Complaints Policy and Procedure

Resident-facing policy | Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code aligned

Organisation	Ashburton Housing Limited
Applies to	Residents, former residents where relevant, representatives and people affected by Ashburton Housing's landlord services
Owner	Managing Director / Complaints Officer
Contact	admin@ashburtonhousing.co.uk | 01723 502419 | 1 Eastway, Eastfield, Scarborough, YO11 3LS
Version	1.0 | October 2026
Review	At least annually and following significant changes to procedure

1. Our commitment

Ashburton Housing welcomes complaints and will use them to put things right, learn and improve. Residents will not be treated differently because they make a complaint. We will handle complaints fairly, openly, promptly and without defensiveness.

This policy is intended to operate in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. Where the Code is updated, Ashburton Housing will review this policy and its practice.

2. What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Ashburton Housing, its staff, contractors or others acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.

A resident does not need to use the word "complaint". If dissatisfaction is expressed, we will offer the resident the opportunity to have it treated as a complaint.

Service requests

A service request is a request for Ashburton Housing to take action to put something right, for example reporting a repair. We will record and manage service requests. If the resident is dissatisfied with our response to a service request, we will raise a complaint even if work on the service request is continuing.

3. Who can complain and how

A resident may complain directly or through a representative. A resident may also be accompanied or represented at a meeting. We may ask for authority to discuss personal information with a representative.

Complaints can be made in any reasonable way, including:

- email to admin@ashburtonhousing.co.uk
- telephone on 01723 502419
- in writing to 1 Eastway, Eastfield, Scarborough, YO11 3LS
- in person to any Ashburton Housing member of staff

We will provide reasonable adjustments and accessible formats where required. Staff receiving a complaint must pass it promptly to the Complaints Officer.

4. When we may not accept a complaint

We will accept a complaint unless there is a fair and reasonable reason not to. Possible exclusions include:

- the issue occurred more than 12 months ago, although we will consider whether there is a good reason to exercise discretion
- legal proceedings have started, meaning the claim has been filed at court
- the same matter has already been considered through this complaints procedure

We will consider each case individually and will not apply blanket exclusions. If we decide not to accept or escalate a complaint, we will explain our reasons in writing and explain the resident's right to ask the Housing Ombudsman to consider that decision.

5. Our two-stage process

Stage 1

We will acknowledge, define and log a Stage 1 complaint within 5 working days of receipt. We will confirm our understanding of the complaint, the outcome sought and which matters we are responsible for.

We will issue our full Stage 1 response within 10 working days of acknowledgement. If the complaint is complex, we may extend this by no more than 10 further working days without good reason. We will explain the reason and expected response date and provide Housing Ombudsman contact details.

The Stage 1 response will state the complaint stage and definition, our decision and reasons, any remedy, outstanding actions and how to request Stage 2.

Stage 2

If the resident remains dissatisfied with all or part of the Stage 1 response, the complaint will progress to Stage 2. The resident does not have to explain why they want escalation, although we will seek to understand what remains unresolved.

We will acknowledge, define and log the Stage 2 complaint within 5 working days. The Stage 2 review will be undertaken by a different person from the Stage 1 decision-maker.

We will issue our final Stage 2 response within 20 working days of acknowledgement. If the complaint is complex, we may extend this by no more than 20 further working days without good reason. We will explain the reason and expected response date and provide Housing Ombudsman contact details.

Our final response will state the complaint stage and definition, our decision and reasons, any remedy, outstanding actions and how the resident can take the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

6. Fair investigation and records

- We will consider the complaint on its merits with an open mind and give the resident a fair opportunity to explain their position.
- We will identify and manage any actual or perceived conflict of interest.
- We will consider the relevant information and evidence carefully.
- We will keep a full record of the complaint, correspondence, supporting evidence, decision and outcome.
- We will continue to progress any underlying repair or service request while the complaint is considered.
- We will provide a complaint response when the answer is known rather than delaying it until every remedial action is complete.

7. Putting things right

Where something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge it and consider a proportionate remedy reflecting the impact on the resident. Depending on the circumstances this may include an apology, explanation, practical action, correcting a record, reconsidering a decision, a financial remedy, or changing a policy, procedure or practice. We will state what will happen and by when and track agreed actions to completion.

8. Housing Ombudsman Service

Residents may contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for information and support about a complaint. After Ashburton Housing's Stage 2 response, a resident who remains dissatisfied can refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET | 0300 111 3000 | www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

9. Governance, learning and oversight

Ashburton Housing will appoint a Complaints Officer with responsibility for complaint handling and liaison with the Housing Ombudsman. A suitably senior lead will be accountable for complaint handling and a member of the governing body or equivalent will have lead responsibility for complaints as the Member Responsible for Complaints.

We will review complaints for themes, trends, risks and service improvements. Complaint performance and learning will be reported to the governing body. We will complete the required annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling

Code and an annual complaints performance and service improvement report, with publication in accordance with the Code.

10. Unacceptable behaviour and contact restrictions

We recognise that people may be persistent when pursuing a complaint. We will only restrict contact where behaviour makes it necessary to do so. Any restriction will be evidence-based, proportionate, communicated clearly, regularly reviewed and applied with regard to reasonable adjustments and equality obligations. A restriction will not prevent the substance of a complaint being considered.

11. Publication and accessibility

This policy will be made available to residents in a clear and accessible format and published on Ashburton Housing's website when the website is live. While a website is unavailable, copies will be provided directly to residents and made available on request. Resident information will explain how to complain and how to contact the Housing Ombudsman.