

## COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS

Sometimes we get things wrong. We might forget to do something or make a mistake, or we might make a decision without the full facts. We naturally love it when we get a compliment but complaints help too. They give us a chance to put matters right and learn a useful lesson. You can make a complaint to us about any of our services, staff or someone working for us. And you can expect us to handle your complaint fairly, openly and promptly.

‘An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by our own staff, or those acting on our behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.’

HOUSING OMBUDSMAN DEFINITION OF ‘COMPLAINT’

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## What you can complain about

You can make a **complaint** or **service request** if you are not satisfied with the standard of service you got from us, or were expecting, or about one of our staff or someone else working for us.

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## Or send us a compliment

We'll be very happy to hear it and will pass it on to the person whose work you think deserved some praise.

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## How to make your complaint

You, or anyone acting for you with your consent, can:

- ✓ tell any of our staff in person
- ✓ call us on the phone  
☎ 020 7704 2324
- ✓ write to us by email or letter  
info@barnsbury.org  
4-6 Colebrooke Place, N1 8HZ
- ✓ contact us through our website at barnsbury.org

Tell us what left you dissatisfied as clearly as you can. It will help if you can back it up with proof, such as photos, letters or diary or calendar notes including dates.

If you would like some help making your complaint from one of our staff just ask. We'd be happy to help.

You can ask anyone to act on your behalf: a relative, friend, someone from another organisation like Citizens Advice, or even your MP or councillor. We will need a letter or note you have signed saying you have agreed to this.

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## We will not in most cases consider your complaint if:

- ✗ at **stage one** of this process, it is about a matter we have **dealt with already**, unless **new evidence or information** has come to light
- ✗ it is about something that **happened 12 months ago or earlier**, unless it is still affecting you or there are good reasons why you didn't report it earlier
- ✗ you are complaining **about another of our tenants**. We have other ways to deal with the sensitive issue of differences between neighbours.
- ✗ you want a service from us but this is the **first time you've asked for it**
- ✗ you refuse to deal with us in a **reasonable manner**
- ✗ you or we are taking some form of **legal action** on the matter you want to complain about
- ✗ if the matter is **better dealt with another way**, like organising a repair for you or, in the case of damages, your making an insurance claim
- ✗ it is about someone or another organisation **we cannot control**
- ✗ it is about the **wording of one of our policies**. But you can complain about how we acted on a policy.

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**You can go to the Housing Ombudsman service for advice at any stage of your complaint - before, during or after. If we reject your complaint, you can also ask the ombudsman to decide whether we were right to do so or not.**

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## Investigating your complaint

Our priority is to quickly get a situation sorted for you, without cutting corners.

### Fast fix: make a 'service request'

If you tell us about a situation you don't want treated as a complaint you can make a **service request**, asking us to just put matters right. If you are not happy with what we do we will treat this as a **new complaint** while also keeping up our efforts to honour your service request.

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## Making a formal complaint

If a problem is not straightforward or you want to make a formal complaint we will start a formal investigation. This is a **two-stage process**. Most complaints are sorted at stage one.

### Stage one for complaints

The person who takes your complaint will log what you have told them on our system. They have a duty to record it fairly and accurately.

You will get a letter or email from us within **five working days** confirming:

- \* the reason for your complaint
- \* the name of the middle manager investigating your complaint.

We may also contact you to get a better understanding of the problem and what you want done about it.

If we have got any details wrong you have **two working days** to tell us.

You can expect a full response from us within **10 working days**. But we will tell you **within 10 working days** if we need more time, and why, and we will give you a new timescale.

Once our investigation is finished we will write telling you if your complaint has been upheld, in full or partly, or not upheld. **If we uphold your complaint we will tell you how we are putting matters right - and will do just that.**

You have **28 working days** to let us know if you **disagree with our decision**. If we do not hear from you we will close the complaint.

### Stage two for complaints

If you **disagree with our decision** your complaint will go to a senior manager.

Our business support officer will write telling you we have and are investigating your stage two complaint within **five working days**.

The senior manager will check we have understood your complaint clearly, ask what outcome you are looking for and ask if there are any other relevant points you want us to consider.

You will be told the decision within **20 working days**, or will get a new timescale and reason for the delay.

Once this investigation has finished, and we are satisfied all possible steps have been taken, we will write telling you the decision and the reasons supporting it. If we agree we were at fault we will make an offer appropriate to the impact it had on you, such as compensation.

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## Taking your complaint further

If at the end of our process you are not happy with our final decision you can take it up with the Housing Ombudsman. We will cooperate as best we can with the ombudsman investigation.

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## Questions and answers

### Do I have to tell you my name?

If you don't give us your name we can't check details, ask you questions or tell you if we uphold your complaint.

### Why can't I complain about my neighbour's behaviour?

We have a different approach for disputes between neighbours where the problem is antisocial behaviour. Please do report it to us and we will explain what we can and will do.

### Why can't I complain about one of your policies?

Our policies are drawn up after careful thought and discussion with tenants and colleagues. You can **complain** about how we put a policy into action. And you can ask to be consulted if and when any of our policies comes up for review.

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## Lessons learned

Your complaints make clear to us where our services are at fault. Our staff and board members regularly review all complaints, what triggered them and how we responded. This helps us see where and how we need to make changes and can be a useful sign of more deep-seated problems.

You can find our complaints policy on our website at [barnsbury.org](https://www.barnsbury.org) or call or email us and we will send a paper copy out to you.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### Barnsbury Housing Association

4-6 Colebrooke Place  
London N1 8HZ

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☎ 020 7704 2324

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[info@barnsbury.org](mailto:info@barnsbury.org)

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### Housing Ombudsman

PO Box 1484  
Preston PR2 0ET

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☎ 0300 111 3000

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

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

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We process and store personal information and data in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018. All complaints are dealt with in line with our GDPR-related policies.

## DO YOU NEED HELP TO READ OR SPEAK ENGLISH?



We can use a **translator** if English is not your first language.