**Service Requests & Complaints**

North Star welcomes complaints. We value this feedback because without it, we would not be able to learn from when things have gone wrong.

# Our Commitment to You

A complaint is defined 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 welcome all complaints and view them as an opportunity to learn.

We will ensure complaints are handled quickly and efficiently and making any improvements and changes when required.

We will make it easy for you to make a complaint and support you until it is resolved.

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman for advice and information at any point during the complaints process. We will provide you with contact details for the Housing Ombudsman in all of our correspondence with you.

# We will always try to resolve issues as soon as possible.

# How can you make a service request or complaint?

We will accept complaints from:

* Any of our customers (tenants, shared owners, leaseholders, management clients)
* Former tenants
* People who have applied for housing.

If a customer gives us permission, we will accept complaints on their behalf from:

* Anyone acting as their representative.
* Third parties and advocates such as social worker
* Family members

We will accept complaints from anyone who is a formal representative of the above including:

* MPs
* Councilors
* Citizens Advice Bureau
* Solicitors

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to make a complaint about our services and we will accept them in any of the following ways:

* In person
* In writing
* By telephone
* By email to customer.services@northstarhg.co.uk
* Via our website at [www.northstarhg.co.uk](http://www.northstarhg.co.uk) in the “Complaints” section
* Through another person, perhaps an advocate, social worker, solicitor, etc.
* Through comments made on surveys
* Through comments on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc

We will provide any reasonable adjustments and discuss your specific needs. This could include:

* Providing information and responses in alternative ways such as large print, translated into another language.
* Extra time to respond in timescales.
* Providing a language interpreter

# Exclusions

There may be circumstances when the complaint cannot be investigated by North Star. These are:

* When the service failure or incident occurred over twelve months from the complaint being made, unless it is a safeguarding or health and safety issue.
* When repeated complaints are made about the same or related matters that we have already addressed.
* Where legal action is being taken against North Star related to the complaint. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
* A complaint regarding a breach of tenancy such as anti-social behaviour, will not be regarded as a complaint unless the complaint is about the handling of the situation.
* When it is referring to a service not provided by North Star.

If we decide not to accept the complaint, we will write to you and explain why we are not accepting the complaint and, in our response, inform you that you have the right to challenge the decision via the housing ombudsman.

**What happens if you make a complaint?**

We will register it at Stage One of our process and we will contact you to listen to you and understand what has gone wrong.

We will acknowledge your complaint within two working days and will assign it to a manager who will carry out an investigation.

We will respond to you in full within 10 working days of receiving your complaint. We will keep you updated if there are any delays with our response.

If you are not satisfied with our response or the issue has not been resolved, we will escalate it to stage two of our process.

At this stage a senior manager (Head of Service or Assistant Director) will review your complaint and how it has been handled. They will contact you to discuss further and will respond to you within 10 working days.

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome of this stage, your next option is for your complaint to be reviewed by the Housing Ombudsman Service. We will provide you with more details on these options in our correspondence to you.

**The Housing Ombudsman**

If after receiving the final response from the Stage 2 complaint review, you are still dissatisfied with how the complaint has been dealt with, you can take your complaint directly to the Housing Ombudsman. The complaint must be received within 12 months from your Stage 2 Complaint being closed.

The Housing Ombudsman can be contacted at:

The Housing Ombudsman

PO Box 1484

Unit D

Preston

PR2 0ET

Or through their website on [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/)

You can also contact the Housing Ombudsman at any point of the complaints process if you require advice with your complaint.

What you can expect from us?

We will explain the outcome of our investigation into your complaint.

We will apologise if we have got things wrong and we will put it right.

We will advise you on what you can do next if we have not resolved your complaint.

If you would like any further information on complaints please contact the Business Improvement team on Tel: 03000 11 00 11.



Endeavour House, St. Mark’s Court, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 6QN

For more information, contact Customer Services on: **03000 11 00 11** or email **customer.services@northstarhg.co.uk**

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