

A BARNSBURY HOUSING  
ASSOCIATION GUIDE TO



## 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.”

HOUSING OMBUDSMAN DEFINITION OF 'COMPLAINT'

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## Who can complain to us

You can make a complaint to any of our staff if you are not satisfied with a service you got from us, or were expecting, or about one of our staff or another person 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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## Ways to make your complaint

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

- ✔ tell one 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, NI 8HZ
- ✔ contact us through our website at barnsbury.org

Tell us what you want to complain about as clearly as you can. It will help if you can back it up with proof, such as photos, letters or notes from a diary or calendar, including dates.

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## We will not consider your complaint if:

- ✘ 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 six 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
- ✘ 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 - before, during or after making a complaint. See page four for how to contact the ombudsman.**

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## Investigating your complaint

Our priority is to get the situation resolved quickly, without cutting corners.

### Quick fix

If you tell us about a matter we can put right quickly we will suggest bypassing the formal process.

We might be able to sort it for you by, for example, explaining something more clearly, chasing up a repair, or apologising for something that should have been handled faster or more sensitively.

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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 member of our staff 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
- \* who on our staff is investigating it.

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 if we need more time, and why, and we will give you a new timescale.

This stage usually takes no more than five weeks. We will also identify and get going any other action needed.

Once our investigation is finished we will write telling you if your complaint has been upheld, in full or partly, or dismissed. If we agree you had good reason to complain we will tell you how we are putting matters right.

You have **15 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 up to one of our leadership team.

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

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

Once our leadership team has finished its investigation, and we are satisfied all possible steps have been taken, we will write to you with the team's decision and the reasons supporting it.

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## Taking your complaint further

If at the end of our process you are not happy with our final decision we will tell you how to 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 much discussion with tenants and colleagues. What you can complain about is 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.

### Can someone else complain for me?

You can ask someone else to act on your behalf, like a friend or councillor. You will need to sign a form confirming that they are acting with your consent.

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

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### Barnsbury Housing Association

☎ 020 7704 2324

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

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4-6 Colebrooke Place

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London N1 8HZ

### Housing Ombudsman

PO Box 152

Liverpool L33 7WQ

☎ 0300 111 3000

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

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