provided in response to your complaint, we will, if you ask us to, arrange for your complaint to be progressed to stage two. This complaint review will be done by one of our senior colleagues. You'll need to request this within 10 working days of us letting you know the outcome of your initial complaint.
- 5.5. We'll acknowledge your request for a complaint review within five working days of receiving it and provide our final response within twenty working days of that acknowledgment.
- 5.6. In some circumstances we may need to extend the timescales at stage one or stage two of our complaints process. We'll provide you with a clear explanation why, agree a communication schedule and provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details. Any extension should not exceed 10 working days at stage one or twenty working days at stage two without good reason.
- 5.7. If additional issues are raised during an investigation, they should be incorporated if they are relevant to the complaint being considered and a formal response has not yet been issued. If a response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the issues should be treated as a new complaint
- 5.8. If you remain unhappy with how we're dealing with or have dealt with your complaint, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any time if you're a tenant, shared owner, or leaseholder:

Housing Ombudsman Service  
PO Box 1484  
Unit D  
Preston PR2 0ET  
Tel: 0300 111 3000  
[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

- 5.9. If your complaint relates to a building safety issue, you can contact the Building Safety Regulator at any time during the complaint handling process.

Health and Safety Executive  
International House  
Dover Place  
Kent TN23 1HU  
Tel: 0300 790 6787

[Contact the Building Safety Regulator - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/contact-the-building-safety-regulator)

## **6. Things we will not handle as complaints**

- 6.1. We'll always try to help resolve service issues. Sometimes there will be issues that we can't deal with as a complaint. For example:

- When your complaint has already been handled through our complaints resolution process.
- If the issue occurred more than 12 months ago it may be difficult for us to reasonably investigate and resolve this for you.
- If you have started legal proceedings against us or there's an ongoing insurance claim
- If you have a neighbour dispute or anti-social behaviour issue, we'll support you through our neighbourhood team. If we fail to do this properly, you can make a complaint.
- Complaints about our policies are excluded where there has not been a service failure; these are treated as policy feedback and passed to the policy owner for consideration. Complaints about how a policy has been applied or communicated can be considered.
- A dispute about the level of your service charges. We'll resolve this for you as part of our service charge management. If we fail to do this properly, you can make a complaint.
- If you're a customer on the Stanhope estate, where we manage properties on behalf of Ashford Borough Council, we'll manage your complaint in line with the Council's complaint process. You can find it on their website: [www.ashford.gov.uk](http://www.ashford.gov.uk) or by calling 01233 331111

6.2. We will consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will explain why and if you are unhappy with the decision, you are able to approach the Housing Ombudsman for advice or the Building Safety Regulator if appropriate.

## **7. Learning from our mistakes**

- 7.1. We're committed to learning from complaints and improvement the services we offer our customers. To do this we'll look beyond the circumstances of individual complaints to identify issues and introduce positive changes.
- 7.2. We'll review all determinations received from the Housing Ombudsman to improve our complaint handling and inform future policy changes.
- 7.3. We'll share our complaints handling performance and the lessons we've learned with our colleagues on our website and in our annual customer and service improvement report.

## **8. Monitoring and reporting**

- 8.1. Our performance is published on a monthly basis on our website.
- 8.2. Our annual complaints performance and service improvement report will be reported to the Board and published on the complaints section of our website along with the most recent copy of the annual self-assessment.

### Definitions

Complaint: an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or a group of residents.

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This policy will be delivered in accordance with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed for this policy and considered as part of the approval process.

### Data protection

This policy will be delivered in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. A Data Impact Assessment was completed for this policy and considered as part of the approval process.

### Related legislation and regulations

- Equality Act 2010
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act (2018)
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

### Related policies and procedures

Anti-social behaviour policy  
Compensation policy  
Data Protection policy  
Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

### Customer engagement

We sought the views of our Customer Advocates and used these to develop the previous version of this policy, which was approved in March 2023. Minor amendments have been made to this policy to ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code updated on 1 April 2024 and for ongoing improvements and good practice.

### Document Revision History (Record of any changes made to the policy)

Date	Approved by	Details of changes made
May 2025	Executive Director: Customer Experience	5.7 Clarity of when additional issues will be considered.
		Added commitment to publicise complaints and Housing Ombudsman (4.7)
		Renamed as Complaints Policy
		Clarification for complaints against policies.
		Added contact details for Health and Safety Executive
		Added reference to Building Safety Executive
		Updated Housing Ombudsman address
		5.6 – adjusted wording as extensions may exceed 10/20 working days; added communication schedule