Ongo Homes
Complaints Policy
November 2025
Owner: Head of Customer Experience

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V8.0	Compliance review	13/06/2024	Heads of Service	
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ongo homes

1. Our policy is...

1.1 A complaint shall be defined 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.

1.2 At Ongo, we do our best to get things right and provide an excellent level of service. However, we recognise that things can go wrong and that there may be reason to complain. We welcome complaints as an opportunity to learn and put things right for our tenants and customers.

1.3 We welcome complaints to be made through all communication channels to ensure that we continue to improve our services and learn from complaints and feedback to prevent similar problems in the future.

1.4 We recognise any dissatisfaction with the level of service you receive as a complaint. However, if we can help resolve your problem straight away, we will, and we will give you a choice if you want to make a complaint.

1.5 We support you to make a complaint by making the process as easy as possible. We will always treat our tenants and customers with respect and will not treat them differently because they have complained.

1.6 Your complaint will be resolved quickly and completely, ensuring we listen to your opinion and understand fully what your complaint is about. Your complaint will be considered on the individual set of circumstances presented to us.

1.7 This policy is available on our website or a copy can be requested by telephone, email, webchat or post we will ensure the policy can be accessed by all our tenants and customers.

2. It applies to...

2.1 All tenants and customers of Ongo Homes (OH) and those who may have been affected by a service we or someone working on behalf of us has provided.

2.2 Anyone helping to make a complaint on behalf of one of our tenants or customers (for example a family member, friend, support worker, MP, or Councillor) or as part of a collective complaint, providing consent from the individual is given.

2.3 Non-tenants who have suffered or who have been negatively affected because of the actions of an employee, a contractor or work carried out by OH.

2.4 Only our employees and companies providing a service on behalf of OH are included in this policy. We cannot take complaints that are outside of our control (for example complaints about other landlords, Government Policies, or external companies).

3. This policy does not apply...

3.1 Requests for service, this is a request from you to put something right and usually a first request. These types of requests are not complaints, but we will record these to ensure

we resolve your request where we can. If you are not happy with our response to your request for service a complaint will be raised, if a complaint is raised it will not delay any ongoing actions of the service request.

3.2 We will not take complaints about damage to personal property unless it has been caused by something we have done or have failed to do. We advise you to take out appropriate household contents insurances in the event of any unforeseen incidents.

3.3 We will only accept complaints if they are made within 12 months of when you first became aware of the problem. We may apply discretion if there are exceptional reasons to accept a complaint outside of these time limits.

3.4 We will not investigate a complaint that has already been investigated through the OH complaints procedure unless it is a reoccurring problem that has not been resolved from your initial complaint.

3.5 Any complaints regarding anti-social behaviour or nuisance by your neighbours will be dealt under our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy. Although complaints about the way we have handled your anti-social behaviour case can be dealt with under this policy, ASB reviews under the Crime and Police Act 2014 are subject to relevant Local authorities' external processes.

3.6 We may not be able to investigate complaints where a complainant's behaviour has been found to be unacceptable in line with our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy. This can include abusive or threatening behaviour, unreasonable demands, and unreasonable persistence on the same issue. We always ensure we discuss this behaviour with the tenant or customer in the first instance before restricting contacts or refusing a complaint. We will always consider our duties under the Equality Act and ensure any reasonable adjustments are put in place to support a tenant or customer to access complaint services where appropriate.

3.7 Decisions around the allocation of our homes will not be dealt with under this policy and will be under the appropriate appeals process. However, if you are dissatisfied with the way in which your allocation has been handled, it will be covered under this Complaints Policy.

3.8 We will not accept the complaint under this policy if legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the claim form and particulars of claim, having been filed at court.

3.9 A detailed explanation will be provided setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process. All explanations will be confirmed in writing to the tenant or customer. Tenants and customers have the right to challenge this decision by taking their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. Where appropriate the Ombudsman will instruct the landlord to take on the complaint.

4. Making a complaint.....

4.1 We will make every effort to resolve any expressions of dissatisfaction with you when you first contact us. We will consider each complaint based on the individual set of circumstances.

4.2 If we cannot resolve your complaint when we first speak with you or you feel that a complaint should be made, we will support you making a complaint.

4.3 A representative can deal with your complaint on your behalf, and you can be represented and / or accompanied at any meeting with us where this has been requested or offered and where this is reasonable. We will consider any vulnerabilities and customer needs and make reasonable adjustments where required. We have a Reasonable Adjustment Policy to support this approach.

4.4 We can only resolve your complaint if you provide us with all the relevant information and are clear about what you want us to do to resolve the matter. We ask you to work with the Complaint Officer to enable them to make the right decision based on accurate information and the facts. We cannot investigate anonymous complaints, but these may be kept on record.

4.5 Complaints can be made through all communication methods including social media platforms made directly to Ongo newsfeeds or pages. When a complaint is made through social media, we will endeavour to resolve the issue at first point of contact. Should we need further information we will ask you to discuss the complaint in a private setting to ensure your privacy and confidentiality is maintained.

4.6 Where you have expressed dissatisfaction with a survey, we may make contact to discuss this with you where you have agreed to do so. We make it clear on our surveys should you wish to make a formal complaint you can do so, and it provides a digital link to our website.

4.7 **Stage 1 complaint investigation**

4.7.1 We will acknowledge and define your complaint within 5 working days; we will let you know who will be dealing with your complaint and we will communicate the date we will respond by. We may also ask for clarification of your complaint at this time if anything is unclear and we will set out any points of the complaint that we are not responsible for investigating.

4.7.2 Your complaint will be investigated and completed within 10 working days. If we are unable to complete within this timescale, we will inform you, explain the reasons why and we will agree when we will update you and when we will respond by. We may extend the complaint timescale by no more than 10 working days but only with good reason. We will inform you of an expected response date.

4.7.3 We will keep you informed throughout the investigation where it has been agreed to do so. If a complaint falls outside of the extended timescales within the Complaint Handling Code, we will agree regular intervals to keep you updated.

4.7.4 If during the investigation you add further points to your complaint, we will add these into your current complaint if it does not cause an unreasonable delay. If we have already responded to the complaint, it delays the complaint or are points that are unrelated, then a new complaint will be raised.

4.7.5 We will discuss the findings of the investigation with you before responding with the Stage 1 decision. We will try to find a solution to make the matter right where this is possible. We will then provide you with a written response of our decision at that time, this will include the points raised in your complaint, the outcome you are seeking, the decision on your complaint, reasoning for our decision, the remedy offered to put things right and any identified organisational learning. On occasion there may be actions to resolve your complaint that are still ongoing after the decision and response has been given. We will set out what actions are outstanding, continue to track these actions and update you until they are completed, and your complaint is fully resolved as agreed.

4.8 **Stage 2 complaint investigation**

4.8.1 If you are unhappy with the outcome or handling of the Stage 1 complaint, you can ask for your complaint to be looked at again. You are not required to provide reasons for your decision to escalate. Your Stage 2 request will be logged, acknowledged, and defined within five working days. Stage 2 complaints will be investigated by an appropriate senior leader that has not been involved in the Stage 1 decision.

4.8.2 We will review your complaint and the Stage 1 response and provide you with a final decision within 20 working days of when the complaint was acknowledged, in line with the Complaint Handling Code.

4.8.3 We will keep you informed throughout the investigation and will agree and communicate reasons for any extensions to timescales with you, which will be no more than a further 20 working days. We will set out the reasons for the extension and when we expect to respond to the complaint. You have the right to approach the Housing Ombudsman service if any extension exceeds the timescales set out in the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

4.8.4 We will discuss the findings of the investigation with you before giving you a final written response. We will try to find a solution to make the matter right where this is possible. The Stage 2 complaint response will be provided when the decision is made, there may be outstanding actions to be completed which we will set out what those actions are and keep you updated until completion. This response will complete our complaint process.

4.9 **If you are still unhappy**

4.9.1 Although we will make every effort to resolve your complaint and respond within timescales, if you are still unhappy with the outcome you have the following options:

- If you are a tenant, leaseholder, or housing applicant, you can take the issue further by contacting the Housing Ombudsman (see below). We will ensure that information on how to contact the Housing Ombudsman is easily available during every stage of the complaints process

- If your complaint is in relation to the reasonableness and costs relating to service charges, you can contact the First Tier Tribunal Service for further guidance

4.10 **Housing Ombudsman**

4.10.1 The Housing Ombudsman Service can assist throughout the lifetime of a complaint. Complainants can discuss their ongoing complaint with the Housing Ombudsman Service.

4.10.2 The Housing Ombudsman will support complaint resolution between you and us and will formally investigate a complaint once you have completed our complaints process fully. We will co-operate fully with all requests from the Housing Ombudsman to support them in their findings and comply with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. Contact details for the Housing Ombudsman are:

Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box1484
Unit D
Preston
PR2 0ET
Telephone: 0300 111 3000
E-mail: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Online complaint form: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/

5. Remedies

5.1 Where things have gone wrong, we will acknowledge this with you and consider what the appropriate remedies are to put things right. Remedies can take a range of forms, for example:

- an apology
- taking action
- changing a decision
- replacing an item
- financial payment

We will consider the most appropriate remedies to reflect the impact of the failure.

5.2 If it is found that compensation should be given as part of a complaint remedy, we will use our Compensation Policy to guide on the appropriate type of compensation and levels of any financial compensation. We will not make you complete separate claim forms as requested in the Compensation Policy and will use the information we have investigated on your complaint to ensure the process is easy to follow and accessible to you.

6. Making sure we do what we say…

6.1 Our customer facing colleagues and those involved in complaint investigations will receive full complaints training, with periodic refresher training. Regular complaint information will be shared to all departments to enable service changes where required.

6.2 We will ensure our Complaint Policy and Procedure complies with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. This will be published on our website along with information about the Housing Ombudsman.

6.3 A self-assessment against the latest Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code will be conducted annually. We will then ensure that the annual submission to the Housing Ombudsman will be carried before the stated submission deadline.

6.4 We will monitor that we keep to agreed timescales through various performance reports to our management teams.

6.5 We will monitor that we have kept you informed, resolved your complaint fully and how happy you are with the handling of your complaint. We will do this via a satisfaction survey. This information will be reported to our Leadership Team, Customer Engagement structures of involvement and the Ongo Homes Board.

6.6 Our overall performance will also be monitored by our tenant Complaint Monitoring Panel, which provides us with a customer perspective on the quality of our complaints handling, what trends are emerging and what we have done to prevent similar complaints happening again.

6.7 We will report on our performance and how we have improved our services through complaints to our customers. We will do this by publishing the Complaint Performance and Service Improvement report on our website alongside our Complaint Handling Code self-assessment and by providing a quarterly performance summary on our website. We share and publish any finding from the Housing Ombudsman and share our performance and self-assessment within our annual report each year.

7. Other things to bear in mind....

7.1 Other policies and legislation

Document or legislation	What it is
Anti-Social Behaviour Policy	• Any complaint from one resident about another is dealt with under the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. We will only investigate complaints about the Ongo Homes Anti-Social Behaviour service. We cannot investigate complaints that refer to the Safer Neighbourhoods Community Trigger.
Compensation Policy	• Any compensation offered as part of a complaint will follow the guidelines set out in the Compensation Policy.
Reasonable Adjustment Policy	• We will consider our customers' needs and vulnerabilities throughout a complaint
Unacceptable behaviour Procedure	• This is the procedure that will inform how we deal with unreasonable and unacceptable behaviour
Choice Based Lettings Policy	• Initial appeals against an allocation decision are dealt with under the Choice Based Lettings Policy.

Document or legislation	What it is
Customer Charter	• We will ensure we follow the principles of the customer charter whilst investigating complaints.
Equality and Diversity Policy	• We believe everyone has the right to fair and equal treatment and recognise that people who use our services come from diverse backgrounds. We ensure we follow the principles set out in this policy.
First Tier Tribunal	• The First-tier tribunal – Property Chamber (Residential Property) provides an independent service for settling relevant disputes involving leasehold property.
Housing Ombudsman Service	• The Housing Ombudsman is set up by law to look at complaints about housing organisations. The service is free, independent, and impartial. Only tenants and resident leaseholders can use this service.
Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code	• This is a statutory code set out by the Housing Ombudsman that all social housing providers have to adhere to. We self – assess against this code every year and publish our finding to our tenants and customers.

8. We'll look at this again.....

8.1 In three years' time. An earlier review will be completed if required.