



CHICHESTER GREYFRIARS  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION  
— FOUNDED IN 1969 —

## **Complaints Policy**

**Chichester Greyfriars Housing Association** is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our service. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible, we will put right any mistakes we may have made. We will provide any service you are entitled to which we have failed to deliver. If we got something wrong, we will apologise and where possible we will try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

### **When to use this policy**

When you express your concerns or complain to us, we will usually respond in the way we explain below. Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by us (eg the state of the roads or street lighting) and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known.

Also, this policy does not apply if the matter relates to a Freedom of Information or Data Protection issue. In this circumstance, you should refer to the association's Data Protection Policy.

### **Have you asked us yet?**

If you are approaching us for a service for the first time, (e.g. reporting an item needing repair) then this policy does not apply. You should first give us a chance to respond to your request. If you make a request for a service and then are not happy with our response, you will be able to make your concern known as we describe below.

### **Informal resolution**

If possible, we believe it is best to deal with things straight away rather than try to sort them out later. If you have a concern, raise it with the person you are dealing with. He or she will try to resolve it for you there and then. If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern then the member of staff will draw them to our attention. If the

member of staff cannot help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

## **How to express concern or complain formally**

You can express your concern in any of the ways below.

- You can ask for a copy of our form from the person with whom you are already in contact. Tell them that you want us to deal with your concern formally.
- You can get in touch with us on the telephone – 01243 531482
- You can send an email to [office@chichestergreyfriars.org.uk](mailto:office@chichestergreyfriars.org.uk)
- You can write a letter to us at the following address – The Forum, Stirling Road, Chichester PO19 7DN.

## **Dealing with your concern**

- We will formally acknowledge your concern within 5 working days and let you know how we intend to deal with it.
- We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements – for example, if you have a disability.
- We will deal with your concern in an open and honest way.
- We will make sure that your dealings with us in the future do not suffer just because you have expressed a concern or made a complaint.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within 6 months. This is because its better to look into your concerns while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.

We may exceptionally be able to look at concerns which are brought to our attention later than this. However, you will have to give us strong reasons why you have not been able to bring it to our attention earlier and we will need to have sufficient information about the issue to allow us to consider it properly. (In any event, regardless of the circumstances, we will not consider any concerns about matters that took place more than three years ago.).

If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

## **What if there is more than one body involved?**

If your complaint covers more than one body e.g. Housing Association and Council re noise nuisance we will usually work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your concerns. You will then be given the name of the person responsible for communicating with you while we consider your complaint.

If the complaint is about a body working on our behalf eg repair contractors you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to express your concern or complaint formally, we will look into this ourselves and respond to you.

## **Investigation**

We will tell you who we have asked to look into your concern or complaint. If your concern is straightforward, we'll usually ask somebody from the service to look into it and get back to you. If it is more serious, we may appoint an independent investigator.

We will set out to you our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we've got it right. We'll also ask you to tell us what outcome you're hoping for. The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see the files we hold relevant to your complaint. If you don't want this to happen, it's important that you tell us.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you're happy to accept this. For example, where you asked for a service and we see straight away that you should have had it, we will offer to provide the service rather than investigate and produce a report.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 20 working days. If your complaint is more complex, we will:

- let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate and tell you how long we expect it to take.
- let you know where we have reached with the investigation, and
- give you regular updates, including telling you whether any developments might change our original estimate.

The person who is investigating your concerns will aim first to establish the facts. The extent of this investigation will depend on how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are. In complex cases, we will draw up an investigation plan.

In some instances, we may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes.

We'll look at relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, emails or whatever may be relevant to your particular concern. If necessary, we'll talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies and any legal entitlement and guidance.

## **Outcome**

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication. This could be by letter or e-mail, for example. If necessary, we will produce a longer report. We'll explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we got it wrong, we'll tell you what and why it happened. We'll show how the mistake affected you.

If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we'll tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

If we got it wrong, we will always apologise.

## **Putting Things Right**

If we didn't provide a service you should have had, we'll aim to provide it now if that's possible. If we didn't do something well, we'll aim to put it right. If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part we'll try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we'd got it right.

If you had to pay for a service yourself, when you should have had one from us, we will usually aim to make good what you have lost.

## **If you are not satisfied**

If you are unable to resolve your complaint through our complaints procedure you can contact a designated person who can also help find a solution. The designated person can be an MP, a local councillor or a Tenant Panel. Their role is to help resolve disputes between tenants and their landlords which they can do in whatever way they think is most likely to work. If the designated person cannot help they can refer a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. If you have decided not to contact a designated person you can go directly to the Ombudsman eight weeks after CGHA has given you our final response to your complaint

Housing Ombudsman

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Housing Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is independent of all government bodies and can look into your complaint if you believe that you personally, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining:

You can contact the Ombudsman by:

- phone: 0300 111 3000
- e-mail: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
- the website:
- writing to: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ

## Complaint form

### A: Your details

Surname	Forename(s):	Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/if other please state:
Address and postcode:		
Your e-mail address:		
Daytime contact phone number		
Mobile number:		
Hospital number (if appropriate)		

Please state by which of the above methods you would prefer us to contact you

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**Your requirements:** if our usual way of dealing with complaints makes it difficult for you to use our service, 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 this in on behalf of someone else, please fill in section B overleaf. 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.

**B: Making a complaint on behalf of someone else: Their details**

Their name in full:	
Address and postcode:	
Hospital number (if appropriate)	
What is your relationship to them?	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	

**C: About your concern/complaint (please continue your answers to the following questions on a separate sheet(s) if necessary)**

C.1 Name of the department/section/service you are complaining about:

C.2 What do you think they did wrong, or failed to do?

C.3 Describe how you personally have suffered or have been affected.

C.4 What do you think should be done to put things right?

C.5 When did you first become aware of the problem?

C.6 Have you already put your concern to the member of staff responsible for delivering the service? If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so.

C.7 If it is more than 6 months since you became first aware of the problem, please give the reason why you have not complained before now.

If you have any documents to support your concern/complaint, please attach them with this form.

Signature:

Date:

When you have completed this form, please send it to:

Director of Housing, Chichester Greyfriars Housing Association, The Forum, Stirling Road, Chichester PO19 7DN

If your complaint is about the Director of Housing please send your completed form to:

Chair of Chichester Greyfriars Housing Association, The Forum, Stirling Road, Chichester PO19 7DN. Mark your envelope 'Complaint'.