Candleston

COMPLAINTS POLICY

FOR ALL RESERVATIONS **FROM 8TH JUNE 2024 TO 2ND MARCH 2026**

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.

Continues overleaf

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**
  - 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. Complaints Handling Procedures

We apply the same high standards of care when looking after our customers as we do when building our homes. However, we appreciate that sometimes things can go wrong, so we take complaints seriously. We are a registered developer with the New Homes Quality Board (www.nhqb.org.uk) and comply with the New Homes Quality Code (the Code).

If you have a complaint, please let us know so we can try to resolve the issue for you and learn from it.

Reporting an issue

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 and it relates to one of the following, please contact us and allow us to put it right:

- we have failed to do something we should have;
- we have carried out something poorly; or
- we have treated you unfairly or discourteously;

Informal complaints

If any issue can be resolved informally with our office and you are happy with the outcome, then you need not 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.

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Formal complaints procedure

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

- Please raise your complaint with our dedicated Customer Service team.
- We will acknowledge all complaints within 5 days of the complaint initiation date*.
- We will investigate your concerns and send a response detailing our proposed pathway to resolution within 10 days of the complaint initiation date*. This should explain how we plan to resolve the issue, along with the steps and anticipated timescales.
- We will send a full complaint assessment response within 30 days. If the complaint is resolved, this will confirm the steps taken. If the resolution is still underway, the response will detail what has caused the delay and the anticipated date for resolution.
- Once the complaint has been resolved, we will send a closure response which confirms what action has customers been taken.
- In the unlikely event that the complaint remains unresolved after 56 days of the complaint initiation date*, we will send a further response to provide information on what has caused the delay, what the next steps are, and the anticipated date for resolution. We will update you no less than every 28 days until the matter is resolved.
- We hope we can resolve most matters without further escalation. However, if your complaint is not resolved in accordance with this procedure or you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may be able to refer it to any dispute resolution service offered by your warranty provider or the New Homes Ombudsman Service (www.nhos.org.uk).
- It is within the New Homes Ombudsman Service discretion to decide when or if to accept a complaint, in accordance with the Scheme Rules. The New Homes Ombudsman Service can accept complaints that have arisen from the point of reservation through to legal completion, as well as from two years after legal completion. After this, disputes within the structural warranty period may be referred to the new home warranty provider, if relevant.

* The complaints initiation date (CID) is the first working day after receiving a complaint. For example, 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).

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**

Continues overleaf

Customers can refer their complaint to NHOS either on receipt of the final response from the developer, or if the complaint reaches 56 days and remains open. The New Homes Ombudsman Service can accept complaints that have arisen from the point of reservation through to legal completion, as well as from two years after legal completion.

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.