

FOR ALL RESERVATIONS PRIOR TO 8TH JUNE 2024 [CLICK HERE](#)

### 1. Policy Statement and Purpose

Complaints are important to us. We need to know if our service goes wrong, so we can put things right, learn from our mistakes and take action to prevent it from happening again.

We capture all expressions of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by Candleston Homes, our colleagues, or those acting on our behalf, whether the issue affects an individual customer or a group of customers.

### 2. Approach

Through this policy we seek to ensure that complaints are:

- handled sensitively and fairly.
- resolved as quickly as possible.
- a catalyst to ensure mistakes are corrected quickly and we do what we say we will.
- used to prevent similar service failures happening again.

### 3. Scope

#### Complaints covered by this Policy

Where a customer, applicant or individual affected by Candleston Homes has expressed dissatisfaction with the service we have provided directly, or by any company we employ to provide a service on our behalf.

#### Complaints not covered by this policy

This policy does **not** cover:

- An issue which happened over 2 years ago from the date of completion; a complaint should be made as soon as possible after the date the event occurred, unless there are exceptional circumstances which mean the complainant was unable to notify us of their concerns sooner. We may consider historic complaint outcomes however, to resolve the issue for the complainant.
- The complaint relates to issues where legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- In some circumstances it may be appropriate to refer the complainant to our insurance team to progress claims where the complaint relates to significant financial loss or damages, and / or personal injury but we will make all reasonable attempts to resolve complaints prior to making this decision.
- Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.

If we fail to deal with an issue through the relevant process however, then the failure to do so can be dealt with as a Complaint under this Policy. The above list is not exhaustive and on receipt of a complaint we will review the concerns and confirm if there is a more appropriate process.

Where we do not accept a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided to the customer which sets out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the New Homes Ombudsman. If a customer disagrees with this decision, they should let Candleston Homes know why, which will enable us to reconsider the decision.

### 4. Making a complaint

We aim to make the complaint process accessible to all and we will:

- Accept complaints in any way the customer wishes, including but not limited to, the following:
  - Contacting us via our Social Media Channels
  - Emailing [aftercare@candlestonhomes.co.uk](mailto:aftercare@candlestonhomes.co.uk)
  - Writing to us at: Candleston Homes, Lower Mill Field, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 0XJ
- If we call a customer to ask them about their experience through our customer feedback programme, we will consider whether we need to address any outstanding issues via the complaints process.
- We are happy to accept complaints from a third party acting on a customer's behalf. We will need signed authority from the customer to divulge any information we hold to a third party. If the third party is an elected representative, such as a councillor or MP, we may proceed to handle the complaint with them on the basis of implied consent.
- Please see our privacy notice for more information: <https://candlestonhomes.co.uk/privacy-policy/>
- Offer a review process if the customer feels their complaint has not been resolved, we call this stage 2.

\* When a customer submits a comment or complaint to us via Facebook, Twitter or other social media we recommend customers use a private channel, such as direct message (DM). Our data privacy information is contained here: <https://candlestonhomes.co.uk/privacy-policy/>

### 5. How we manage complaints

We have a simple two stage complaint process:

#### Stage 1

We aim to deal with all formal complaints at Stage 1 because we want to put things right as soon as possible.

#### Acknowledgement

Customers will receive an acknowledgement of their complaint within 5 working days of us receiving the complaint. In acknowledging the complaint, we will set out our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the customer is seeking. We may ask for clarification of our understanding before we start investigating the complaint.

#### Response

Stage 1 responses will be issued within 10 working days of the complaint being logged, unless the complaint is complex. If this is the case, we will discuss and agree an extension of the timescales directly with the customer; generally, any extension will not exceed a further 10 working days without 'good reason'.

'Good reason' could include, but not limited to, complaints where legal advice is required, or another independent third party expert is needed (other than our partners who support us to deliver day to day services). An extension of the timescales may also be required where we are unable to contact a customer and / or the complaint and the outcome they are seeking is unclear. In these circumstances we will ensure timescales are communicated with the customer.

In instances where we cannot agree an extension timescale with the customer, we will provide contact details for the New Homes Ombudsman to allow the customer to challenge our plan to respond and the timescales involved.

We will keep in touch with the customer via their preferred method of contact throughout the complaint and we may in some instances arrange to meet a customer at their convenience.

The outcome of the complaint will be communicated with the customer via their preferred method of contact. This will include any actions we are going to take to put the matter right and provide clear timescales as to when the actions will be completed.

Following the response, we will continue to monitor all complaints to ensure agreed actions are completed.

### Stage 2

If the customer is not satisfied with the outcome at stage 1, or the actions have not been completed within the agreed timescales provided in the stage 1 response, customers have the right to request their complaint is escalated for review at stage 2. We will not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint; however, we will request the following information:

- confirmation from the customer as to which points of the complaint remain unresolved.
- any further information or evidence to support their complaint, if required.
- to clarify the intended outcome, they are seeking.

On receipt of the customer response, we will review our previous response to ensure there are no outstanding and / or unresolved issues that cannot be resolved straight away.

If the request to escalate is made to us later than 20 working days from the date of our stage one response, we may refuse to escalate the complaint for review at Stage 2. In these instances, we will provide a written explanation and include the right to take that decision to the New Homes Ombudsman.

## 6. New Homes Ombudsman

Following completion of our internal process, if the customer remains unhappy, they can refer directly to the New Homes Ombudsman Service by contacting them in the following ways:

- By Telephone **0330 808 4286**
- Visit their website to log a complaint online at <https://www.nhos.org.uk/>
- By Post, sending a complaints form to the address below:  
The New Homes Ombudsman Service, West Wing First Floor, The Maylands Building,  
200 Maylands Avenue, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7TG
- By Email [customer.services@nhos.org.uk](mailto:customer.services@nhos.org.uk)

Customers do not have to wait until our internal processes are exhausted and can contact the New Homes Ombudsman Dispute Resolutions Team at any time during the complaint process to seek their guidance. For further information you can visit their website:

<https://www.nhos.org.uk/consumers/our-complaints-process/>

### 7. Other Considerations

#### Reasonable adjustments and support

We understand that some customers may have difficulty communicating a complaint and / or participating in the complaint process, as such we will always make reasonable adjustments, ensuring information is accessible for customers to report their concerns and engage in the process.

#### Changing circumstances

On occasion we may conclude our internal complaint process if we consider the dissatisfaction is now the subject of another process e.g., legal action, insurance claim.

If so, this will be communicated and agreed with the customer as early in the complaint process as possible.

#### Further information

Our aim is to make the complaint policy accessible to all our customers and we will publish guidance on our website and as part of regular communication as to how to make a complaint. Customers can also speak to any colleague for further guidance in making a complaint.

### 8. Legislative Requirements

By following this policy, it ensures that Candleston Homes complies with:

- New Homes Ombudsman
- Consumer Code <https://consumercode.co.uk/the-code/what-is-the-code/>

### 9. Assurance Framework

We will monitor compliance with this policy through regular self-assessment, internal audit, and performance measures. Regular reporting will be provided to Board, senior leaders, and Communities Influence Network to support learning from complaints and to promote the open and transparent use of information to access performance and risks.

### PURPOSE

Candleston welcomes feedback from customers as it provides the organisation with an opportunity to learn about how we can improve our services we deliver. It also allows the organisation to understand expectations and needs of our customers.

Candleston will handle all complaints, compliments and enquiries efficiently and effectively to monitor, review and continually improve our services.

This policy sets out our approach to providing resolutions for customer complaints.

### COMPLIANCE

Candleston put the same high standards of care into looking after our customers as we do into building our homes. However, we do appreciate that sometimes things can go wrong and so we take complaints very seriously.

Candleston are currently a Registered Developer with the Consumer Code for Home Builders ([www.consumercode.co.uk](http://www.consumercode.co.uk)) and comply with the Consumer Code.

When developing our homes, house builders are required to have, and keep to, a system for dealing with complaints and this will be explained to you prior to any purchaser.

Candleston will provide a comprehensive and accessible After-sales Service for at least two years after Legal Completion.

### COMPLAINT PROCESS

If you do have a complaint, we ask you to let us know so that we may have the opportunity to resolve the issue for you and learn from it.

#### Reporting an Issue

Candleston will ensure that Snags or Defective, Faulty or Incomplete Works covered by the After-sales Service are resolved as soon as possible and within a mutually agreed timescale.

Although we hope you will not have any problems after you move into your new home, our commitment continues after your sale has been completed.

If you have a complaint that we have:

- Failed to do something we should have done
- Undertaken something badly
- Treated you unfairly or discourteously

Then please do contact us on [aftercare@candlestonhomes.co.uk](mailto:aftercare@candlestonhomes.co.uk) and allow us the opportunity to put it right.

#### Informal Complaints

If you are able to resolve any issue informally with our office and are happy with the outcome, then you do not need to use our formal complaints procedures.

If, however, you are not satisfied that the problem has been resolved or handled to your satisfaction, you may wish to make a formal complaint. You can do this by using our formal complaints procedure set out below.

### Formal Complaints Process

We have a robust process to ensure that your complaint is properly investigated and followed up:

1. Please raise your complaint and email to [aftercare@candlestonhomes.co.uk](mailto:aftercare@candlestonhomes.co.uk)
2. We will acknowledge all complaints in writing within 5 working days of the complaint initiation date.  
*\*The complaints initiation date (CID) is the first working day after a complaint is received. Thus, if a complaint is received on a Monday, the CID is the following Tuesday. If a complaint is received on a Saturday, the CID will be the following Monday (excluding public holidays).*
3. We will investigate your concerns and send a response which details our proposed pathway to resolution within 20 working days of the complaint initiation date. This will explain how we plan to resolve the issue, along with the steps and anticipated timescales.
4. We will send a full complaint assessment response by no later than 30 calendar days. If the complaint has been resolved, this will confirm what steps were taken. In the event that the resolution is still underway, the response will detail what has caused the delay, and the anticipated date for resolution.
5. Once the complaint has been resolved, we will send a closure response which confirms what action has been taken.
6. In the very unlikely event that the complaint remains unresolved after 56 calendar days of the complaint initiation date, we will send a further response to provide information on what has caused the delay, what are the next steps and the anticipated date for resolution.

We hope we can resolve most matters without the need for further escalation. However, if your complaint is not resolved in accordance with this procedure, or you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, then you may be able to refer your complaint to any dispute resolution service offered by your warranty provider (NHBC), or the Independent Dispute Resolution Scheme.

It is within the Independent Dispute Resolution Schemes' discretion to decide when or if to accept a complaint, in accordance with the scheme rules. The Independent Dispute Resolution Scheme can accept complaints that have arisen within two years of legal completion. After this, disputes within the structural warranty period may be referred to the New Home Warranty Provider - NHBC if relevant.