

Clarion Interim Complaints Policy

This policy is effective from 17 June 2022.



COMPLAINTS DEFINITION

A complaint is 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.

As a customer, you do not need to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as one.

A complaint submitted via a third party or representative will still be handled in line with our complaints policy.

We will accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. We will always provide a detailed explanation setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for our complaints process and your right to escalate to the Housing Ombudsman.

We will always manage your expectations from the outset being clear where your desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic.

WHAT IS NOT A COMPLAINT?

- A first time customer enquiry; its important Clarion has an opportunity to provide a response or resolve our customers' issues.
New complaints received since 17 June 2022 about service delays due to the Cyber Security incident. We will provide a response to each customer enquiry apologising for the delay and explaining what we can do until services are fully restored. Once the investigation and restoration is complete, we will undertake a lessons learned review and publish an update on our website.
- Matters already being dealt with at determination stage by the Ombudsman Service.
- Liability or personal injury claims.
- Where we are advised that legal proceedings have been issued (this is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court) we will close the complaint explaining the reason.
- Complaints from one resident about another; the customer should contact the Neighbourhood Housing team for advice on neighbour disputes.
- Issues regarding Antisocial Behaviour (ASB). We will manage complaints about the handling of an ASB process.
- Feedback about our policies and procedures from customers or other parties will be recorded and form part of future reviews.
- Disagreement with a decision we have made where there is another procedure to appeal the decision, such as a dispute about service charges, succession of tenancy.
- Issues Clarion receive in an unreasonable manner.
- Survey feedback may not necessarily need to be treated as a complaint, though where possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue their dissatisfaction as a complaint if they wish to.
- Any complaint closed over six months ago unless:
 - There are issues ongoing related to the complaint – e.g. ASB, Damp or Mould.
 - An MP or Ombudsman have asked us to review the complaint.
 - There is good reason for delay.

Service requests where a customer is unhappy with a situation that they wish to have rectified, will be passed to one of our teams to be dealt with as an enquiry. An explanation will be provided, setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process, if we decide not to accept a complaint. If further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter or if a customer requests it, the issue will be logged as a complaint.

CORRESPONDENCE TO CLARION EXECUTIVES, BOARD MEMBERS, PRESS OFFICE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Correspondence addressed to Clarion Housing Executives, Board Members the Press Office or Social Media will be directed to the appropriate team for action. Where the contact relates to dissatisfaction, the issue will be investigated as a new complaint or included as further information in a complaint that is already being investigated.

*Please note we advise all our customers to send correspondence to our [central contact channels](#) as this helps us to understand volumes and identify trends. Correspondence to Clarion's Executives and Board members may take longer to filter to the correct place and subsequently result in response delays.

A complaint made in the form of a petition on behalf of multiple customers will be treated as one complaint; interactions and correspondence will be directed to the nominated signatory.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

Our main priority is to deliver the highest quality service to you, which is why it is important that you let us know when you think we have something wrong so we can deal with the matter as soon as possible. It helps us learn how we can improve our services for the future.

A complaint can be made via the following channels:

Live Chat

You can contact us via our online Live Chat system. This is available during the extended hours set out below.

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 08:30 – 20:00
- Wednesday: 10:00 – 20:00
- Saturday and Sunday: 10:00 – 14:00
- Online - www.myclarionhousing.com/contact-us by completing a 'make a complaint' form.

OUR PRINCIPLES

Our policy sets out how we intend to resolve complaints efficiently whilst learning from them to improve our services and prevent complaints arising in the future. Our principles are to provide a quality service by:

- Being fair.

- Putting things right within reasonable timescales.
- Keeping our customers informed and managing expectations.
- Following our policy and procedures.
- Fully and accurately recording details, actions and investigations of the complaint at all stages.
- Using lessons learned from the complaints to improve our service and prevent complaints.

OUR PROMISE

We will:

- Listen and ensure we understand your complaint.
- Tell you what will happen next.
- Take ownership of issues that you raise to us.
- Keep you informed.
- Aim to resolve your complaint quickly and manage your expectations.
- Make it easy for you to contact us during the duration of your complaint.
- Address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.

OUR PROCEDURE

We have a two-stage procedure, which is co-ordinated by our Customer Solutions team.

1. **Complaint** – If an attempt to resolve the issue as an enquiry/service request fails, a formal complaint will be recorded and investigated (see above). We will do all we can to resolve customers' issues and put things right.

When a complaint is made, it must be acknowledged and logged at stage one of the complaints procedure within ten working days of receipt.

We aim to respond to new complaints received since 17 June 2022 within 20 working days of the complaint being logged.

Where we are unable to resolve the complaint we will:

- Provide the reasons for this decision and manage your expectations regarding what we can do until systems have been restored.
- If we need to do this, we will provide you with an action plan outlining what we intend to do and if possible provide a timeline of when your complaint will be in a position to provide a full response.

For complaints logged before the 17 June 2022, our Customer Solutions team will contact the customer and try to progress these through to resolution. If we are unable to progress all or some aspects of your complaint we will manage your expectations.

2. **Peer Review** – At the conclusion of the complaint process, a customer may request a peer review. They will need to be clear on what they wish to be considered as their desired outcome and what specifically they are not accepting. Where a customer requests an escalation due to the cyber incident, we will apologise for the delay and explain that the incident was beyond our control. If the customer remains dissatisfied, the complaint will be closed at stage one and the customer advised of their right to go directly to the Ombudsman.

We will log and acknowledge requests for a peer review in 10 working days.

We will aim to resolve peer reviews within 40 working days. If we are unable to resolve your peer review within this time, we will:

- Contact you and explain why we are unable to resolve your peer review.
- Provide a timescale of what is involved in order to resolve your peer review and if possible, approximately how long your peer review will take.
- Agree with you the frequency of keeping you updated and your preferred method of communication.

Please note from the 1 October 2022, a change in law means that a customer will no longer have to contact a designated person or wait eight weeks before they can refer their complaint to the Ombudsman. The demographic filter is being removed following a change in the law. Further information can be found on The Housing Ombudsman website at www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk.

EQUALITY

We will ensure our practices don't disadvantage minority groups or disabled people and don't discriminate against any resident on grounds of their race, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, marital status, disability, age, religion or class

We welcome complaints in all formats and will provide help for customers with hearing difficulties or sight problems.

Date last reviewed:	August 2022
Date next review:	November 2022