



**Lafford  
Homes**

**Unlocking More Choice**

**Lafford Homes Complaints  
Policy  
August 2022 v.3**

## Complaints Policy

Lafford Homes goal is to achieve 'Right first time', that is, to resolve complaints locally and quickly with an acceptable outcome and learning for all parties concerned.

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out a clear, simple and concise complaints procedure for Lafford Homes. It includes the service standards that customers can expect when making a complaint. The policy also offers a range of ways for residents to express any dissatisfaction, timescales for dealing with complaints and what to do if they are unhappy with the outcome of their complaint.

### 2. Policy Aim

- To have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly.
- To offer a range of ways for tenants to express a complaint
- To set out clear service standards for responding to complaints, including complaints about performance against standards and details of what to do if a customer is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint.
- To inform customers how Lafford Homes will use complaints to improve its services.
- To accept complaints made by advocates authorised to act on a customer's behalf.

### 3. What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about Lafford Homes' action, lack of action or about the standard of service it has provided.

### 4. What do we do with complaints?

Lafford Homes will log complaints. This is to ensure that any trends in complaints can be monitored, learned from and lead to improvements in the way the service is delivered or so that standards are improved:-

- a. Complaints help Lafford Homes to help the customer when things have not gone right
- b. Complaints tell us where Lafford Homes has got something wrong and helps us to improve the service.

## 5. Complaints Procedure



## 6. Complaints standards

### 6.1 Contacting Lafford Homes to express dissatisfaction

Agents will consider any communication, access or advocacy to ensure that everyone has access to the complaints procedure and information about the process in an appropriate format. Customers will be able to contact Lafford Homes in the following ways:

Telephone: 01529 308313

Email: [jason.jarvis@laffordhomes.co.uk](mailto:jason.jarvis@laffordhomes.co.uk)

Web: [www.laffordhomes.co.uk](http://www.laffordhomes.co.uk)

Write: Jason Jarvis, Lafford Homes, Civic Offices, Kesteven Street, Sleaford, NG34 7EF

Visit: Lafford Homes, Civic Offices, Kesteven Street, Sleaford, NG34 7EF

### 6.2 Expression of dissatisfaction

The first time a customer contacts Lafford Homes with an expression of dissatisfaction about its action, lack of action, or about the standard of service it has provided it is an opportunity for Lafford Homes to rectify things quickly, easily and 'right first time'. The objective is to resolve complaints locally and quickly with an acceptable outcome for both the customer and Lafford Homes

The quickest way for a customer to let Lafford Homes know they are unhappy or dissatisfied is to contact a Lafford Homes agent by telephone (see 6.1 above). The agent taking the call will log it and aim to resolve the issue with the customer immediately if at all possible. Once the call is logged the complainant will be given a unique call reference number, which they should use if further contact about the same issue is required. The agent will deal with the matter as soon as possible or if more time or information from other sources is needed by the agent to deal with the situation they will take down all the details of the complaint, and then contact the complainant within five working days with the outcome.

After this time if the complainant is still unhappy with the situation or if a solution cannot be found, the agent will refer the complaint to a Director of Lafford Homes for a decision:

- The Director will ask the agent making the original decision to submit a statement explaining

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the complaint, investigation and reasons for the decision.

- The complainant may be invited to meet with the Director in person or through the use of technology platforms, together with the agent involved. If the complainant declines to attend any meeting, the decision can be made on the basis of any written information submitted.
- A decision is made and communicated to the complainant within 5 working days of the meeting

The response will include details of how to contact the National Landlords Association, should the complainant be unhappy with the Director's response or if they feel there has been a breach of the NLA's Code of Conduct in dealing with the complaint.

### 6.3 Closing a case

If the complainant makes no response within 20 days, Lafford Homes will assume they are satisfied with the outcome of the complaint and close the case.

## 7. National Landlord's Association

If the complainant is unhappy with the written response giving the Director's decision or if they feel there has been a breach in the NLA Code of Conduct, they should contact the National Landlords Association

National Landlords Association  
2nd Floor, 200 Union Street  
London  
SE1 0LX

<http://www.landlords.org.uk/about-us/complaints-process> or contact [info@landlords.org.uk](mailto:info@landlords.org.uk)

### **The National Landlords' Association (NLA) Complaints Process**

If the customer thinks that Lafford Homes has not abided by the NLA scheme rules or code of conduct, then they must let them know and talk the problem through with them.

The customer should write a letter to Lafford Homes describing the complaint sent via recorded delivery to ensure that Lafford Homes received it.

If this is done and Lafford Homes, through their own procedures, have not achieved a satisfactory resolution to the customer's issue then the NLA can be contacted with the complaint.

### **What will the NLA do in the event of receiving a complaint about an NLA Accredited Landlord?**

- They will contact Lafford Homes and advise them that a complaint has been received
- They will give Lafford Homes seven days in which to respond and rectify the matter.
- As soon as the NLA have spoken to Lafford Homes, or once the seven days has lapsed the NLA will contact the customer with an update.

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## **What if the complaint is still not resolved?**

There are a number of implications which could relate to the nature of the complaint.

- The customer can report Lafford Homes to North Kesteven District Council.
- The NLA can suspend Lafford Homes from the NLA scheme until the matter is resolved.
- The NLA can make a recommendation that Lafford Homes does development based courses that relate to the nature of the complaint.

## **Independent dispute resolution**

If Lafford Homes has not taken the necessary steps to resolve the matter and the NLA think the customer has a valid complaint, then the NLA can recommend that the customer's case is passed to an Independent adjudicator. Lafford Homes as part of the NLA Code of Conduct agree to adhere to the recommendations of the adjudication process or face being removed from the NLA scheme.

The customer, in order to take this route with a third party adjudicator, also needs to sign a declaration highlighting their agreement that the adjudicator's decision is binding.


## **8. Data protection**

The complaint belongs to the complainant and they decide if and when to take the matter further or not.

## **9. Publicising the complaints procedure**

The Complaints policy is made available on the Lafford Homes website

## Appendix 1

		<h3>Lafford Homes Complaints Referral to Director Form</h3>	
Name:			
Address:			
Telephone number:			
Decision that you are asking for review on:			
Please name an agent involved in the decision?			
Please give the date of the decision? (please note that appeals must be returned within two months of the date of the decision referred to)			
Please state why you are unhappy with the decision:			
Please state what you would like Lafford Homes to do:			
Would you like to attend a meeting with Lafford Homes, or would you prefer the Director to consider your referral on the basis of the written comments on this form and the information held on your file?			
I would like to attend a meeting <input type="checkbox"/>		I would like a Director of Lafford Homes to consider the matter <input type="checkbox"/>	
Would you like someone to represent you at the meeting? If so, please state their name, address, and relationship to you:			
Representative's name:		Address:	

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Relationship to you:	
Are there any dates that you could not attend a meeting?	
The meeting will normally involve the Director and agent. Are you happy for them to attend and consider the information related to the meeting?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please state any additional comments in relation to the meeting on this form (you may continue on separate sheets). Please attach any additional correspondence that that you feel may be of use.	

**Please return this form to:**

Jason Jarvis  
 Lafford Homes Limited  
 Civic Offices  
 Kesteven Street  
 Sleaford  
 Lincolnshire  
 NG34 7EF

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## Appendix 2 – Information Release Declaration



### Information Release Declaration

The customer should sign this document before any information is released to any advocate with regard to a customer complaint.

The information I/we gave in the complaint was and still is true. I/We authorise Lafford Homes to share my/our details with;

Name	Relationship

I understand that this will involve a representative from Lafford Homes sharing the following information:

- My/our full name, address, contact details and full details of the current complaint

Signed by the customer/s:	1		
	2		
Date:			
Witnessed by:		Position of witness:	
Full name:	on behalf of Lafford Homes		
Date:			

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### Appendix 3 – Management of unreasonably persistent and vexatious behaviour

In a minority of cases people may pursue their service requests or complaints in a way that is unreasonable. They may behave unacceptably, or be unreasonably persistent in their contacts and submission of information.

This can impede how Lafford Homes:

- manages their request for service (or service requests by others)
- investigates their complaint (or complaints by others)

This behaviour can have significant resource issues for organisations. These actions can occur:

- outside of the formal Lafford Homes complaints process
- while a formal complaint is being investigated, or
- once a complaint investigation has finished

This appendix to Lafford Homes' complaints policy covers 'unreasonable behaviour', which may include one or two isolated incidents, as well as 'unreasonably *persistent* behaviour', which is usually a build-up of incidents or behaviour over a longer period and may be affecting more than one officer or service.

Examples of unreasonable demands include but is not limited to:

- Demanding responses within an unreasonable time scale
- Insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular person
- Continual phone calls, letters, emails, visits
- Repeatedly changing the substance of the contact or raising unrelated concerns
- Further demands relating to a specific issue where the Complaints policy has already been followed

Examples of unreasonable persistence include but is not limited to:

- Persistent refusal to accept a decision made
- Persistent refusal to accept explanations as to what Lafford Homes can and cannot do
- Continuing to pursue a matter (for example complaint) without providing new information.
- Further demands relating to a specific issue where the Complaints policy has already been followed

Some people may have justified service requests or complaints but may pursue them in inappropriate ways. Others may pursue complaints which appear to have no substance or which have already been investigated and determined. Their contacts with Lafford Homes may be amicable but still place heavy demands on staff time, or they may be emotionally charged and distressing for all involved.

Situations can escalate, and sometimes customers can become abusive, offensive, threatening or otherwise behave unacceptably. In response Lafford Homes may have to restrict access to its premises or staff, in accordance with its own procedures protecting their staff from harassment and harm.

#### Warnings

In most instances when we consider someone's behaviour is unreasonable we will explain why and ask them to change it. We will also warn them that, if the behaviour continues, we may take action to restrict their contact with our offices.

Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of our staff we may report the matter to the police or consider taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning.

### **Restricting access to Lafford Homes' services**

If, following a warning, the unacceptable behaviour continues it may be appropriate to restrict access. A written communication will be made to the customer of the decision explaining

- why the decision has been made
- how long any restriction will apply for before it is reconsidered.

The sort of restrictions imposed could include:

- Placing time limits on telephone conversations
- Restricting number of telephone calls (this may also include restricting to specified times e.g. Morning or afternoon).
- Limiting customer to one method of contact e.g. phone, letter or e-mail.
- Requiring the customer to communicate only with one named member of staff.
- Requiring any personal contacts to take place in the presence of a witness.
- Refusal to register and process further service requests/complaints about the same matter.
- Banning a complainant from some or all of the authority's premises.
- Other suitable options will be considered in the light of the customers circumstances or additional needs

In cases where Lafford Homes believes the complainant has committed a criminal offence (e.g. assault on staff or criminal damage), where assault is threatened, or where the complainant refuses repeated requests to leave the authority's premises, the Police should be involved.

Where a decision has been made and conveyed to complainant, and future correspondence comes back from customer, Lafford Homes are entitled to only provide a response stating that correspondence has been read and placed on file.

### **Subsequent actions**

Adequate records of all contacts with unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants will be kept.

Reviews will take place on a 6 monthly basis.

- If the customer is still in contact about the same matter, a Director will review whether the restrictions imposed are still necessary and should remain.
- If restrictions are removed and new contacts from people whose behaviour has previously been deemed unreasonable are received, they will be treated on their merits.
- Restrictions imposed in respect of an earlier complaint will not automatically apply to a new matter.