

# Complaints, Compliments & Suggestions Helpsheet

## Complaints

We'd like to think that we get things right most of the time, but we know that occasionally things may go wrong. As an organisation that is committed to listening to our residents and improving our service, we really do want to hear from you if you've had a problem.

Anchor recognises a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.'

Our complaints process has two stages. We welcome complaints from anyone who is affected by the services we provide. This includes but is not limited to:

- residents
- customers seeking to rent or buy a property
- family members
- friends, representatives, or advocates of residents
- neighbours
- service providers or professionals.

## 1. Getting in touch

Often the quickest way to put things right is for you to speak with the local manager who works at your location. We do appreciate that sometimes this isn't possible, or you'll want to contact us directly, so we've made this easy for you to do.

You can get in touch with our Customer Relations Team in any of the following ways –

- In person via your local manager or another Anchor representative
- Telephone - **0800 731 2020** (Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm)
- Email – [Customer.Relations@Anchor.org.uk](mailto:Customer.Relations@Anchor.org.uk)
- Webform – [www.anchor.org.uk](http://www.anchor.org.uk)
- Post – Anchor Customer Relations Team, 2 Godwin Street, Bradford, BD1 2ST or by completing one of our 'We welcome your feedback' forms available at all locations.
- Social Media – using our Facebook page or twitter

Whatever your complaint, it will be dealt with fairly and professionally, and we will not treat you any differently because you've complained. We can also accept complaints from people acting your behalf if you'd prefer, we'll just need your permission to discuss it with them.

If you have a disability which may impact on how we may need to communicate with you then please let us know. We will take all reasonable steps to adapt our normal processes (where appropriate) to accommodate your needs. As part of this commitment our Customer



Relations Team will ask you when logging a complaint about your preferred method of contact. We will then ensure wherever possible that we contact you using this method.

## 2. Is it a Complaint or a Service Request?

Service requests and Complaints are slightly different. A Service request is a contact that brings a matter to our attention for the first time. This might be a request for an action or for information. For example: the contractor has missed the appointment to carry out a repair.

By providing the information or completing the action the service request is usually solved. However, if you are unhappy with the way the request was handled then you may wish to make a complaint.

## 3. Our process and timescales: Stage 1

\*Please note - where stated 'working days' refer to standard Monday-Friday working days.

- We will log and acknowledge your complaint **within 5 working days** (of it being received by Anchor).
- You will (where possible) be contacted by telephone **within 2 working days** of your complaint being logged and acknowledged (unless you've asked not to be) by the person who will be working with you to get it resolved. This is to make sure they have understood the issues correctly and to see whether they can get it resolved straight away.
- If it can't be resolved straight away, it will be fully investigated, and you will receive confirmation of the outcome **within 10 working days** of logging and acknowledgement. If this is not possible, we will provide an explanation and a date by when the stage one response will be received. This will not be more than **10 working days** total without good reason.

If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to enable us to respond fully this should be agreed by you. You may be contacted during the investigation by the person handling the complaint if they need additional information, or if they need to provide you with updates.

If agreement cannot be reached, you will be provided with the details of the Housing Ombudsman Service so that you can challenge our plan for responding and/or the timeliness.

- If you wish to escalate the complaint you should let us know as soon as possible, usually within **30 days** of receipt of the stage 1 response. We will however consider requests to escalate that fall out of this timeframe.

## 4. Our process and timescales: Stage 2

- Once you've received our stage 1 response, we hope that this will resolve the complaint for you. If, however, you feel it hasn't been sorted, you can request the matter to be escalated and a reviewed by a colleague who is independent of the stage 1 complaint response.



- You can do this by getting in touch using the contact method that best suits you. We'll let you know the outcome of any review within **20 working days** from escalation.

If this is not possible, we will provide an explanation and a date by when the stage two response will be received.

This will not be more than **10 working days** without good reason. If an extension beyond **10 working days** is required to allow us to investigate fully we will agree any such extension with you.

If agreement cannot be reached, you will be provided with the details of the Housing Ombudsman Service so that you can challenge our plan for responding and/or the timeliness.

When a complaint has been reviewed by a senior staff member and the outcome provided, this is the end of our internal process. While we'd hope that most complaints would be resolved by this point there may be times when they're not.

## **5. Exceptions to the normal process**

There may be rare and exceptional circumstances where, it is necessary to immediately escalate a new complaint to the final stage of the internal process. This will be at the Customer Relations Manager's discretion.

## **6. Taking your complaint to an Ombudsman**

This section explains where to go for an independent review of how we handled your complaint.

If you have completed the internal Anchor complaints process you may refer your complaint to the relevant Ombudsman Service if you remain dissatisfied with our final decision, or we fail to provide that decision by the relevant deadline. We will co-operate fully with the relevant Ombudsman Service during any investigation and comply fully with the resulting decision which will be binding on us.

The route taken will be dependent on the subject of your complaint. Please see details for the Housing Ombudsman or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (section 9 contact details).

You may, however, wish to consider referring your complaint to Anchor's Independent Resident Complaint Panel (again, see section 10 below).

**Please note** - you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice or support with your complaint throughout the complaints process.

## **7. When we won't accept or escalate a complaint**

We will not discriminate against anyone who makes a complaint. If a complainant behaves inappropriately in making a complaint, we will seek to manage that behaviour as necessary, while treating the complaint like any other. However, there will be some rare occasions when we will not accept a complaint, examples of this are given below (this list is not exhaustive):

- Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour, which is threatening, abusive or aggressive.
- Where the issue giving rise to the complaint happened over 6 months ago. Though an exception will likely be made for any complaint that has a safeguarding or health and safety element.
- The same matters have been fully addressed under a previous complaint.
- The complaint is disputing the term of a lease, cost, or reasonableness of a service charge, sinking fund/reserve fund contribution, or rent increase. These disputes are dealt with by the First Tier Tribunal (see details below in the 'Other bodies that can deal with your complaint' section).
- Where the complaint is a dispute over legislation or is a matter that is already the subject of legal proceedings.
- The complaint is disputing the cost or reasonableness of a service charge or sinking fund/reserve fund contribution.

If we do not accept a complaint for any reason including those described above, we will write to the complainant within 10 working days explaining our reasons. The complainant will also be told that they are able to appeal this decision by contacting the Housing Ombudsman Service.

## 8. Compliments

As with complaints, compliments are a good way of helping us improve our services. They are also great for team and individual morale as we make sure any compliments reach the team or person they're about. We also make sure that managers get to hear about the brilliant things our staff are doing and, where appropriate, use this information to share best practice across the organisation.

You can submit a compliment using any of the methods detailed earlier for complaints. Your compliment will be acknowledged, and we'll make sure it gets to the right person or team.

## 9. Suggestions

Sometimes you may want to let us know about something that's neither a complaint nor a compliment. For example, it might be an idea you've had for improving our services. We'd love to hear from you. You can submit your suggestions by using any of the methods listed earlier.

You'll always receive acknowledgement of your suggestions and may, where necessary, receive some follow up contact from a member of the Anchor team.

## 10. Contact Details: taking your complaint to ombudsman or other body

### Rented and Leasehold residents and their representatives

- **Housing Ombudsman Service**

Once you have completed Anchor's internal complaint process you can refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman for investigation. You can also contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice or support with your complaint throughout the complaints process.



*Please note: this service isn't available to those who own the freehold of their home.*

E-mail: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Post: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ

- **Independent Residents' Complaint Panel (IRCP)**

The Independent Residents' Complaints Panel is made up of Anchor residents from rented and leasehold locations. These residents all have an interest in providing an impartial view on how a complaint has been handled throughout the process. If you decide to ask the Panel to look at your complaint, they will review all the correspondence relating to the matter and provide a response based on how they feel the case has been handled.

As part of the response sent to you, the IRCP may make recommendations to Anchor to ask them to act over and above the replies already sent to you, or they may sign post you to the relevant bodies for further review if they don't feel any recommendations are necessary. To ask the panel to review your complaint you can contact them using the following details:

E-mail: [IRCP@anchor.org.uk](mailto:IRCP@anchor.org.uk)

Telephone: 0345 602 5516

Post: ICCP, 2 Godwin Street, Bradford, BD1 2ST

- **Local Councillor or a Member of Parliament (MP)**

You can also refer your complaint directly to your local councillor or an MP for your area immediately after receiving your stage 2 response from Anchor.

- Names of local councillors can be found in local libraries or by contacting your local Council
- You can find out the name and contact details for your MP by phoning the House of Commons Information Office on 020 7219 4272 or online at [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk).

- **Energy Ombudsman**

P.O. Box 966, Warrington, WA4 9DF

Tel: 0330 440 1624

Email: [enquiry@energyombudsman.org](mailto:enquiry@energyombudsman.org)

[www.energyombudsman.org](http://www.energyombudsman.org)

The Energy Ombudsman handles disputes between consumers energy suppliers (in some situations this will be Anchor).

## **Residents receiving care services (and their representatives)**

- **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

For care related complaints you can refer your complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman immediately after receiving your response from Anchor.

Web: [www.lgo.org.uk/adult-social-care/](http://www.lgo.org.uk/adult-social-care/)

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Post: The Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH

- **Care Quality Commission (CQC)**

We are registered with the CQC for all our care services however, the CQC do not investigate individual complaints. While the CQC will not investigate individual complaints, they are happy to receive information and feedback from you regarding our services.

Care Quality Commission Customer Service Centre  
Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA  
Tel: 03000 616161  
[www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

### Other external bodies that can look at your complaint

- **First Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) - (leaseholders and tenants)**

An application can be made to the Tribunal to address certain types of disputes (such as service charge disputes or rent increases). For a full list of their areas of **jurisdiction** please see the website detailed below.

Contact details for your regional office can be found by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-property-chamber>

### 10. Other useful contacts

Whether a complaint, compliment, or suggestion the organisations listed below may be able to provide you with information and/or advice –

- Age UK - [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk) or telephone 0800 678 1602
- LEASE - [www.lease-advice.org](http://www.lease-advice.org)
- Citizens Advice - [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or telephone: 0800 144 8848

### Accessibility

This document can be made available in large print, Braille, audio or electronic formats and other languages on request.

Contact our Customer Centre on 0800 731 2020. Alternatively, speak to your local manager if you need audio or large print versions.

The complaints policy is available online in large print at [www.anchor.org.uk](http://www.anchor.org.uk) (search 'Complaints'),