

# Bromford.

## Complaints Policy

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### 1. Policy Statement & Purpose

Complaints are important to us. We need to know if our service goes wrong, so we can put things right, learn from our mistakes and take action to prevent it from happening again.

We capture all expressions of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by Bromford, our colleagues, or those acting on our behalf, whether the issue affects an individual customer or a group of customers.

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### 2. Approach

Through this policy we seek to ensure that complaints are:

- handled sensitively and fairly.
  - resolved as quickly as possible.
  - a catalyst to ensure mistakes are corrected quickly and we do what we say we will.
  - used to prevent similar service failures happening again.
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### 3. Reference Documents

List of Referenced Documents
<a href="#">Compensation Policy</a>
<a href="#">Restricting Customer Access Policy</a>
<a href="#">Equality and Diversity Policy</a>
<a href="#">Lettings Policy</a>
<a href="#">Aids &amp; Adaptations Policy</a>

## 4. Scope

### Complaints covered by this Policy

Where a customer, applicant or individual affected by Bromford has expressed dissatisfaction with the service we have provided directly, or by any company we employ to provide a service on our behalf.

### Complaints not covered by this policy

This policy does **not** cover:

- Complaints where there is another process already in place to handle them. For example:
  - Complaints relating to nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour where the matter has not been reported previously.
  - Decisions where there is another appeal process in place, including the Lettings and Aids and Adaptations policies.
- An issue which happened over 6 months ago; a complaint should be made no later than 6 months after the date the event occurred, unless there are exceptional circumstances which mean the complainant was unable to notify us of their concerns sooner. We may consider historic complaint outcomes however, to resolve the issue for the complainant.
- The complaint relates to issues where legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- In some circumstances it may be appropriate to refer the complainant to our insurance team to progress claims where the complaint relates to significant financial loss or damages, and / or personal injury but we will make all reasonable attempts to resolve complaints prior to making this decision.
- Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.
- Service requests, such as the reporting of repairs where we have not been notified of issues previously.

If we fail to deal with an issue through the relevant process however, then the failure to do so can be dealt with as a Complaint under this Policy. The above list is not exhaustive and on receipt of a complaint we will review the concerns and confirm if there is a more appropriate process.

Where we do not accept a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided to the customer which sets out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Housing Ombudsman. If a customer disagrees with this decision, they should let Bromford know why, which will enable us to reconsider the decision.

## 5. Making a complaint

We aim to make the complaint process accessible to all and we will:

- Accept complaints in any way the customer wishes, including but not limited to, the following
  - Calling us on 0330 1234 034
  - Speaking to an allocated Neighbourhood Coach
  - Filling in the form on our website: [www.bromford.co.uk](http://www.bromford.co.uk)
  - Contacting us on Twitter or Facebook \*
  - Emailing [CustomerSolutions.Team@bromford.co.uk](mailto:CustomerSolutions.Team@bromford.co.uk)

- Writing to us at: **Bromford, 1 Venture Court, Broadlands, Wolverhampton, WV10 6TB**

- If we call a customer to ask them about their experience through our customer feedback programme, we will consider whether we need to address any outstanding issues via the complaints process.
- We are happy to accept complaints from a third party acting on a customer's behalf. We will need signed authority from the customer to divulge any information we hold to a third party. If the third party is an elected representative, such as a councillor or MP, we may proceed to handle the complaint with them on the basis of implied consent. Please see our privacy notice for more information.
- Offer a review process if the customer feels their complaint has not been resolved, we call this stage 2.

\* When a customer submits a comment or complaint to us via Facebook, Twitter or other social media we recommend customers use a private channel, such as direct message (DM). Our data privacy information is contained here: <https://www.bromford.co.uk/about-us/open-and-transparent/privacy-notice/>

## **6. How we manage complaints**

We have a simple two stage complaint process:

### **Stage 1**

We aim to deal with all formal complaints at Stage 1 because we want to put things right as soon as possible.

**Acknowledgement:** Customers will receive an acknowledgement of their complaint within 5 working days of us receiving the complaint. In acknowledging the complaint, we will set out our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the customer is seeking. We may ask for clarification of our understanding before we start investigating the complaint.

**Response:** Stage 1 responses will be issued within 10 working days of the complaint being logged, unless the complaint is complex. If this is the case, we will discuss and agree an extension of the timescales directly with the customer; generally, any extension will not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason.

Good reason could include, but not limited to, complaints where legal advice is required, or another independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party expert is needed (other than our partners who support us to deliver day to day services). An extension of the timescales may also be required where we are unable to contact a customer and / or the complaint and the outcome they are seeking is unclear. In these circumstances we will ensure timescales are communicated with the customer.

In instances where we cannot agree an extension timescale with the customer, we will provide contact details for the Housing Ombudsman to allow the customer to challenge our plan to respond and the timescales involved.

We will keep in touch with the customer via their preferred method of contact throughout the complaint and we may in some instances arrange to meet a customer at their convenience. The outcome of the complaint will be communicated with the customer via their preferred method of contact. This will include any actions we are going to take to put the matter right and provide clear timescales as to when the actions will be completed. Following the response, we will continue to monitor all complaints to ensure agreed actions are completed.

### **Stage 2**

If the customer is not satisfied with the outcome at stage 1, or the actions have not been completed within the agreed timescales provided in the stage 1 response, customers have the

right to request their complaint is escalated for review at stage 2. We will not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint; however, we will request the following information:

- confirmation from the customer as to which points of the complaint remain unresolved.
- any further information or evidence to support their complaint, if required.
- to clarify the intended outcome, they are seeking.

On receipt of the customer response, we will review our previous response to ensure there are no outstanding and / or unresolved issues that cannot be resolved straight away.

If the request to escalate is made to us later than 20 working days from the date of our stage one response, we may refuse to escalate the complaint for review at stage 2. In these instances, we will provide a written explanation and include the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.

An independent adjudicator will review the complaint and there is an option, if the customer so chooses, for a customer member of the Locality Influencing network (LIN) to also review the complaint when the investigation is nearing completion, to give an impartial view of the findings and recommendations. Your adjudicator will offer this option as part of the acknowledgment conversation.

Acknowledgement: Customers will receive an acknowledgement of their stage 2 complaint within 5 working days from your allocated adjudicator. Alongside the independent adjudicator, the relevant head of service and manager of the service will be engaged to ensure there is a continued focus on learning from customer complaints

Responses: We will respond within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated, however where this is not possible, an explanation will be provided, and a date confirmed as to when the stage 2 response will be received. Any extension will not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason. The outcome of the review will be communicated in writing.

This is the final stage of our internal complaints process.

Bromford take responsibility for the actions of our colleagues and where a complaint is made about the conduct of our people, appropriate consideration of our People Policies will be made, if and where required. Where an investigation about individual colleagues and their actions is undertaken in line with our People Policies, we will not disclose the detailed outcome directly to the customer due to the confidentiality rights of our colleagues.

## **7. Housing Ombudsman**

Following completion of our internal process, if the customer remains unhappy, they can refer directly to the Housing Ombudsman Service by contacting them in the following ways:

- By letter: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ
- Telephone: 0300 111 3000
- **Email:** [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Customers do not have to wait until our internal processes are exhausted and can contact the Housing Ombudsman Dispute Resolutions Team at any time during the complaint process to seek their guidance. For further information you can visit their website <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us/>

## **8. Other considerations**

Reasonable adjustments and support: We understand that some customers may have difficulty communicating a complaint and / or participating in the complaint process, as such we will

always make reasonable adjustments, ensuring information is accessible for customers to report their concerns and engage in the process.

Restricting or changing a customer's access to services: On rare occasions we may make the decision to restrict a customer's access to our services by making alternative arrangements for communication to manage the relationship more effectively. For full detail as to how and why the decision will be taken, please refer to our [Restricting Customer Access Policy](#).

Changing circumstances: On occasion we may conclude our internal complaint process if we consider the dissatisfaction is now the subject of another process e.g., legal action, insurance claim, anti-social behaviour. If so, this will be communicated and agreed with the customer as early in the complaint process as possible.

Further information: Our aim is to make the complaint policy accessible to all our customers and we will publish guidance on our website and as part of regular communication as to how to make a complaint. Customers can also speak to any colleague for further guidance in making a complaint.

**9. Legislative Requirements:** by following this policy, it ensures that Bromford complies with:

- [Regulator of Social Housing, the Regulatory Standards](#)
- [Localism Act, 2011](#)
- [Equality Act, 2010](#)
- [Housing Ombudsman Complaint Code](#)

#### **10. Assurance Framework:**

We will monitor compliance with this policy through regular self-assessment, internal audit, and performance measures. Regular reporting will be provided to Board, senior leaders, and Communities Influence Network to support learning from complaints and to promote the open and transparent use of information to assess performance and risks. An annual complaint report highlighting performance, trends and lessons learnt will be available to customers through the Customer Annual Feedback Programme and Customer Annual Report.

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#### **Document Details**

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