

Glebe Housing Association

Complaints Policy

September 2023

Glebe Housing Association

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1. Policy

Glebe Housing Association aims to provide good quality services to all our residents and service users.

We recognise that sometimes things go wrong, and you may be dissatisfied and wish to complain.

We welcome complaints and these will be viewed positively as they help us to learn from any mistakes and will use this learning to improve our services.

We will deal with complaints promptly, confidentially, ensuring residents and service users are heard and understood and we will seek to put things right.

Glebe Housing Association values diversity and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity to ensure all residents are treated fairly in the implementation of this policy. As part of our commitment to the Equality Act 2010, we will ensure that we make reasonable adjustments and adapt our policies and procedures in order to meet individual needs. We will accept complaints from a resident's advocate or representative when the resident has confirmed they would like that person to act on their behalf. We will adhere to any reasonable arrangements agreed with the complainant in terms of frequency of contact, and how we will communicate with them.

Glebe Housing Association reserves the right to use its discretion, after fair and appropriate consideration, when applying this policy and we may deal with a complaint differently where individual circumstances merit it. We will progress complaints as far as possible to maximise the opportunity to resolve any dispute.

2. Policy Aims & Objectives

In dealing with complaints, we will comply with the Ombudsman's 3 Dispute Resolution Principles;

1. Be fair - treat people fairly and follow fair processes.
2. Put things right.
3. Learn from outcomes.

1. Treat complainant fairly

To ensure we have a fair process for dealing with complaints, we will

- Openly provide information on our website, in paper format in the main office and the Warden's Hub and in our Welcome Pack in relation to
 - what constitutes a complaint,
 - how to make a complaint (we provide a number of options)
 - how complaints are dealt with
 - how to challenge decisions at each stage of the process.
 - Timescales for response
 - Assistance available to make a complaint
- Ensure our approach is resident focussed
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained.

- Not prolong the process or avoid making a decision.
- Ensure decisions are unbiased, impartial and based on fact and evidence.
- Communicate decisions clearly with reasons and details of action to be taken as necessary.
- Consider individual circumstances.
- All decisions reached will be in line with relevant legislation.
- The process complies with the law and any regulatory requirements.

2. Aim to resolve the matter and put things right

In reaching a resolution of the complaint we will;

- Ensure that any resolution is in line with relevant legislation.
- Seek to put the complainant back in the position they would have been in if there was no service failure.
- Not make promises that cannot be delivered or provide outcomes which would cause unfairness to any other resident or service user.
- Ensure that the person handling the complaint has the authority to make decisions on the issue raised.
- Look at our wider systems and services and amend these if necessary, as a result of information arising from the complaint.
- Seek to improve, repair or rebuild any breakdown or damage of trust as necessary.
- Consider financial compensation where we are unable to put the complainant back in the position they would have been in if there was no service failure.

3. Learn from outcomes of any complaints

We are committed to learning from the outcomes of complaints and have systems and procedures in place to ensure this learning is recorded and considered. We will;

- Advise the complainant if we have made any changes to our services as a result of receiving the complaint.
- Maintain a complaints register and analysis of complaints will be reported to Senior Management Team meetings.
- The Senior Management Team will review the outcomes of complaints and any implications for service delivery and policy changes.
- Reports on complaints are routinely provided to the Board.
- Provide opportunities for positive feedback so that we can keep doing what we do well.

3. Legislative Context

All complaints will be dealt with in line with relevant legislation which may include;

- Localism Act 2011, Housing Act 1996 (schedule 2), General Data Protection Act 2018, Equality Act 2010, Housing Ombudsman Scheme, Tenant and Involvement Empowerment Standards

4. What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Glebe Housing Association, (staff, volunteers or those acting on our behalf) affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

4.1 What is not a complaint?

A service request is not a complaint (example: request for repair work to be carried out). Feedback provided in a resident survey is not a complaint.

5. When to use this Complaints Policy

Anyone wishing to make a complaint may do so using the process set out in this policy and we will respond as explained. Any resident who is concerned about a matter which is not decided by us (for example homecare or utility services), we will do our best to advise them on how to make their concerns known.

5.1 Exclusions

We will accept and deal with all complaints received with some exceptions as listed. If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will explain why. If the complainant is not satisfied with these reasons, they may refer the matter to the Ombudsman. These exceptions include;

- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over six months ago (unless this relates to health and safety, safeguarding or legal obligation)
- Legal proceedings are ongoing. This does not mean that we will not seek to settle a matter outside of court proceedings.
- The matter has already been dealt with under our complaints policy.

6. Methods by which a complaint can be made

Any dissatisfied service user may make a complaint to us by any of the following methods:-

6.1 By completing and returning our complaints form (Appendix 1)

Our complaint form is available from:-

- The Wardens Hub,
- Glebe House Head Office (The White House)
- From the member of staff the complainant has been dealing with.
- From our website
- By emailing enquiries@glebeha.org.uk requesting a form
- By sending a private message through Facebook requesting a form

Forms are available in large print or translated into languages other than English to make it easier to submit a complaint. Completed forms may be submitted by email, to reception@glebeha.org.uk or by post to Head Office.

6.2 By Telephone

Complaints can be made by telephone to: 0208 777 1122.

6.3 By letter or email

Complaints can be made in writing to Office Manager.

6.4 Through Facebook

Complaints can be made by sending a private message through Facebook.

7. How we deal with complaints

Throughout the complaints process the resident, and if applicable any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, will be given a fair chance to set out their position and comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made. Where a key issue of a complaint relates to the parties' legal obligations landlords should clearly set out their understanding of the obligations of both parties.

The Association will seek to resolve all complaints informally. Where it is not possible to do so complaints may be escalated to the formal complaints process in accordance with the following steps:

7.1 Acknowledgement

We will formally acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 5 working days, letting the complainant know who will investigate and when they can expect to hear back from us. A complainant will be informed at the outset if their stated desired outcome is considered unreasonable or unrealistic.

7.2 Stage 1 of Formal Complaint Process

The complaint will be investigated and responded to within 10 working days of receipt. If further time is required to adequately complete our investigation, the complainant will be notified, and we will seek to respond to the complaint within 20 working days of date of receipt. Our response will:-

- Address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions referencing relevant policy, law and good practice as applicable.
- State which stage of the complaints process the complaint has been dealt under
- The outcome of the complaint.
- The reasons for any decisions made.
- The details of any remedy offered to put things right.
- Details of any outstanding actions
- Details of how to escalate the matter if dissatisfied.

This will conclude stage 1 of our complaints process.

7.3 Stage 2 of Formal Complaint Process

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied, they may refer the complaint to the Chief Executive, stating why they disagree with the decision reached at Stage 1 and whatmore they would like us to do to put it right. Complaints to the CEO may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- Writing to the CEO at Glebe House, Bencurtis Park, Corkscrew Hill, West Wickham, BR4 9QD.
- Emailing the CEO at reception@glebeha.org.uk
- Telephoning the CEO at 0208 777 1122.
- Calling into the Glebe House office to make the request in person.
- Telephoning the Office Manager at 0208 777 1122.

The Chief Executive will investigate the matter and will respond within 20 working days of receipt of the notification. If it is not possible to provide a full response within that time period, the CEO will notify the complainant of the reason and provide an indication of when a response will be issued which will aim to be within 30 working days of referring the matter to the CEO.

This is the final stage of our internal complaints process.

7.4 Referring a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman

The Association aims to resolve all complaints at Stage 1 or stage 2. However, should the complainant remain dissatisfied following this, they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service to investigate how we dealt with the matter. This Service is contactable at:

Website:	https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Online Complaint form:	https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/
Email:	info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Telephone:	0300 111 3000
Address:	Housing Ombudsman Service PO Box 152 Liverpool L33 7WQ
Hours:	9:15 a.m. – 5:15 p.m. Monday – Friday

One of the following may refer a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman on the complainant's behalf:

- A Member of Parliament (MP)
- A local Councillor
- A tenant panel

The Association will cooperate fully with any communications from the Housing Ombudsman

8. Compensation and Redress

Any awarding of, or claims for compensation arising from the investigation of complaints under this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Association's Compensation and Redress Policy.

9. Closing Complaints

The Association will keep a complaint open until we have investigated it, responded to the complainant and the complainant is satisfied that it is resolved. We may at our discretion close a complaint at any stage during the complaints process where;

- After sending a response and attempting to make contact with the complainant to discuss it, we have received no further contact from them after 20 working days.
- We have exhausted the complaints handling process and the expectations of the complainant are deemed to be unreasonable.
- Where complaints are deemed to be vexatious.

The Association will notify the complainant in writing of our decision to close a complaint.

10. Vexatious Complaints

We recognise that on occasion complaints made can be vexatious. The Association will not tolerate continuous vexatious complaints and will take appropriate action through the enforcement of the tenancy or advise the complainant the way in which communication with us will be managed in future.

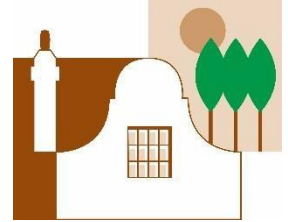
11. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or as required by legislative changes.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Complaints Form

12.1 Appendix 1 – Complaints Form



1. Your Contact Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address _____

Preferred method for us to contact you _____

2. Your Requirements

If our usual way of dealing with complaints is difficult for you, please tell us so that we can discuss how we might help you.

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are filling in this form on behalf of someone else, please fill in the next section. Please note that before taking forward the complaint, we will need to satisfy ourselves that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.

3. Making a Complaint for someone else

Making a complaint on behalf of someone else: Please enter details here;

Full Name _____

Address _____

Your relationship to them _____

Why are you making a complaint on their behalf _____

4. Your Complaint

Please continue your answers on a separate sheet(s) if necessary.

What do you think we did wrong, or failed to do?

Describe how you personally or the person you are representing has been adversely affected

What would you like us to do to put things right?

Have you already put your concern to the frontline staff (e.g. wardens, housing/maintenance staff or administration) If yes, please give details of how and when you did so.

Please attach any documents or other evidence to support your complaint.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please return form (by post or in person) to;

Glebe Housing Association
Glebe House
Bencurtis Park
West Wickham
Kent BR4 9QD

By email to: reception@glebeha.org.uk