



Complaints policy
September 2024
(Version 4)

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1 Introduction

Torvista are committed to high standards of customer service. However, there may be occasions when we do not meet those high standards which we set for ourselves. We welcome feedback and we also take any form of complaint seriously. We will try wherever reasonably possible to resolve a complaint to the customer's satisfaction.

This policy explains how customers can make a complaint if they are not satisfied with our services and this applies to all customers of Torvista and to any managing agents or sub-contractors working with or on behalf of Torvista.

2 Definition of a complaint

We define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

We will aim to recognise what a complaint is from talking to a customer without them having to use the word complaint. We will give customers the choice of making a complaint or not.

A complaint can be made in the following way:

- In person
- Letter to Tor Hill House, Union Street, Torquay
- Online: [Contact us - TorVista \(torvistahomes.co.uk\)](http://torvistahomes.co.uk)
- Email: enquiries@torvistahomes.co.uk
- Telephone: 01803 201201
- Email or phone the Housing Manager or Housing officer

Complaints will be accepted via a third party eg friend, family, neighbour or MP. These will be logged accordingly and this Complaints Policy followed.

3 When we will not accept a complaint

We will accept a complaint unless there is a reason not to do so. The list below demonstrates what may not be considered a complaint but will be looked into on its own merits.

- A complaint that a contractor has turned up late to carry out a repair. We will contact the contractor immediately to find out the reason and feedback for a quick resolution. However, if the complaint is about the dissatisfaction of the repair itself then this will be logged and looked into under our Complaints Policy.
- Complaints about another neighbour will be passed on to the housing team to give advice on neighbour disputes.
- Issues regarding Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) will be dealt with under our ASB policy. We will manage complaints about how we are handling the ASB process under this policy.
- Issues that occurred over 12 months ago but we will consider the circumstances around each complaint.
- Disagreement against a decision where there is already an appeal process in place i.e. lettings decision
- We will consider the complaints made about dissatisfaction in surveys and these will be signposted accordingly.
- If legal action has begun regarding an issue and an application has already been lodged at Court.
- An issue that is already being investigated by other agencies i.e Police investigation, serious case review.
- A complaint already being dealt with by the Housing Ombudsman.
- Any complaint that is already being dealt with under our Complaints Policy unless there are ongoing issues related to the complaint or an MP or Housing Ombudsman has asked us to review the complaint.

If an issue raised falls under the above categories we will explain why it is not considered under the complaints process and advise them if there is an alternative method or how to contact the Ombudsman.

4 **Complaint's Procedure**

There is a two-stage complaint procedure in place which is dealt with within our Housing team.

We aim to deal with complaints quickly and where applicable offer an apology or resolution.

We will consider if the customer is vulnerable or at risk and follow other relevant policies to minimise any risks.

We will acknowledge complaints in a clear away setting out our understanding of the complaint and what the customer is seeking as an outcome.

A written answer to the complaint will be provided when known and not when the outstanding actions are due to be completed. Any outstanding issues or if a complaint requires an extension will be clearly set out to the customer.

Where additional complaints are raised during an investigation these will be included in the stage 1 response if they are related and if a response has not been finalised. If the stage 1 response has been issued and the new issues are not related these will be logged as a new complaint.

Informal - Quick resolution

Where we receive negative feedback, a representative of Torvista will contact the complainant within 2 working days of their complaint being raised and will work to agree a suitable resolution in a mutually agreeable timeframe. The response is much quicker than a formal complaint as we will not normally carry out an investigation or send formal letters but will look to get the problem resolved as quickly as possible.

Formal Complaints

Where we are unable to resolve a complaint through our quick resolution process, or a customer requests to make a formal complaint we operate a two stage formal complaints process:

Stage One

When a complaint is made it must be acknowledged and logged within 5 working days of receipt.

We will let you know who will be dealing with your complaint and how to contact them.

We will investigate the complaint and provide a written response within 10 working days of receiving the complaint and will keep the complainant informed of the progress until resolution.

We will provide details of how to escalate to stage two if the customer is not satisfied with the response. This will then be dealt with by a senior member of staff.

If a complaint is made through a third party then the third party will receive an acknowledgement and a copy of the outcome letter.

Stage Two

If a customer is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint review at stage one, the customer can make a request for their complaint to be escalated to stage 2 (appeal panel), within 15 working days of receiving the stage one response.

When a complaint is made it must be acknowledged and logged within 5 working days of receipt.

We will investigate the complaint and provide a written response within 20 working days and will keep the complainant informed of the progress until resolution.

We will let you know who will be dealing with your complaint and how to contact them.

Customers or those acting on their behalf will be allowed to speak to the complaint handler regarding any adverse findings from the outcome of stage one.

Stage two will be dealt with a senior member of staff that has had no previous involvement with the initial complaint therefore the review will be independent. We may involve board members as part of this review stage. This is the final stage of Torvista's complaints process.

5 Taking your complaint further

If the complainant remains unhappy with Torvista's handling of their complaint once the complaints procedure has been exhausted they can refer their case directly to the Housing Ombudsman Service for an independent review.

Details of the Housing Ombudsman Service is available on their website: <http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk>

6 Learning from complaints

Complaints and feedback will be promoted to our customers and staff as an opportunity to learn and make improvements to our service.

When something changes as a result of a complaint, we will acknowledge this and set out the actions we have already taken, or intend to take, to put things right. This can include but is not limited to:

- Apologising
- Acknowledging where things where things have gone wrong and providing an explanation and or reasons
- Reconsidering or changing a decision
- Changing policies, procedure or practices

As a result of any fault being identified we will offer a remedy which will reflect the impact on the customer. This offer will set out what will happen, when and in agreement with the customer. This proposal will be followed through to completion.

The board will receive quarterly reports about the volumes of complaints received, at which stage they were resolved, and any trends or themes within the complaints.

All staff will receive training on this policy and this will be ongoing through regular performance reviews.

7 Monitoring and Performance

The Board is responsible for ensuring this policy is kept up to date, implemented within the organisation and monitored and evaluated.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or when there is a change in circumstances, in work practices or the introduction of new legislation.

8 **Approved Dates**

Version/Date	Consultation & Approval Process			Review
	Residents	Audit & Compliance	Board	
V1 Feb 2021				April 2022
V2 April 2022		Yes		April 2025
V2.1 Oct 2022		Yes		October 2023
V3 Oct 2023		Yes		October 2024
V4 Sept 2024			Yes	September 2027

9 **Supporting policy**

Equality & Diversity Policy