GRANVILLE Community Homes



COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY & PROCEDURE

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Section 1 – Policy Context

Purpose

This policy sets out how Granville Community Homes (Granville) handles complaints in accordance with the statutory Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, so that residents have a clear, fair, and accessible route to raise dissatisfaction and Granville can evidence its compliance through the mandatory annual self-assessment.

Most day-to-day service delivery in Granville's portfolio is carried out by managing partners. A resident whose complaint is about a partner's service is still making a complaint to Granville — and Granville remains accountable to the Housing Ombudsman for how that complaint is handled. This policy closes the gap that would otherwise exist between partner-delivered services and Granville's complaint responsibility.

Scope

This policy applies to any expression of dissatisfaction — however made, and whether or not the word 'complaint' is used — about a service delivered by Granville or by a managing partner acting on Granville's behalf. It applies to complaints from current residents, former residents, and prospective residents.

It does not cover:

- Appeals against tenancy decisions (e.g. allocation decisions), which have their own process under policy HM01.
- Reports of repairs or damp/mould, which are handled under HM02 and HS04 but may become a complaint if the response is unsatisfactory.
- ASB reports, which are handled under TM14 but may also generate a complaint about Granville's response.

Principles

Accessibility

Every resident can make a complaint in whatever way suits them — in person, by phone, in writing, by email, through a managing partner, or via a representative. Granville does not impose a single channel.

No Barriers

Granville does not require residents to have tried to resolve the matter informally before accepting a complaint. Residents who wish to pursue informal resolution first may do so, but it is their choice.

Accountability for Partners

A complaint about a managing partner's service is Granville's complaint to handle. Granville does not redirect residents to the partner and walk away. Granville investigates, responds, and takes responsibility for the outcome.

Learning Culture

Complaints are a source of insight about service quality. Themes and lessons from complaints are reported to the Board quarterly and shared with managing partners where the learning relates to their service.

Fair and Independent Review

Stage 2 is conducted by someone who was not involved in Stage 1. The Stage 2 reviewer may be the CEO, a Board member, or an independent person appointed by Granville.

Definitions

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by Granville or anyone acting on its behalf, which requires a response.

Stage 1: The first formal stage of the complaints process. The complaint is investigated and responded to by Granville (or the Housing Manager). Response required within 10 working days.

Stage 2: A review of the Stage 1 outcome, carried out by someone not involved in Stage 1. Response required within 20 working days.

Housing Ombudsman referral: The resident's right to refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman after Stage 2 is exhausted (or where Granville fails to engage with the process). The Housing Ombudsman can make findings of maladministration and order remedies.

Complaint Handling Failure Order (CHFO): An order from the Housing Ombudsman where Granville has failed to comply with the Code. A CHFO is a serious finding that must be reported to the Board immediately.

Regulatory Basis

This policy gives effect to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (the Code), which is statutory under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. Key Code requirements built into this policy:

- A complaint must be acknowledged and a response at Stage 1 provided within 10 working days.
- A complaint escalated to Stage 2 must receive a response within 20 working days.
- Extensions beyond these timescales require the resident's agreement and must be agreed in writing.

- Granville must complete an annual self-assessment against the current Code, have it approved by the Board, and publish it.
- Granville must accept a complaint at the point it is made — it cannot require residents to pursue informal resolution first.
- Granville cannot exclude a category of complaint from the Code process.
- Residents must be informed of their right to refer to the Housing Ombudsman at Stage 2 completion.

Section 2 – Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility Under This Policy
Board of Directors	Approves this policy; receives quarterly complaint data; approves the annual self-assessment before publication; holds the CEO to account for complaint handling performance.
CEO	Stage 2 reviewer (or nominates independent alternative); receives all Housing Ombudsman determinations; approves action plans in response to adverse findings.
COO	Complaints lead; logs all complaints; ensures Stage 1 and Stage 2 timescales are met; manages partner complaints; produces quarterly report and annual self-assessment; manages Ombudsman referrals.
Complaint Handler	Stage 1 investigating officer; responds to residents within Code timescales; liaises with partners to obtain information; records outcomes on the complaints log.
Managing Partners	Report complaints received about their service to the COO & Complaint Handler within 2 working days; provide records and information for Granville investigations within 5 working days; co-operate with all complaint processes.

Section 3 – Procedures

Stage 1

- Complaint received and logged by the Complaints Handler within 1 working day of receipt.
- Acknowledgement sent to the resident within 5 working days, confirming the complaint reference, the name of the investigating officer, and the expected response date.

- Investigation carried out by the Housing Manager (or COO where the complaint concerns the Housing Manager's conduct). Where the complaint involves a managing partner, the partner is required to provide information and records within 5 working days of the request.
- Stage 1 response sent to the resident within 10 working days of the complaint being received. The response must: state Granville's decision on the complaint; give reasons; explain any remedy offered; and inform the resident of their right to escalate to Stage 2.
- Where a 10-working-day response is not possible, the COO contacts the resident before the deadline to agree a revised date. The revised date must not exceed a further 10 working days without strong justification.

Stage 2

- Resident requests Stage 2 within 12 months of the Stage 1 response (or of the event complained about, if Stage 1 was not completed).
- COO logs the Stage 2 request and assigns a reviewer not involved in Stage 1. They must acknowledge the escalation within 5 working days. The person reviewing must be more senior than the person reviewing Stage 1.
- Stage 2 response sent within 20 working days of the escalation request. The response must: confirm the Stage 2 reviewer's role; state the outcome of the review; give reasons; state any additional remedy; and inform the resident of their right to refer to the Housing Ombudsman.
- Where 20 working days is not achievable, the reviewer contacts the resident before the deadline to agree a revised date, which must be reasonable and communicated in writing. This must be no more than 20 extra working days.
- After Stage 2, the COO writes to the resident confirming the complaint is closed at Granville's level and providing the Housing Ombudsman's contact details.

Handling Complaints about Managing Partners

Where a complaint concerns the conduct or service of a managing partner, Granville handles the complaint under this policy. The process is:

- COO notifies the managing partner within 2 working days of receipt that a complaint has been received about their service.
- COO requests from the partner all relevant records, correspondence, and information within 5 working days.
- The Housing Manager investigates, using both Granville's own records and the partner's information.
- Granville responds to the resident as the accountable party. The partner's position is considered in the response but does not determine Granville's decision.
- Where the investigation finds that the partner has failed, Granville may initiate a Level 1 escalation alongside resolving the complaint.
- Complaint volumes and themes per partner are reviewed at each quarterly partner meeting as a KPI.

Remedies

Where a complaint is upheld, Granville considers what remedy is proportionate and fair. Remedies may include:

- Written apology.
- Explanation of what went wrong and what Granville is doing to prevent recurrence.
- Repair or service action that was previously delayed or refused.
- Financial compensation, calculated in line with the Housing Ombudsman's guidance on appropriate remedies.
- Change to a policy, procedure, or partner instruction.

Remedies are confirmed in writing in the Stage 1 or Stage 2 response. Financial compensation is paid within 20 working days of the response.

Annual Self-Assessment

The COO conducts an annual self-assessment against the current Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. The self-assessment is:

- Completed by the COO by 31st January each year, covering the preceding calendar year.
- Reviewed and approved by the Board at the first meeting of the calendar year.
- Published on Granville's website and provided to any resident who requests it.
- Used to identify any gap between Granville's practice and the Code; gaps are tracked to closure with named owners and deadlines.

The annual self-assessment is also informed by the complaint data reported to the Board quarterly (volumes, timescale compliance, themes, learning, and any Housing Ombudsman determinations).

Housing Ombudsman Determinations

Where the Housing Ombudsman investigates a complaint and makes a determination:

- The determination is shared with the Board immediately.
- Any finding of maladministration or severe maladministration is reported to the RSH (GC10) and included in the next annual self-assessment.
- Any Complaint Handling Failure Order is treated as a serious regulatory finding and addressed within the timescale the Ombudsman sets.
- The COO prepares an action plan in response to any adverse determination, for Board approval within 20 working days.

Board Reporting

Report	Content	Frequency
Quarterly complaints report	Volume; Stage 1/2 timescale compliance rates; outcomes (upheld/not); remedies issued; themes; partner comparisons; open cases	Quarterly
Annual self-assessment	Full self-assessment against Code; gaps identified; action plan	Annual (Q!, Board approval before publication
Immediate escalation	Any Complaint Handling Failure Order; any Housing Ombudsman finding of (severe) maladministration; any complaint involving a risk to life or safeguarding	Immediately on receipt

Section 4 – Equal Opportunities

Granville Community Homes is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of its work. We will provide equal opportunities in employment and service delivery and will not unlawfully discriminate against employees, residents, applicants, contractors or any other individual on the grounds of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Granville is committed to treating everyone fairly, with dignity and respect, and to making reasonable adjustments where required to support disabled employees, residents and others with additional needs.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and is intended to be applied consistently and fairly. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed before the policy is submitted to the Board for approval.

Section 5 – Related Documents

The following laws, legislation, and standards have been considered in accordance with the composition of this policy:

- Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024
- Social Housing Regulations Act 2023
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR
- Equality Act 2010

Other documents relevant to this policy from Granville's Policy Suite include:

- Regulatory Notification Self-Referral Policy (GC10)
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (TM14)
- Repairs & Maintenance Policy (HM02)
- Data Protection & UK GDPR Policy (IT03)

Section 6 – Revision History & Document Control

This policy will be reviewed Annually, with an exercise at least every two years, or earlier if there is a relevant change in legislation, regulatory requirements, or Granville's operating model (including material change to the partner/lease-based portfolio).

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Approved By
0.1	06/07/2026	Policy suite build project	Initial draft – not yet approved	Pending Board approval
0.2	01/08/2026	Policy suite build project	Company branding and improved policy structure – not yet approved	Pending Board approval