

Complaints Policy

Pinnacle Affordable Homes (“PAF”)



1. Scope

This Policy sets out Pinnacle Affordable Homes consistent and fair approach to managing complaints.

We have developed this Policy in accordance with the [Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code](#), our statutory and legal duties, and residents’ feedback.

2. Aims and Objectives

Pinnacle Affordable Homes aims to provide a good quality, reliable service to all clients and to treat feedback as a learning opportunity to improve services.

We are committed to responding promptly and courteously to all expressions of dissatisfaction and ensuring action is taken to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity.

3. Complaints

We define a complaint 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.

The word ‘complaint’ does not have to be used for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative will be handled in line with the complaints policy.

Who can make a complaint

PAF positively welcomes feedback in the form of complaints from anyone who is affected by a service we provide, or decision taken by us. However, you may only be able to escalate your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service if you have a landlord/tenant relationship with us such as:

- A Residents named on a PAF tenancy for any of our properties.
- A person acting on behalf of a resident with their consent for example a family member, neighbour, advice agency, member of parliament, councillor or the Housing Ombudsman.
- A complaint may be also made in the form of a petition. The complaint will be dealt with following the normal complaints process, on the address of the first signatory only.

Service Requests

The Housing Ombudsman Service defines a service request as ‘a request from a resident to their landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right’.

When you first let us know about your concern, as a starting point we’ll ask you what you’d like us to do to put things right. We can often resolve service requests, such as a missed appointment or repair delay, immediately with an apology and by providing another appointment. We may be able to resolve this outside of our complaints process, recording it as a service request and monitoring it to completion.

If we need to make further enquiries to resolve the matter, you're dissatisfied, or if you ask us to at any point, we'll log it as a complaint.

Complaint Inclusions and Exclusions

You can complain about our standard of service, actions or lack of action by us within 12 months of the issue happening or of you becoming aware of the issue. We may use our discretion to accept older complaints if there's good reason you hadn't raised it before or if a problem is a reoccurring or ongoing issue.

If you make a complaint and we complete our process, we're unlikely to accept another complaint about the same issue unless you provide new information.

We won't accept new complaints that have already been investigated or are under investigation by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

There may be some circumstances where your complaint is better dealt with outside our complaints process. Examples of where we'll advise alternative action are outlined below this list is not exhaustive.

- The first request for a service or where we have been given insufficient time to deliver that service according to our service standards
- A general request for information or a service
- An enquiry about the levels of rent or service charge or the amount of rent or service charge increase. Unless the customer is unhappy with the information provided in response to a rent or service charge enquiry raised and responded to by the team.
- An explanation of, or challenge to, a PAF policy or procedure; although we can look at how that policy or procedure has been applied
- Any matter that can be appealed to an outside body, so for example, the Housing Benefit Tribunal, the Planning Inspectorate and the Parking Adjudicators.
- A challenge to a PAF decision, although we can look at how that decision was reached
- A complaint about another resident, as part of a neighbour dispute for example
- Where legal action is in progress. However, if a solicitor is acting as an advocate for a customer, this will be logged as a complaint, and it will be dealt with in the usual way
- We may decline to investigate a complaint if it is being pursued in an unreasonable or unfair manner including frivolous or vexatious complaints
- Insurance claims
- Where legal action is in progress, as the legal action supersedes the complaint.

Complaints about a service provided by an external provider will be considered dependent upon the contractual relationship of the external provider and PAF.

We'll consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. If we decide not to accept a complaint, we'll provide an explanation setting out the reason why. If you're unhappy with our decision, you're able to approach the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice.

There are a range of ways you can raise a complaint:

- Phone

- Via our Online Customer App (contract dependant)
- Email or Letter
- In person

We'll take residents needs into account when communicating through all channels and we will make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010.

4. Complaints Process - Stage One

Stage one complaints will be reviewed by a Complaint Officer, when we receive a stage one complaint we will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days
- Establish full details of your complaint, clarifying with you anything that's unclear and which aspects of your complaint we are, and are not, responsible for
- Find out how you'd like us to resolve it
- If multiple complaints are raised at the same time, we'll provide you with one point of contact, where possible. If you raise further concerns when we've already issued a response, or it would unreasonably delay our response, we'll log it as a new complaint
- Aim to give you a full response within 10 working days of the acknowledgement date
- If, for any reason, we need more than 10 working days to respond to your complaint, we'll explain why and inform you of the expected timescale for our response

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman for advice at any point. We'll continue with our investigation and provide a response within the extended timeframe.

We'll email our formal response (unless you've requested a different communication method). Our response will confirm:

- The complaint stage
- Definition of your complaint
- Our decision on the complaint and reasons for our decision
- Clear details of any remedy offered to put things right, including timescales
- Details of any outstanding or further actions required and how we'll monitor progress
- How you can contact us to discuss our findings
- If, for any reason, we need more than time to respond to your complaint, we'll explain why and inform you of the expected timescale for our response
- Details of how to escalate your complaint to stage two if you're not satisfied with the outcome

We may close your complaint if you refuse to engage with us to resolve the complaint, for example:

- Failing to respond to contact for a prolonged period

- Refusing to allow access to your home if required
- Failing to provide information when requested within agreed timescales

5. Complaint Process - Stage two

You can ask us to escalate your complaint to stage two if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of stage one. A Senior Manager with no previous involvement in your complaint will conduct a review. You must request this within 20 working days of the date of our formal response. We may consider requests after this time at the discretion of the manager responsible for the service.

When we receive a stage two complaint we will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days
- Confirm our understanding of the issues and outcomes you're seeking
- Clarify any details of your complaint that are unclear. We'll confirm which aspects of your complaint we are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear
- Aim to contact you with our decision within 20 working days of our acknowledgement of your complaint
- If, for any reason, we need more than time to respond to your complaint, we'll explain why and inform you of the expected timescale for our response

We'll email a formal response (unless you've requested a different communication method). Our response will confirm:

- The complaint stage
- Definition of your complaint
- Our decision on the complaint
- Reasons for our decision
- Clear details of any remedy offered to put things right including timescales
- Details of any outstanding or further actions required and how we'll monitor progress
- How you can contact us to discuss our findings
- Your right to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service if you remain dissatisfied

6. Putting things right

Where something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge this. We will share the actions already taken, and/or those we intend to take, to put things right. This may include:

- Apologising
- Accepting responsibility
- Acknowledging your expectations

- Taking action to correct the issue that caused the complaint
- Keeping you updated
- Providing compensation, if deemed appropriate in line with our Compensation Policy
- Listening to your feedback and make improvements were needed

7. Monitoring, reporting and continuous improvement

Annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures surveys will be used to monitor how effectively complaints are handled and resolved from the tenant's perspective.

We will publish information about complaints received each year, including the number, nature, outcome and our plans to improve services provided.

This policy will be reviewed annually unless legislation, business or sector developments require to ensure that it continues to meet the stated objectives and take account of good practice developments.

8. Housing Ombudsman Service

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you have the right to take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman Service may not consider complaints that fall within the jurisdiction of another

- Ombudsman
- Complaints-handling body (such as the Information Commissioner)
- Regulator (such as the Regulator of Social Housing or Building Safety Regulator)

The Housing Ombudsman

Housing Ombudsman Services

PO Box 1484

Preston PR2 0ET

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk.

Web: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Please be aware that you have up to 12 months from the date you receive our final response to refer your complaint to the Ombudsman in writing, although it is preferable that you do so as soon as possible if you wish to pursue your complaint further.