



Complaints Policy

2026 – 2029

Policy control

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Has a DPIA been completed? (Attach to policy as an appendix)	No. The policy does not introduce new processing of personal data beyond existing complaints and service management processes.
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Purpose

This document sets out our overall approach to handling complaints.

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1. Policy aims

1.1 Derby Homes aims to provide services that meet customer needs, both in terms of appropriateness and quality. If something goes wrong, we want to be able to resolve complaints at the earliest available opportunity and learn lessons to help improve our services.

1.2 We are committed to making the process of complaining as simple and straight forward as possible in line with the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code.

1.3 We want customers to be able to raise a complaint so we can respond, put things right in a fair and timely manner and learn from their complaint.

1.4 We do not view high volumes of complaints as a negative. We also analyse areas where there are low volumes of complaints to ensure individuals can complain.

1.5 We publicise this policy on our website, social media, Derby Homes News and other regular communications.

1.6 This policy can be considered alongside our Remedy and Redress Policy

2. Statutory/Regulatory requirements

2.1 This policy is directly aligned with both the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Codes.

2.2 This policy is also in line with relevant legislation and regulation such as:

- The Localism Act 2011,
- Housing Act 1996 (schedule 2),
- General Data Protection Act 2018,
- Equality Act 2010,
- The Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards,
- Building Safety Act 2022.

Building Safety

2.3 As part of the Building Safety Act 2022, we consider complaints from our high-rise property, Rivermead House, in accordance with the Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code. We have an Accountable Person and a Principal Accountable Person at Derby Homes and Derby City Council specifically for this property as part of the Building Safety Act 2022.

2.4 We monitor complaints from Rivermead House within the complaints process to ensure we create a voice for residents and understand if there are any building safety concerns. If residents are not happy with how their complaint was handled specifically for building safety, Derby Homes will inform the customer of how to contact the Building Safety Regulator. Further details of this are outlined in Section 11 of this Policy.

3. What is the difference between a complaint and a service request?

3.1 A complaint is defined by the handling code as:

“an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.”

A customer does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. When a customer expresses dissatisfaction, we will offer the Complaints Procedure.

3.2 When we are reviewing complaints that are related to concerns from residents regarding building safety, or how we have responded to these concerns, a relevant complaint could include:

- A) a building safety risk, or
- B) the performance by Derby Homes under regulations made under the Building Safety Act

3.3 There may be times when we are unaware of an issue, and it is the first time a customer has reported it to us. This is called a service request, which is defined as:

“a request from a resident, to the landlord, requiring action to be taken to put something right.”

This might be a first request for service, advice, or clarification. It may be a request for us to explain a policy or decision. A service request is not a complaint, but we do record and monitor these. We will make it clear to the customer that their enquiry has been addressed as a service request and not a complaint, for clarity and to give them the opportunity to respond.

3.4 If a customer expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, this will then enter the complaints process. If the service request is ongoing, we will continue to address this alongside the complaint.

4. Who can make a complaint?

The policy applies to anyone who receives or requests a service from Derby Homes. This can include:

- current tenants
- leaseholders
- people making a housing application
- a former tenant
- a non-resident
- a number of people, such as a group complaint
- an advocate on behalf of a customer with their permission.

- A complaint that is submitted through a third party or representative will be handled in line with the Derby Homes complaints policy.

A group complaint is a complaint that has been submitted by residents from more than one property. A lead complainant will need to be established by the group making the complaint. Names and addresses of all members of the group complaint will be needed to show that permission has been gained and they want to be part of the group making the complaint.

We will only communicate with the lead complainant. The lead complainant will then be able to share information with other residents and individuals who are part of the group.

If it appears that the individuals involved are raising different issues, or the circumstances vary although the issue may be similar, it may be more appropriate to deal with matters as separate complaints.

5. How to make a complaint

Customers can contact Derby Homes to make a complaint in the most convenient way for them:

In person	Through talking to a member of staff.
By emailing	housing.complaints@derbyhomes.org
By writing to	The Complaints and Feedback Team, 839 London Rd, Derby, DE24 8UZ
By the website	www.derbyhomes.org
By the online self-service portal	www.my.derbyhomes.org
By telephone	01332 888777
By social media	Through any of our active social media accounts

If you raise a complaint through social media, we will send you a message to ask for more information before considering the complaints process.

When reporting a complaint, we may ask you:

- What the problem is and what action you think should be taken to resolve it,
- If you need any assistance to raise your complaint,
- If you have any reasonable adjustments that you wish us to consider as part of this complaint,
- Your name, address, email and contact number,
- The best way to communicate with you.

6. Who handles the complaints process?

6.1 We aim to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity. We recognise that every complaint is different and will require individual investigation. We will maintain our commitment to fairness, transparency and consistency during the process.

6.2 We have a dedicated Complaint and Feedback team responsible for handling complaints, who have the authority and autonomy to act and resolve complaints quickly and fairly.

The team are responsible for the complaint handling process, including liaison with the relevant Ombudsman and reporting complaints to our relevant governing body (Derby City Council).

All complaints that are received, including complaints about contractors, are handled by Derby Homes' complaints team.

6.3 The team report on complaint handling performance, which is detailed more in section 12.

6.4 The team prioritise complaint handling and influence a culture of learning from complaints across the organisation.

6.5 At each stage of the complaints process, the complaints team will:

deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;

give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;

take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.

6.6 There may be times when complaints are not isolated to one service area, or when several services are involved. The centralised complaints team will coordinate the gathering of specialist information from all departments involved.

6.7 Where a concern relates to both Derby City Council and Derby Homes services combined, the complaint will be handled and responded upon by the organisation which is accountable for the majority of the complaint. The customer will be clearly informed of this at acknowledgment. In such instances, the lead organisation will investigate with the other organisation through their dedicated Complaints Team. This is to ensure the Complaints Teams remain the centralised point of information gathering, recording, outcomes and lessons learned. This will also ensure both organisations comply with applicable Ombudsman codes or governing practices.

6.8 Where Derby City Council is the lead organisation for a complaint that includes matters relating to services provided by Derby Homes, Derby City Council will remain responsible for investigating the complaint and communicating with the customer throughout the complaints process. However, Derby Homes will retain responsibility for ensuring that all aspects of the complaint relating to Derby Homes services are handled in accordance with Derby Homes' Complaints Policy and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. This includes compliance with applicable complaint stages, response timescales, escalation arrangements and customer rights. Derby Homes' Complaints Team will work alongside Derby City Council and provide

oversight of Derby Homes-related complaint elements, including review and assurance of investigations and responses where appropriate, to ensure compliance with this Policy.

6.9 Where Derby City Council receives a complaint which contains aspects relating solely to the services of Derby Homes, or vice versa, the receiving organisation will forward the complaint (or the applicable aspects) to the other's Complaints Team inbox, and inform the customer accordingly.

7. The Complaints Process

7.1 Our complaints process has two stages, in line with the Complaint Handling Code 2024.

Stage one complaints

7.2 We aim to resolve all complaints at this stage.

7.3 The timescales once a complaint has been made are:

Acknowledgement	5 working days
Full response	10 working days after the complaint acknowledgment letter has been sent
Stage one extensions	No more than 10 working days without good reason

7.4 Our complaints team will contact the customer to discuss the complaint to:

- clarify any aspects of the complaint they are unclear about,
- understand the outcomes the customer is seeking,
- give a customer the opportunity to tell us more information,
- confirm any elements Derby Homes are not responsible for and direct the customer to alternative routes for those elements, such as enquiries or appeals,
- ask if the customer has any support needs to help identify any reasonable adjustments that may be required.
- Where we are unable to contact the customer, we will conduct a desk top review and investigate the complaint on the information available before sending a full response to the customer.

7.5 Within 5 working days of receipt, we will log the case, and write to acknowledge and define our understanding of the complaint. We will confirm the deadline for response and give the customer the opportunity to contact us if we have misunderstood the complaint, or they have further information or evidence.

7.6 Where customers raise additional complaint matters during the investigation, these are incorporated into the stage one response if they are related, and the stage one

response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or the new issues are unrelated to the complaint already being investigated, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues are logged as a new complaint.

7.7 The team will investigate our records, and work with relevant services to gather all the information to investigate the complaint.

7.8 Before the complaint response is sent to a customer, the Complaints Team will contact them to discuss the outcome of their investigation. A full response will be sent to the customer after this conversation. Where we have been unable to talk to the customer (for example if the customer expresses a preference not to be telephoned), a response letter will be sent.

7.9 We will confirm the following in writing at the completion of stage one:

- the complaint stage;
- the complaint definition;
- the decision on the complaint, including which aspects are upheld and not upheld. If any aspect is upheld, then the complaint is recorded as upheld upon closure;
- the reasons for any decisions made;
- the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
- details of any outstanding actions and a contact point for this, if applicable;
- all points raised in the complaint definition will be addressed, with clear reasons given for any decisions made, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate;
- details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the customer is not satisfied with the response, and;
- details of how to escalate the matter to the relevant Ombudsman Service if the customer remains dissatisfied or is seeking assistance or advice.

7.10 A complaint response is sent to customer when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions are tracked and actioned promptly, with appropriate updates provided to the customer by the relevant department.

7.11 If the customer is not satisfied with the response given at stage one, they can ask for this to be reviewed by escalating their complaint to the stage two.

Stage two complaints

7.12 The stage two complaint must be requested within 12 months of the stage one resolution. Discretion may be applied where there is good reason to consider a complaint out of this timescale.

7.13 Customers do not have to explain their reasons for requesting a stage two complaint if they do not wish to, they just need to inform us that they remain dissatisfied. Derby Homes will make reasonable efforts to understand why the customer remains dissatisfied as part of the stage two review.

7.14 Stage two is the final response from Derby Homes.

7.15 The person considering the complaint at stage two is never the same person that considered the complaint at stage one, to ensure impartiality.

7.16 The timescales once a complaint has been made are:

Acknowledgement	5 working days
Full response	20 working days after the complaint acknowledgment letter has been sent
Stage two extensions	No more than 20 working days without good reason

7.17 On receipt of the escalation request, the investigating officer will contact the customer to discuss the stage two complaint to:

- clarify any aspects of the complaint they are unclear about*,
- understand the outcomes the customer is seeking*,
- give a customer the opportunity to tell us more information*,
- confirm any elements Derby Homes are not responsible for and direct the customer to alternative routes for those elements, such as enquiries or appeals,
- ask if the customer has any support needs to help identify any reasonable adjustments that may be required.

*As outlined in 7.13, customers are not obligated to provide justification or clarify their reasons for escalating to stage two. We will make reasonable efforts to understand this, to aid the investigation, but it is optional, and not mandatory, for customers to explain.

7.18 Within 5 working days of receipt of escalation, we will log the case, and write to acknowledge , and define our understanding of the complaint. We will confirm the deadline for response and give the customer the opportunity to contact us if we have misunderstood the complaint, or they have further information or evidence.

7.19 We will confirm the following in writing at the completion of stage two investigation:

- the complaint stage;
- the complaint definition;
- the decision on the complaint including which aspects are upheld and not upheld;
- the reasons for any decisions made;
- the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
- details of any outstanding actions and a contact point for this, if applicable;

- all points raised in the complaint definition will be addressed, with clear reasons given for any decisions made, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate,
- details of how to escalate the matter to the relevant Ombudsman Service if the customer remains dissatisfied or is seeking assistance or advice.

7.20 A complaint response is sent to a customer when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions are tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the customer by the relevant department.

Extensions

7.21 Derby Homes will decide whether an extension to a complaint's timescales is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint. We will inform and agree with the customer the expected timescale for response in line with the table below. We will consider suitable intervals for keeping the customer informed about their complaint in the interim.

Stage one extensions	No more than 10 working days without good reason
Stage two extensions	No more than 20 working days without good reason

7.22 All extensions will be confirmed to customers in writing, including the reasons for the delay and the new, agreed response date. At this stage, the relevant ombudsman details are provided.

7.23 Any extensions are in line with the "comply or explain" principles set out in the Code and clearly communicated to the complainant.

7.24 When a response to a complaint will fall beyond the extended timescales set out in the Code and outlined above (i.e. beyond the deadline of a first extension), we will agree with the customer suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.

Withdrawals

7.25 Complainants may withdraw a complaint at any time. In those instances we will confirm this in writing and close the complaint case on our contact management system. However, we will continue to informally investigate, and document the findings and outcome internally, to identify learning and service improvements. This will not normally result in further complaint correspondence being issued to the complainant, unless there is an overriding reason to do so, such as safeguarding, or if we identify reimbursements owed.

8. Exclusions and timeframes

8.1 A complaint must be made within 12 months of the issue occurring, or the customer becoming aware of the issue. Discretion may be applied where there is good reason to consider a complaint out of this timescale.

8.2 If we decide not to accept a complaint, this will be explained to the customer along with contact details for the relevant Ombudsman. Each complaint is reviewed on its own merit.

8.3 There are circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint. These include the following:

- A report of Anti-Social Behaviour,
- A request for service, such as the first report of a repair issue, a request for information, or explanation of our policies (see section 3),
- A complaint that has already been fully investigated in line with this policy,
- Matters subject to legal proceedings: We will not investigate concerns that form part of ongoing or completed legal action involving Derby Homes and the complainant, whether legal proceedings have been started by either party. This applies where the matter is, or could reasonably be expected to be, considered as part of the legal process, including any claim or defence. Legal proceedings are defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. However, in instances of disrepair cases, both Derby Homes and customers have the right for their concerns to be considered within the complaints process, as part of the pre-action protocol,
- Complaints from people with whom we have no relationship or obligation to provide a service,
- Where the issue is not within the control or remit of the organisation,
- Where the issue occurred more than 12 months ago,
- Matters subject to a separate appeals process, review process or alternative route. Where a decision has its own appeals or review route, we will not (re)consider an outcome to that decision through the complaints process. However, residents may complain about how the matter was handled or the service they received,
- Where a complaint includes a personal injury or insurance claim, we may not consider that aspect through the complaints process if it is more appropriately dealt with through another route, which we will signpost. However, residents may complain about how the matter was handled or the service they received,

We are unable to formally log or respond to anonymous complaints. However, we will internally investigate, and record any lessons learned where appropriate.

8.4 Requests from Members of Parliament and Councillors will be addressed as part of a separate policy. Where it is clear the request relates to a complaint, we will contact the customer and ask if they wish this to be considered as an official complaint alongside the enquiry.

9. Equity and diversity

9.1 We believe in treating everyone fairly and with respect. We value diversity and are committed to equitable access of our services. Our two-stage complaints process is in

line with statutory regulation to maximise fairness and opportunity to give us feedback and promote learning.

9.2 This policy is aligned with the following Derby Homes policies:

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy,
- Reasonable Adjustment Policy,
- Advocacy and Authority to Act Policy.

9.3 We take account of the complexity of the complaint and whether the customer is vulnerable or at risk when reviewing a complaint.

9.4 As part of our process, at both stage one and stage two acknowledgments, we may ask if a customer has any support needs to help us identify any reasonable adjustments that may be required in the handling of the complaint. All complaints are then handled based on their individual need. We keep a record of any agreed reasonable adjustments and keep these under review during the complaints process. As part of this process, we may also ask customers to complete an 'About You' survey to ensure we are capturing all their support needs correctly.

9.5 We will consider requests for this Policy to be provided in an alternative format where required (for example, large print, audio, or a different language).

10. Managing unacceptable behaviour

10.1 In a small number of cases, the actions of individuals may become unacceptable because they involve the abuse of our employees, attempts to circumvent our processes, or make excessive demands on resources.

10.2 Derby Homes reserves the right to manage and support a customer's contact in circumstances where their behaviour meets the definition of our Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy. This will be proportionate and in line with the Equality Act 2010.

11. Ombudsman services

11.1 Customers have the right to access Ombudsman services at any time during our complaints process. An Ombudsman can provide advice and guidance to support the early and local resolution of a case at any point in proceedings. We promote access to the Ombudsman services at every stage of our complaints process.

11.2 Ombudsmen may formally consider a complaint once it has exhausted the landlord's complaint process. When things go wrong, they can make orders and recommendations to put things right or to improve service failure. Their services are free, independent, and impartial.

11.3 Different Ombudsmen oversee different types of complaints, so it's important to check which Ombudsman is right for a complaint. Detailed information can be found on our website, or we have written a summary for each Ombudsman below.

The Housing Ombudsman

11.4 The Housing Ombudsman considers complaints about housing associations and local housing authorities. They look at complaints from social housing residents about their landlords' actions and provision of housing management.

The contact details for the Housing Ombudsman service are:

Online complaint form:	www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/
Phone:	0300 111 3000
Email**:	info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Postal address:	Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484 Unit D Preston PR2 0ET

**The Housing Ombudsman Service do not accept new case enquiries via email.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Service

11.5 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman consider complaints about local authorities' wider activities, for example in discharging their statutory duties in homelessness. This includes housing allocations, homelessness, general housing advice, housing benefit, housing improvement grants and adult social care.

The contact details for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are:

Online complaint form:	https://complaints.lgo.org.uk/complaint-form/
Phone:	0300 061 0614
Postal address:	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman PO Box 4771 Coventry CV4 0EH

Building Safety Regulator

11.6 For customers that live in a high-rise building (such as Rivermead House) who remain dissatisfied with the services about building safety Derby Homes provide,

contact can be made directly to the Building Safety Regulator at any time during our complaints process. This can include complaints about:

- Issues in a high-rise residential building that could lead to fire spreading,
- Issues in a high-rise residential building that could lead to part or all of the building collapsing,
- Issues with fire safety or structural integrity in a high-rise residential building that is being designed, built or renovated,
- People and organisations the regulator oversees, for example building inspectors and people accountable for safety in a building,
- The Building Safety Regulator itself.

The details for the Building Safety Regulator are:

Online complaint form:	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contact-the-building-safety-regulator
Phone:	0300 790 6787
Email:	enquiries@hse.gov.uk
Postal address:	The Building Safety Regulator, The Health and Safety Executive Redgrave Court Merton Road Bootle Liverpool L20 7HS

12. Monitoring and reporting complaints

12.1 In order to monitor our complaints, we keep the following information:

- a full record of the complaint,
- the outcomes at each stage. This includes the original complaint, and the date received,
- any extensions to timescales,
- all correspondence with the individual,
- correspondence with other parties, and
- any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.

12.2 Any outstanding repairs or promised actions which are discussed with the customer are documented on a tracker by the Complaints and Feedback team, and

monitored and progressed by the relevant department. Customers are given regular updates as agreed with the department.

12.3 We have systems in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of our complaints process.

12.4 Complaints are recorded on our system as either 'Upheld' or 'Not upheld'.

12.5 A stage two complaint will be upheld if we recognise service failures which have not been recognised or adequately remedied at stage one. If no further failures in service are found at stage two (than those reasonably remedied and redressed at stage one), then the stage two complaint will be not upheld.

12.6 We will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which includes:

- the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure our complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements;
- a qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance. This includes a summary of the types of complaints we have refused to accept;
- any findings of non-compliance with the Code;
- the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;
- our performance in relation to Ombudsman's determinations;
- any other relevant reports or publications from the Ombudsmen, and;
- Derby City Council's response to the annual report.

12.7 Our annual complaints performance and service improvement report is reported to Derby City Council, Derby Homes Board, Operational Committee and published to customers.

13. Learning from Complaints

13.1 Customer satisfaction is very important to us, and we use customer feedback, including leaning from complaints to shape improvements to our services.

13.2 Our annual report includes details of our complaints performance and how we have improved services in line with learning from complaints.

13.3 Derby Homes have a Lesson's Learned framework for learning from complaints. We look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether any service improvements should be made as a result of any learning. We use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.

13.4 We report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in an annual report and more frequently through our governance framework such as Derby Homes' Board and Operational Committee.

13.5 A suitably senior manager oversees our complaint handling performance. They assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision.

13.6 Within Derby Homes our Complaints Policy is overseen by:

- Derby City Council Strategic Partnership Board,
- Derby Homes Board,
- Operational Committee,
- Managing Director,
- Finance Director and Company Secretary,
- Head of Quality and Consumer Regulation.

13.7 As part of this oversight, Derby Homes also has a Member Responsible for Complaints who is part of the Board.

13.8 In addition to the Member Responsible, Derby Homes has a Board member position of a Complaints and Customer Services Champion. The complaints process directly relates to our first strategic objective:

‘Service that puts our customers first’.