



Golden Lane Housing

Golden Lane Housing Limited

Complaints Policy

Policy Owner: Director of Housing and Tenant Experience

Policy Manager: Head of Tenant Experience

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Version	Author	Amendments	Approved By	Approval Date	Review Date
1		Original Document			
2		Version 2		January 2024	
3	Head of Tenant Experience	Version 3 now includes: changes linked to regulatory changes and the Housing Ombudsman’s self assessment code requirements.	Board	July 2024	July 2026
4	Head of Tenant Experience	Version 2 now includes: recommended changes from HQN following audit under section 3.2 & 6.8 Also includes recommendation from Housing Ombudsman to include complaints form link when providing their contact details.	Board	March 2026	March 2027

1. Purpose

1.1 This policy sets out how Golden Lane Housing manages complaints upholds our values, of caring, honesty, listening, reliable and creative. This policy will be published on our website and is aimed at our tenants and customers. It sets out our approach to handling their complaints: which is to have a clear, simple and accessible process that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly. We aim to provide a high-level framework to support effective handling and prevention alongside learning and improving the way we do things. If we have made a mistake we will apologise and try to put things right.

Golden Lane Housing's objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties is:

- a) have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;
- b) take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and
- c) act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.

1.2 This policy provides that Golden Lane Housing will follow the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code which can be found on the website: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/> and be compliant with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards.

1.3 Policy statement: We will offer a range of ways for customers to express a complaint or a compliment, and we set out clear service standards for responding to complaints, as well as details of what tenant and customers can do if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint.

1.4 To support transparency and better outcomes we will publish information on our website to inform tenants and customers about how we have used complaints to improve services including a statement on the number and nature, and the outcome of complaints in our annual report.

1.5 The complaints policy, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme will be publicised to tenants and customers in multiple formats and as part of relevant correspondence.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Golden Lane Housing Limited (“GLH”) employees, contractors, agents, GLH Tenants and their representatives.

3. Definitions

3.1 The definition of a service request and a complaint.

We use the Housing Ombudsman’s definition of a service request: “A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints but must be recorded”

We use the Housing Ombudsman’s definition of a complaint: ‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of 4 action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

3.2 Exclusions: We will accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so, examples are set out below:

- We will not usually consider a matter where the issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. However, where the problem is a recurring issue, we will usually consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint as we feel that this will help to resolve the issue for the customer and provide a better outcome.
- We will not usually consider a complaint where legal proceedings have been started or are pending. However, we will ensure compliance with any pre action court protocols that require us to respond in a certain time frame.
- We will not usually deal with a matter that has already been considered under the complaints policy, or where the complainant is displaying unreasonable behaviour or is unreasonably persistent.

If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will provide an explanation as to why that is the case with reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process.

4. Link to the Risk Management Framework

The following risks are addressed in this policy, based on the current GLH taxonomy:

Level 2 Risk	Level 3 Risk
Regulatory Compliance	Failure to effectively implement regulatory change/legal change.
Tenant Engagement	Failure to engage effectively with tenants and deliver effective services demonstrating transparency and accountability.
Process and Service Delivery Risk	Over reliance on manual or legacy processes. Failure to adequately design business processes.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to overall policy ownership and management, the following roles and responsibilities apply:

Role	Responsible For
Board	Holds overall accountability for compliance with the statutory Complaint Handling Code. Signs off the annual complaints self-assessment submitted with Tenant Satisfaction Measures. Ensures scrutiny, learning, and a positive complaints culture.
Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) (Chair of Housing & Property Committee)	Provides strategic oversight of complaint handling. Ensures landlord-wide compliance with the Code. Acts as Board lead for complaints performance and culture.
Head of Tenant Experience	Oversees day-to-day complaint handling operations. Ensures correct application of the Code (e.g., two-stage process, timeframes). Coordinates complex or cross-departmental complaints.
Complaint Handling Staff (Tenant Experience Agents)	Log, triage, and manage complaints correctly. Provide clear, fair, resident-centred responses. Correctly distinguish service requests vs. complaints.
All Employees & Contractors	Identify and record dissatisfaction promptly. Avoid informal complaint handling routes that cause delay. Provide information needed for investigations.

6. Content

How we deal with complaints

- 6.1 We will deal with complaints promptly, politely and fairly. We will always have a positive and friendly approach to all complaints and we will ensure any conflict of interest is addressed.
- 6.2 We will make sure complainants have the chance to explain their position and reason for complaining.
- 6.3 We will consider the individual circumstances of each complaint throughout our review and before we make any decisions.
- 6.4 We will base our decisions on evidence and the facts of the particular complaint, giving clear information on how decisions have been made and how they may be challenged.

Making a complaint

6.5 Our Tenant Experience team are the point of contact for all complaints:

- Telephone: 0300 003 7007
- Email: enquiries@glh.org.uk
- Send a letter to: Head of Tenant Experience

Golden Lane Housing
Parkway 4, Parkway Business Centre
5 Princess Road
Manchester
M14 7HR

Whenever you express dissatisfaction, we will make sure you are given the choice to make a complaint if you wish. If you cannot make a complaint yourself, we can accept a complaint from someone you have appointed such as a friend, relative, advocate, appointed deputy or legal representative.

6.6 Stage 1

We recognise that sometimes we get things wrong or don't meet the high levels of service that our customers expect.

We will:

- Clarify the complaint points and our understanding of the complaint. We will also set out the outcomes that you are seeking.
- Try to resolve your complaint by telephoning you to see if we can put it right on the day we receive it.
- If we need time to look into it, we will write to you within 5 working days and let you know we have received your complaint.
- Appoint a colleague to assess and look into your complaint in an impartial and balanced way.
- Respond to you in full and in writing within a further 10 working days.
- Agree an extension with you if circumstances mean that our response to your complaint will fall outside of the above timescales.
- Aim to conclude Stage 1 within 3 weeks, (15 working days).

We will also:

- Acknowledge where things have gone wrong and apologise for failures.
- Take action to put things right.
- Manage expectations with you.
- Set out our understanding of any legal obligations and seek clarification if needed.
- Include any additional complaint points that relate to your complaint whilst the investigation is still ongoing. If the additional points do not relate, if the response has already been issued or if it will delay the response then we will ask you to log a new complaint.
- Seek to find solutions for all parties and maintain a positive relationship.
- Offer compensation, on an evidential basis, where appropriate and in accordance with our compensation policy.
- Agree and make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010.
- Try to provide opportunities for tenants or customers to challenge adverse findings before a final decision is made.
- Learn from our mistakes and make changes to the way we do things to improve our services.

6.7 Stage 2 - Senior colleague review.

If you feel your complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily, you can ask for the complaint to be reviewed at Stage 2.

- A Stage 2 complaint will be dealt with by a senior member of staff to the colleague who has dealt with the complaint at Stage 1.
- This will usually be a manager or a senior colleague we determine as the most appropriate person to review your complaint. We will tell you who that is.
- They will review and assess why the complaint has not been resolved.
- A written response will be provided to you within 20 working days.

6.8 Housing Ombudsman review

You or your representative can contact the Ombudsman Service for advice at any time.

We will provide details of how to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service following a stage 2 response and if we decide not to accept a complaint.

You can:

- Contact the Ombudsman for help if you do not receive a response to your complaint by sending a copy or providing details of the complaint you raised.
- Refer the complaint to the Ombudsman for formal investigation if you are unhappy with Golden Lane Housing Stage 2 final response.
- Refer the complaint to the Ombudsman for them to review if you are unhappy with our decision not to accept a complaint.
- Visit the Housing Ombudsman's website or write to the Housing Ombudsman.

Housing Ombudsman Service

PO Box 152

Liverpool

L33 7WQ

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Online Form: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/online-complaint-form>

Once the Ombudsman has completed their investigation, they will issue findings, known as a determination.

6.9 Learning from the outcome of complaints

We aim to learn from the outcome and use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and in order to improve the services we provide to our customers. We will do this by:

- Having systems in place to record and analyse complaints and their outcomes.
- Capturing and recording satisfaction levels on our complaints process and how complaints have been handled.
- Reporting back on wider learning and improvements to our Board, Executive team and Tenant group, More Voices, More Choices.
- The Chair of the Housing and Property Service committee will have lead responsibility for complaints.
- Publishing useful information on our website.
- Carrying out an annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code to ensure our complaint handling remains in line with the Codes requirements and publish the outcome on our website.

6.10 Compliments

Compliments and positive feedback is an expression of satisfaction with the standard of service received from Golden Lane Housing, one of our employees or contractors. Golden Lane Housing aims to provide the best possible customer experience to you and when we get it right we would like to know what worked well or who was excelling so we can do more. If you want to compliment or praise anyone at Golden Lane Housing, you can contact us by:

Telephone: 0300 003 7007

Email: enquiries@glh.org.uk

Send a letter to:

Head of Tenant Experience

Golden Lane Housing

Parkway Four, Parkway Business Centre

5 Princess Road

Manchester

M14 7HR

6.11 Training

Employees identified as complaints handlers will receive complaints training within the first 6 months of their employment, to enable them to effectively handle complaints.

All colleagues will receive training within the first 6 months of their employment to provide awareness around identifying a complaint and an overview around the Golden Lane Housing Complaints procedure.

Refresher training will be provided every 2 years, or earlier if any performance factors indicate the need for training, if there are any changes to our procedure or regulatory guidance. Our People and Culture team are responsible for arranging, tracking and reporting on complaints training.

All training is in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

Roles identified as complaint handlers at Golden Lane Housing are:

- All Heads of Service
- All Managers
- Housing Officers
- Development Leads
- Property Surveyors
- Quality and Assurance Officers
- Fire Safety Business Partners
- Building Safety Business Partner
- Financial Accountant

7. Regulatory Context

This policy aligns to the below regulations:

- Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards

8. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Unreasonable Behaviour policy
- Allocations Policy
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Golden Lane Housing Code of Conduct
- GDPR Data Protection Policy
- Compensation Policy

9. Linked Standards and Procedures

The following documents support the implementation of this policy:

- Complaints Procedure

10. Oversight and Reporting

Our Complaints performance is reported to our leaders, Executive Team, Board Members, members of the Housing and Property Committee and to our tenants.

11. Policy Non-Compliance

The provisions of this policy are Rules where compliance is mandatory and any exceptions or waivers may only be authorised by the Policy Owner, with escalation to Executive or Board Committees if required. Unauthorised breaches must be recorded as a Policy Non-Compliance within 4Risk and reported as such to Risk & Audit Committee on a case by case basis.

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure any policy non-compliance issues are raised in a timely manner to the Policy Owner in order that corrective action may be taken. Where a provision of this Policy is explicitly expressed as a Guideline, non-compliance does not need to be recorded.

12. Ownership & Regular Review

This policy is owned by the Director of Housing and Tenant Experience. It is reviewed and renewed annually by Housing and Property Committee and ultimately approved by Board.

Interim policy reviews will occur in the event of a material change in business strategy, the GLH Plan, operating environment or at the direction of the Executive or Board.

The policy may be subject to further thematic targeted reviews on a risk-based approach through Heads of Service monitoring or Internal Audit reviews.

13. Link to GLH Plan

The complaints policy links to our strategic objectives

- **Quality Tenant Experience**, specifically supporting the delivery of goals such as:
 - We enhance our service offer for tenants and ensuring they know what to expect and how to access services
 - We continue our work to improve our satisfaction and feedback mechanism

- **Future Ready:** specifically supporting the delivery of goals such as:
 - We maintain our positive gradings with the Regulator of Social Housing
 - Our approach to data and insight, which drives business decisions improves