

Chilmington Homes Ltd

Complaints Policy & Procedure

What is a complaint?

A complaint is defined as an expression of concern or dissatisfaction with any service provided by Chilmington Homes Ltd or the conduct of its staff.

What a complainant should expect

- Complainants should expect their complaint to be taken seriously and to be dealt with promptly.
- A complainant should not fear the recrimination of any member of Chilmington Homes Limited staff.
- Chilmington Homes Ltd believes that wherever possible, complaints are best dealt with on a local level between the complainant and the organization.
- As far as is reasonably practical and if requested, a Complainant can be given assistance to enable them to understand the complaint procedure, and be given advice on where they may obtain such assistance such as local advocacy services.
- A complaint must be made no later than 12 months after the date the event occurred or, if later, the date the event came to the notice of the complainant. The time limit will not apply if Chilmington Homes Ltd is satisfied that the complainant can give a good reason for not making the complaint within that time limit, and despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.

Who can make a complaint?

A complaint may be made by a Service User, relative, advocate, friend, professional or any other person who feels dissatisfied with a matter with which they are directly involved. The complaint may be made by telephone, in person, in writing or by email. Anonymous complaints will be logged and dealt with by the Service Manager and the outcome recorded, however no acknowledgement or response can be sent to an anonymous complainant.

Complaints from a representative (relative, advocate or friend) will be accepted only where the Service User has consented, either verbally or in writing or where the Service User cannot complain unaided and cannot give consent because they lack capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, **and** the representative is acting in the Service User's best interests – for example, where the matter complained about, if true, would be detrimental to the Service User.

Who to complain to

A complainant may complain either directly to the party concerned, or to the Service Manager: Martine Dell, Chilmington House, Armadale Court, Westcote Road, Reading RG30 2ES; Tel: 01189567877; mdell@chilmingtonhomes.co.uk. If the complaint is about the Service Manager, they should complain to Brenda Dean, Managing Director, Chilmington Homes limited, PO Box 8149, Reading RG6 9LX; Tel: 01189 611219; bdean@chilmingtonhomes.co.uk.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution of a Complaint

A complaint which is made in person or by telephone which is resolved to the complainant's satisfaction no later than the next working day after the day the complaint was made, will not require further investigation or written acknowledgement but will be recorded in the complaints book.

Complaints not resolved in this way or those received in writing will be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days. The name of the Investigating Officer (who will be a senior staff member) will be provided. A copy of the Company's complaints procedure will be enclosed, and where a complaint is made in person or by telephone, a written record of the complaint will be taken and a copy of the record will also be enclosed. A record of the complaint will be made in the complaints book by the Investigating Officer.

The 'Stage 1 - Informal Resolution' process involves every effort being made by the Investigating Officer to resolve the complaint by means of further discussion - either face to face or by telephone, by meeting(s) between relevant parties or by further correspondence. In most instances, a suggested course of action to resolve the complaint will be communicated to the complainant within 14 working days of receipt of the complaint.

If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant, then they can move to 'Stage 2 - Formal Complaint and Investigation' where they must be asked to put their complaint in writing stating clearly the grounds of the complaint. (See 'Stage 2 - Formal Complaint and Investigation').

Where the complainant does not have the skills or mental capacity to put their complaint in writing, they will be assisted by our staff to contact an independent advocacy service.

A complainant has the right to move to 'Stage 2 - Formal Complaint and Investigation' without going through an attempt at 'Stage 1 - Informal Resolution'.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint and Investigation

Your complaint must be made in writing to Brenda Dean Managing Director (at the address indicated in 'Who to complain to') stating clearly the grounds of your complaint. Your letter will be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days and the name of the Investigating Officer (who will be a senior staff member) will be advised to you. A copy of the Company's complaints procedure will be enclosed. A record of the complaint will be made in the complaints book by the Investigating Officer.

The Investigating Officer will report their findings to the Managing Director who will provide an explanation of the findings to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned within 28 working days of receipt of the written complaint.

Should the investigation take longer the complainant will be kept informed about its progress. Unless a different deadline is agreed with the complainant, all complaint investigations will be concluded within 6 months of their acknowledgement letter.

Stage 3 – Taking your complaint to the Local Authority, the Local Government Ombudsman and or Care Quality Commission

If the complainant is not satisfied by the Company's processing of the complaint, the individual can take their complaint to their local authority, if they receive funding support

from it; or directly to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) if they are self-funding. Local authority-funded Service Users may also decide to take their complaint to the LGO if they are dissatisfied with the way that Chilmington Homes Ltd or the local authority has handled their complaint. The LGO provides a free, independent service. You can contact the LGO Advice Team for information and advice, or to register your complaint. Tel: 0300 061 0614; Email: advice@lgo.org.uk; Web: www.lgo.org.uk. The LGO will not usually investigate a complaint until the provider has had an opportunity to respond and resolve matters.

The Care Quality Commission states that it will always welcome hearing about any concerns, though it will not investigate any complaint directly. It can be contacted by phone on 03000 616 161, by e-mail to enquiries@cqc.org.uk or by post to: Care Quality Commission, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE1 4PA.

Safeguarding

In the event of the complaint involving alleged abuse or a suspicion that abuse has occurred, Chilmington Homes Ltd will refer the matter immediately to the Local Safeguarding Board manager. Usually the board will call a strategy meeting to decide on the actions to be taken next. This could entail an assessment of the allegation by a member of the Safeguarding Authority team.

Accessibility

This procedure can be made available on request in other languages and in other formats such as cassette and Braille, however, there may be a reasonable delay in its production as a translation would have to be specifically commissioned.

Administrative Procedures

The management will discuss complaints and their outcome at a formal Management meeting and any shortcomings in procedures will be identified and acted upon. The complaints procedure will be reviewed periodically.

Monitoring

The complaints book will be used to record each complaint received; the subject matter and outcome of each complaint; details of the reasons for delay where an investigation took longer than the agreed response period agreed, and the date the report of the outcome of the investigation was sent to the complainant.

Annual reports

An annual report will be produced each year (the period of 12 months ending 31 March) specifying the number of complaints received; the number of complaints that the provider decided were well-founded, partly or fully; the number of complaints that the provider has been informed have been referred to other bodies; the subject matter of complaints received; a summary of any matters of importance in the complaints themselves or in the way that the complaints were handled, and a summary of any matters where action has been or is to be taken to improve services as a consequence of those complaints. The annual complaint report will be made available to anyone on request.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Designation: _____

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