

Lumen Customer Complaints Guide



Lumen Housing does not view complaints as negative and see them as an opportunity to learn from the issues raised by our residents and to take steps to improve the services we provide. We accept there will be occasions when this is not always achieved. Complaint handling is a priority for us, and we want our residents to feel heard and understood. We understand that things can go wrong, so when this happens, we want to know so that we can try to put things right.

Our commitment to you

We are committed to making our complaints process accessible to all and can offer help and support to ensure any concerns from customers are listened to and understood. This document provides a summary of Lumen's Complaints Policy.

Our Complaints Process

A complaint is defined 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 an individual resident or group of residents.'

A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction we must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with this policy.

Types of complaint

The types of complaint we can consider may include, but is not limited to:

- Failure to provide a service
- Provision of a poor standard of service
- Mistakes in the way we provide a service
- Failure to meet our existing service standard or comply with policies

We will first try to resolve expressions of dissatisfaction as early resolution, outside of this Policy where possible. This means putting something right quickly at the first point of contact and offering an apology where necessary. However, if further enquiries or actions are needed to resolve the matter, or if a customer exercises their choice to make a complaint, it will be logged as a formal complaint and dealt with in line with this policy.

Service Requests

Lumen Housing recognises the difference between a service request and a complaint. A service request is a request from a resident to Lumen Housing requiring action to be taken to put something right.

We do not treat service requests as complaints, however service requests are recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly by the appropriate service.

A complaint will be raised if a resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. We will continue efforts to address the service request if a resident complains.

What Lumen Housing does not consider to be a complaint

Each complaint will be considered on its own merits, along with the individual circumstances of each complaint. Grounds for which a complaint would not be suitable for the complaints process are outlined below:

- Reports of anti-social behavior or breaches of tenancy
- Complaints concerning the level of service charge or the amount of the rent
- Complaints about the actions of an organisation that is not working for, or supported by Lumen Housing
- Personnel matters including issues about staff employment or former employment and applications for employment
- Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy
- Anonymous complaints

For a full list of issues we do not consider under Lumen's Complaints process, please refer to the full Formal Complaints Policy.

Although we do not treat these issues as a complaint under this procedure, we will deal with them in an appropriate manner.

If we decide not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided to the customer setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process within 10 working days of a request being made.

All customers have the right to challenge this decision by taking their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

Early & Local resolution

Due to the nature of our services, our residents may present a wide range of problems or queries to staff members on a daily basis. In many cases, issues raised by our customers are best resolved by the service responsible for the problem arising, as they may be able to resolve it swiftly to the satisfaction of the complainant. These matters will be dealt with outside of this Policy as Early Resolution cases, however records will be kept for audit and learning purposes. In such cases the customer will be advised of their choice to make a formal complaint.

If the customer remains dissatisfied, or requests complaint is made, we will log the issue as a formal complaint in line with this Policy.

Who can make a complaint?

A Complaint can be raised by any person or group of people affected by an activity or service provided by, or on behalf of Lumen Housing including but not limited to:

- Current tenants/licensees and members of their households
- Former tenants/licensees
- Housing applicants
- Leaseholders
- MPs and Councillors
- Advocates of the complainant such as friends, relatives or other representatives (prior written consent from the complainant is required)
- A resident or group of residents who have been affected by our activities and/or services in the locality

Stage 1 – Formal Complaints

If a formal complaint is received, a member of the Lumen Housing Team, will take responsibility for facilitating the complaint and be the 'Complaints Officer' and all complaint actions are recorded. Any urgent issues that relate to safeguarding or health or safety will be flagged by the Complaint Officer to the relevant service manager.

The Complaints Officer will:

- Act sensitively and fairly
- Be trained to handle complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents
- Access staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints
- Have the authority and autonomy to resolve disputes quickly and fairly

Complaints will be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of our complaints procedure within five working days of the complaint being received.

Within the complaint acknowledgement, we will set out our understanding of the complaint (the complaint definition) and the outcomes the complainant is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, we will ask the complainant for clarification and agree the complaint definition.

Stage 1 - Complaint

1. Complaint Received

2. Complaint Logged and Acknowledged in writing to complainant within 5 working days.

3. Investigated by relevant Senior Officer/ Manager

4. Following the investigation, a written response will be sent within 10 working days of a complaint being lodged

We will consider the complexity of the complaint and if an extension to the expected timescale is required we will inform the complainant of the expected timescale for response. An extension will be no more than 10 working days without good reason and will clearly explain any reasons to the complainant.

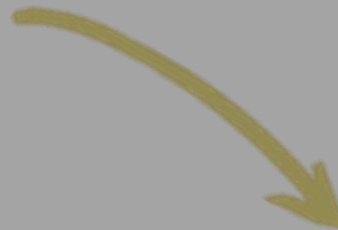
If the customer is unhappy with the outcome of a stage 1 complaint, they can escalate this to stage 2 of the complaints process.

Stage 2 - Final stage for internal resolution - Appeal Panel

The Appeal Panel consists of the Director responsible for the service area the complaint relates to and a Head of Service.

All customers and/or their representative will be extended an invite to attend the Appeal Panel meeting or will be offered the opportunity to provide evidence to the panel again in a way that suits their needs. This means that the customer can ask that the panel is held virtually, or at a venue other than Lumen Housing's Head Office.

1. Request to escalate complaint within 25 working days of the stage 1 response



2. Escalation Acknowledged within 5 working days

3. Appeal Panel hearing held with the Director responsible for the service area and a Head of Service



4. Written response sent within 20 working days of escalated complaint being acknowledged



The Stage 2 Appeal Panel Decision marks the end of the Lumen Housing's internal complaints process

Putting things right

Where something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge this and set out the actions we have already taken or intend to take to put things right. This may include:

- Apologising;
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
- Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;
- Taking action if there has been delay;
- Reconsidering or changing a decision;
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
- Providing a financial remedy;
- Changing policies, procedures or practices

Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified. The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion. Lumen Housing will take account of the guidance issued by the Housing Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.

Closing a complaint

A complaint will be considered closed under the following circumstances:

- After sending a Stage 1 response and there is no further contact from the customer after 25 working days from the issue of the response. (If a complainant makes contact with the same issue, additional evidence or requesting to escalate beyond 25 days then the circumstances will be considered and if appropriate the complaint will be re-opened and escalated. If new matters are raised then this will be opened as a new Stage 1 complaint.)
- When a Stage 2 response has been issued.

We have the discretion to close a complaint early if we believe that it is better dealt with through another channel and it is in the complainant's interest to do so, or where it is suspected that the complaint is based on fraudulent information and/or activity. This will be communicated to the complainant along with their right to approach the Housing Ombudsman about our decision.

Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

On completion of a complaint, an evaluation will be completed to assess the root cause of the complaint, what lessons have been learned and what, if any, actions need to be taken to prevent reoccurrence. Stage 1 evaluations will be completed by Heads of Service and Stage 2 evaluations will be completed by the Director responsible for the service. This is to ensure that Lumen Housing look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.

A satisfaction survey will be conducted with complainants upon the closure of their case to help us identify whether there are any wider steps that we can take to improve our complaint services. This survey may be undertaken by a Lumen Housing team member.

Lumen Housing is committed to fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration and professionalism in handling complaints. This involves working together with colleagues across teams and departments to address complaints promptly, efficiently and empathetically.

All parties involved in the complaint handling process must take collective responsibility for any shortcomings identified through complaints. Instead of assigning blame to others individuals should focus on understanding the root causes of issues and working collaboratively to implement corrective measures. This collective responsibility fosters a culture of continuous improvement, where feedback from complaints serves as a catalyst for organisational learning and development.

Employees and third parties are expected to act within the professional standards as set out by the Housing Ombudsman.

Housing Ombudsman

A customer can complain to the Housing Ombudsman Service at any time but the complaint will usually be referred back to us if it has not been through the full internal complaints process.

The Ombudsman will also only consider the matter if you have contacted them within 12 months of your original complaint.

A customer can refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman by:

Visiting <http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk>

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Emailing: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Writing to:
Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ

How to make a complaint

We offer a wide range of ways to make a complaint:

In writing: Lumen Housing Ltd



348-350 Lytham Rd, Blackpool,
FY4 1DW.

In Email



Hello@myblackpoolhome.co.uk

On Our Website



Visit: <https://lumenhousing.co.uk/contact-us/>

In Person:



Appointments can be booked with a member of the Team at a convenient venue (customer's home or office).

By Telephone:



01253477222

We are committed to making our complaints process accessible to all and can offer help and support to ensure any concerns from customers are listened to and understood.

A customer may contact the Ombudsman at any time throughout the course of their complaint for advice and support.



A full copy of our Complaints Policy and Procedure can be found on the Lumen website or upon request using the contact details below.

A copy of this document can be provided in an accessible format upon request.

Lumen Housing Ltd

348-350 Lytham Road, Blackpool FY4 1DW

T: 01253 477222

E: hello@myblackpoolhome.co.uk W:

<https://lumenhousing.co.uk>