

Procedure: Complaints Procedure

For the Complaints Policy

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Details of consultation with customers and external stakeholders:	This policy has been developed and updated informed by feedback from customers and the Housing ombudsmen about our approach to complaint handling.		
Details of consultation with internal teams:	This policy was developed in consultation with internal teams across Housing for Women, including operations, policy, and communications.		
Equality Impact Assessment:	YES	Date conducted: December 2025 Conducted by: Alison Brown	
	Results: No Negative Impact		
Frequency of Review	This policy will be reviewed every 5 years or more frequently if required to ensure that it complies with any changes in good practice, legislation or regulation.		
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Related Policies	• Compensation policy		
Appendices	• Appendix 1 - Impact remedies • Appendix 2 - Housing Ombudsman determination apology letter • Appendix 3 - Housing Ombudsman Investigation Acknowledgement • Appendix 4 - Stage 1 Acknowledgement • Appendix 5 - Stage 1 Extension		

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appendix 6 - Stage 1 Extension unable to contact• Appendix 7 - Stage 1 Response template contact• Appendix 8 - Stage 1 Response template unable to contact• Appendix 9 - Stage 2 Acknowledgement• Appendix 10 - Stage 2 Extension• Appendix 11 - Stage 2 Extension unable to contact• Appendix 12 - Stage 2 Response |
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1. Purpose of the Process

1.1 This process sets out how Housing for Women handles complaints and Housing Ombudsman cases in a way that is:

- Fair, timely and transparent
- Accessible and inclusive
- Trauma-informed and sensitive to risk
- Focused on learning and service improvement

The process reflects:

- The **Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code**
- The **Equality Act 2010**
- Housing for Women's **Equality Impact Assessment**
- Learning from **Housing Ombudsman Spotlight and Insight reports**
- Learning from **Ombudsman determinations and Complaint Handling Failure Notices**

2. What Is a Complaint?

2.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about:

- An action or lack of action
- The standard of service
- The behaviour of staff or contractors

Residents **do not need to use the word “complaint”**.

2.2 If HFW decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation will be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and explain their right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.

2.3 A complaint can be made:

- In person
- By phone
- By email or letter

- Via the website
- Through a representative or advocate

2.4 Those cases which fall within Health and Safety, Fire Safety and Building Safety categories and present an immediate risk to the safety of our customers, staff or the general public, will be prioritised

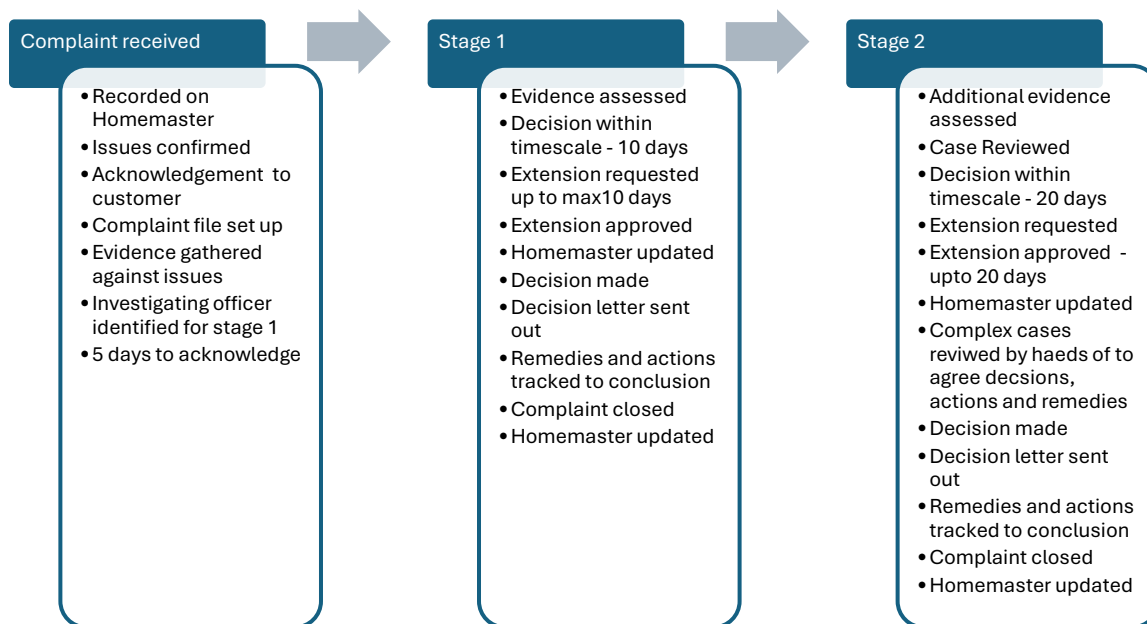
3. Equality, Accessibility and Trauma-Informed Practice (Applies at All Stages)

3.1 At every stage of this process, staff must:

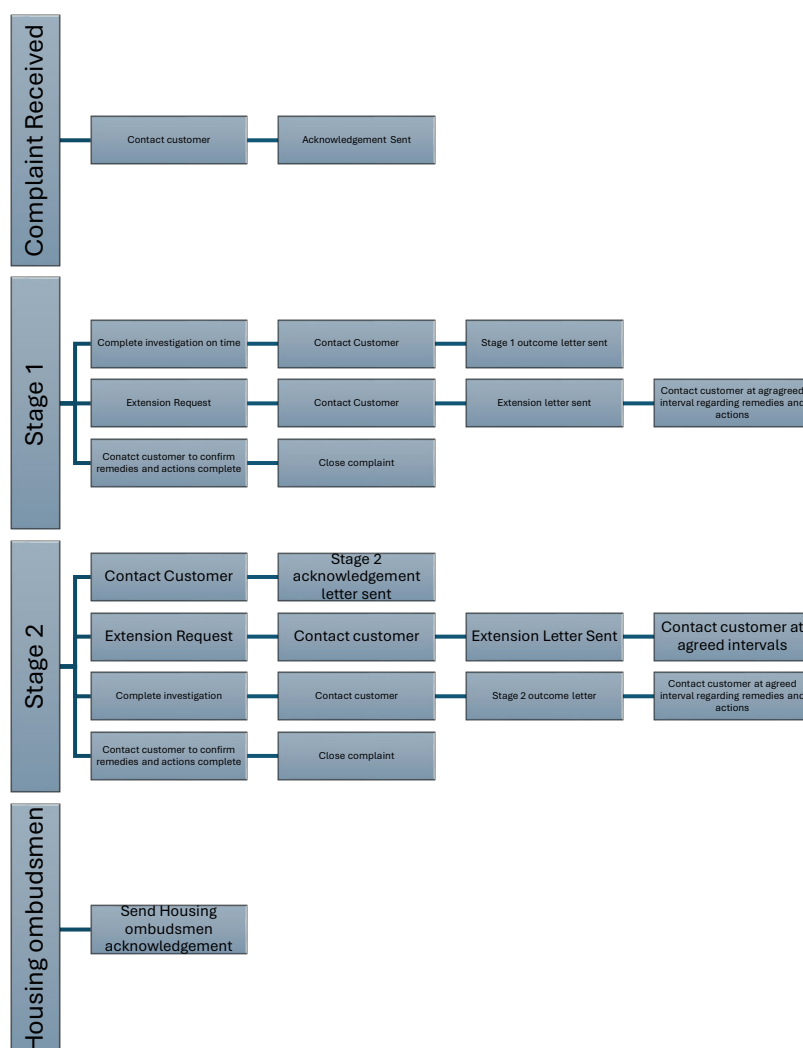
- Consider equality needs, vulnerability, safety and risk
- Offer reasonable adjustments (e.g. language, format, support, time)
- Avoid assumptions or judgmental language
- Recognise that some residents may have experienced:
 - Domestic abuse
 - Exploitation or modern slavery
 - Trauma, fear, or loss of trust in services

3.2 Adjustments and considerations must be recorded on the complaint file to ensure maximum access to the complaints policy and process. We will keep in contact with the customer and agree on the frequency and best way to do this with them to reflect any known communication preferences, health or mental wellbeing needs and vulnerability issues

Summary of complaints process



Summary of customer contact by complaint stage



Roles and responsibilities of complaints summary

Customer contact centre	Resolution support	Resolution lead officer	Resolution lead Manager	Resolution lead head of
- Log complaint on homemaster - Ensure include summary of issues - Upload original letter/text etc against complaint reference number	- Contact customer to agree understanding of issues and any reasonable adjustments - Gather evidence to support stage 1 calim made eg tenancy agreement, repairs history, contact log with contractor - Feedback to customer information such as a revised date for repair visit etc - Set up folder in share point - put evidence - Link folder to compalint reference number - Send out complaint acknowledgement letter - Allocate resolution officer for stage 1 investigation - Arrange quality assurance for stage for stage 2 decisions - Produce performance report at agreed intervals - Esculate in jeordy responses - Complete quality assurance checks against complaints process as directed by Heads of service	- Carry out investigation against evidence for stage 1 complaints - If not within 10 day timescale contact customer to propose and agree and extension with customer and manager - send stage 1 extension letter - Maintain contact with customer as agreed - Send out stage 1 outcome letter - Take all required actions to ensure proposed remedies are actioned - Track remedies and actions to conclusion - Close case - Update learning log	- Contact customer to discuss concerns following stage 1 outcome letter and proosed remedies actions - Carry out investigation against evidence for stage 2 complaints - If not within 20 day timescale contact customer to propose and agree and extension with customer and Head of service - send stage 2 extension letter - Maintain contact with customer as agreed - Send out stage 2 outcome letter - Take all required actions to ensure proposed remedies are actioned - Track remedies and actions to conclusion - Close case - Update learning log	- Allocate resolution lead managers for cases spanning multiple service areas - Oversee quality assurance on stage 2 decsion proposals - deal with escalations where actions and remedies not progressed against agreed timelines

4. Stage 1 – Complaint Logged and Acknowledged

4.1 Logging the Complaint

- Complaint is logged on the CRM/House Master system to ensure that clear audit trail can of the customer contact and accountability for addressing issues
- The operations team will contact the customer to discuss the complaint to
 - ensure Issues are defined **in the resident's/advocates own words including an opportunity to tell us more information**
 - Any issues that are unclear will be discussed verbally with the resident or their advocate, or 1st named person where group complaint
 - Tenants communication preferences will be discussed including need for independent interpreters
 - Agree any adjustments where distress or vulnerability is evident
 - Desired outcomes and preferred remedies are recorded
- Discussions with tenants can trigger safeguarding and modern slavery escalation pathways where indicators are identified
- If HFW is unable to make contact with the resident the complaint will be investigated based on the information provided at that point

4.2 Acknowledgement

- Must be in writing and sent within **5 working days**
- Confirms:
 - The complaint stage (Stage 1)
 - Summary of the complaint and issue
 - Which aspects the landlord is and is not responsible for.
 - Desired outcomes and preferred remedies
 - Named contact – the resolution lead officer will be allocated on a case-by-case basis depending on the issue
 - Response timescale (**10 working days**)
 - Confirmation of or offer of support or reasonable adjustments
 - Housing Ombudsman signposting for advice

Responsibility – Operations support Officer

Time as an Adjustment: In some cases, giving a resident more time to respond to your queries is itself a reasonable adjustment, but this does not give the landlord an automatic right to exceed the mandatory 10-day extension limit for their own investigation.

5. Stage 1 – Investigation and Response

5.1 Investigation

- Relevant records, policies, customer contact and evidence will be gathered by the resolution support and reviewed by the allocated resolution lead officer. This will include any additional information and evidence provided after issue/complaint logged and following the telephone call with the customer is contact is made.
- If the customer introduces an unrelated issue they will be advised that this will need to be the subject of an additional complaint if the stage 1 response has been issued, the issues are unrelated or it would unreasonably delay the response.
- Clear explanation of:
 - What Housing for Women is responsible for
 - What decisions were made and why
- Impact on the resident considered (not just process)

Addressing Hazards: From 2026, if the complaint involves health and safety hazards, you must confirm that the investigation or repair has met the statutory Awaab's Law timeframes.

5.2 Timescales

- Response issued within **10 working days of complaint being acknowledged and once the answer to the complaint is known**

Active Review: If a resident's disability makes waiting 10 extra days a "substantial disadvantage," you may need to provide interim solutions (e.g., temporary repairs or alternative accommodation if hazards are present).

5.3 Extension

If an extension is required. The investigating officer will contact the customer to explain the rationale for the request and allow an opportunity for feedback

- It must be agreed with the resident and approved by a manager
- Reasons clearly explained for example
- **(Option A: Complexity)** The complexity of the issues raised, specifically (insert detail), requires coordination between multiple departments to ensure a thorough response.
- **Option B: Third-Party Info** We are currently awaiting critical information or a technical report from an external contractor/specialist regarding (insert detail).
- **(Option C: Staff Availability)** A key staff member involved in the case is currently unavailable due to (e.g., leave/sickness), and their direct input is essential for a fair review.
- **(Option D: Awaab's Law Hazards/ Building/Fire Safety)** To comply with health and safety standards, we are conducting a specialist technical survey for (e.g., damp/mould/structural hazard) before we can finalise our decision.
- **(Option E: Exceptional Events)** We have experienced a major operational disruption, (such as a cyber-attack or significant business continuity events), that has temporarily impacted complaint-handling capacity
- New date confirmed no more than an additional 10 working days without good reason
- Will agree with the tenant suitable intervals for being updated on their complaint

- Ombudsman contact details included and residents will be made aware of their right to approach the Ombudsman if extension timescales exceed those stated by the Code
- Extension limited and recorded

Mandatory Tracking: Under the 2024 Code, we must track every extension we issue. High volumes of extensions can be flagged by the Ombudsman as a systemic failure in our Annual Complaints Performance Report.

5.4 Managing Cases with multiple issues

A lead resolution officer will be allocated to coordinate response to the customer.

5.5 Stage 1 Response

Before the complaint response is sent to a customer, the resolution lead officer will contact them to discuss the outcome of their investigation. A full response will be sent to the customer after this conversation. Where we have been unable to talk to the customer (for example if the customer expresses a preference not to be telephoned), a response letter will be sent acknowledging that no telephone contact has been made.

A complaint response is sent to customer when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed.

Must be in writing and Include

- Use of agreed stage 1 response template
- Clear decision on each issue and the reasons for any decision made including which aspects are upheld, partially and not upheld.

When to Use "Partially Upheld"

- **Multiple Issues:** If a resident complains about three separate repairs and you find that two were handled correctly but one was delayed, the overall complaint is "partially upheld".
- **Partial Fault:** If you acknowledge a delay occurred but do not agree with the resident's claim that staff were also rude, you would uphold the delay point and not uphold the conduct point.
- **Proportionate Redress:** If you find some failings but determine they did not have the severe impact the resident claimed, you may partially uphold the complaint while offering a remedy for the specific faults found

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- If the complaint involves health and safety hazards, we must confirm that the investigation or repair has met the statutory Awaab's Law timeframes.
- Confirmation of which aspects the landlord is and is not responsible for.
- The details of any actions and impact based remedy offered to put things right with timescales see appendix 1 for other examples of remedies.
- How we have made reasonable adjustments
- Details of any outstanding actions and a contact point for this, if applicable;
- Learning identified
- Clear explanation of how to escalate to Stage 2 and access to Housing Ombudsmen.

5.6 Outcome

- If resident is satisfied → complaint decision recorded in HomeMaster, date for remedies recorded so remedy actions can be tracked
- Outstanding actions will be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.
- If resident is dissatisfied with the stage 1 process or the outcome of the stage 1 → escalate to Stage 2
- Complaint closed and updated in Home Master once remedies fully implemented

Residents **do not need to justify escalation.**

Responsibility – Operations Officer

6. Stage 2 – Final Complaint Review

6.1 Allocation

- If we have successfully addressed all issues then this should help reduce the volume of customers who escalate their issues to a stage 2.
- Stage 2 complaints will be reviewed by a **senior staff member not involved at Stage 1**
- On receipt of the escalation request, the investigating officer will be allocated, and they will contact the customer to discuss the stage two complaint. Stage 2 complaints will be allocated on an alternate basis to staff not involved in a stage 1 response.

6.2 Acknowledgement

- Use of agreed stage 2 acknowledgement template

- Sent within **5 working days**
- Confirms in writing:
 - Final stage
 - Issues under review and preferred remedies
 - Response timescale (**20 working days**)
 - Confirm name of senior staff member responsible for investigating.

6.3 Investigation

- Full review of:
 - Stage 1 handling
 - Any new information considered
 - Equality and impact considerations
- Decisions must be reasoned, evidence-based and fair

1. **Independence:** The [Ombudsman](#) will check that Stage 2 was not just a "rubber stamp" of Stage 1. Ensure your reasoning shows active disagreement or confirmation of the original facts.
2. **Redress:** Your compensation offers must be in line with our published policy.

6.4 Timescales

- Final response issued within **20 working days of complaint escalation being acknowledged and once the answer to the complaint is known.**
- If an extension is required:
- The investigating officer will contact the customer/evidence a reasonable attempt to contact the customer to explain the rationale for the request and allow an opportunity for feedback
- Once they acknowledge it (or after a reasonable attempt to reach them), send the formal extension letter to ensure your written records are compliant.
- Any extension must be agreed with the resident and approved by a senior manager
- Reasons clearly explained for example
 - **Complexity:** The issues raised are multifaceted and require coordination across multiple departments to ensure a thorough final review.
 - **Third-Party Information:** We are awaiting a final specialist report/information from an external contractor regarding (**Issue**) which is essential to our decision.
 - **New Evidence:** tenant/representative has provided significant new information) which we need additional time to verify and investigate.

- **Staff Availability:** A key staff member required for the final investigation is currently unavailable due to unexpected (**e.g., emergency leave**).
- New date confirmed no more than an additional 20 working days without good reason
- Will agree with the tenant suitable intervals for being updated on their complaint
- Ombudsman contact details included residents will be made aware of their right to approach the Ombudsman if extension timescales exceed those stated by the Code
- Extension limited and recorded

6.5 Stage 2 Response Must Include

- Final decision on all issues including which aspects are upheld, partially and not upheld.
- Clear reasons for decisions
- How we have made reasonable adjustments
- Remedies offered linked to resident impact (see appendix 1) to put things right
- Details of any outstanding actions and a contact point for this, if applicable;
- Service improvement actions
- Confirmation this is the final stage
- Clear signposting to the Housing Ombudsman

6.6 Stage 2 Outcome

- A stage two complaint will be upheld if we recognise service failures which have not been recognised or adequately remedied at stage one. If no further failures in service are found at stage two (than those reasonably remedied and redressed at stage one), then the stage two complaint will be not upheld.
- Where the stage 2 complaint covers multiple issues they will be reviewed by the heads of service to agree the actions and remedies.
- We will complete a quality assurance check on stage 2 complaints
- The complaint decision is recorded in HomeMaster,
- The date for any other actions or remedies are recoded so remedy /actions can be tracked to completion
- Outstanding actions will be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.
- If tenant (s) is dissatisfied advise of Housing Ombudsmen.
- We monitor complaints from our high rise building within the complaints process to ensure we create a voice for residents and understand if there are any building safety concerns. If residents are not happy with how their complaint was handled specifically for building safety, HFW will inform the resident of how to contact the Building Safety Regulator.
- Complaint closed and updated in Home master only once all the remedies and actions are fully implemented

7. Housing Ombudsman Case

7.1 Referral to the Ombudsman

A resident may contact the Housing Ombudsman if:

- Stage 2 is complete, or
- Timescales have not been met, or
- They believe the complaint was not handled fairly

7.2 Ombudsman Triage / Early Resolution

- Ombudsman may seek early resolution
- Housing for Women must cooperate promptly
- Responses to Ombudsman enquiries must be within required timescales

7.3 Formal Investigation

If early resolution is not appropriate:

- Ombudsman requests evidence and records
- Complaint handling and service delivery are assessed
- Equality, fairness and reasonableness are considered

8. Housing Ombudsman Outcomes

8.1 Possible determinations include:

- No maladministration
- Service failure
- Maladministration
- Severe maladministration
- Complaint Handling Failure Notice (CHFN)

8.2 Each outcome must be:

- Logged
- Reported internally
- Included in governance reporting

9. Remedies and Orders

9.1 Where issues are identified, the Ombudsman may order:

- A formal apology
- Practical action to put things right
- Compensation reflecting distress, inconvenience or time and trouble
- Changes to policy or process

9.2 Housing for Women must:

- Comply with orders within timescales
- Evidence completion
- Report progress to senior management and the Board

10. Learning, Governance and Assurance

10.1 Learning

- Themes and trends analysed
- Learning logged from:
 - Complaints
 - Ombudsman cases
 - CHFN
- Equality Impact Assessment reviewed where relevant

10.2 Governance Oversight

- Complaints performance framework in place with agreed dashboard (**TBC**)
- Operational review of complaints at agreed frequency
- Quality assurance of delivery against agreed process and proposed actions and remedies
- Quarterly reporting to the People and communities Board
- Oversight by the Member Responsible for Complaints
- Annual report to board
- **SEE also resident engagement and scrutiny (tbc)**

- Performance monitored via:
 - KPIs
 - QA scores
 - RAG ratings
 - Ombudsman outcomes

10.3 Continuous Improvement

- Action plans updated and tracked
- Staff training informed by learning
- Improvements communicated to residents (“You said, we’re improving”)

11. Core Principles Throughout the Process

- Accessibility and inclusion
- Fairness and transparency
- Timeliness and accountability
- Trauma-informed practice
- Learning and improvement

12. Further information

Provide an office contact name and telephone number, email address, or Web address for individuals who may need assistance or additional information regarding topics covered in the policy section.

Details of Policy Holder - Director of Operations – Alison.Brown@h4w.co.uk Alison Brown

Governance Manager – Theodora.Ugo@h4w.co.uk Tel:02037523573

13. Records of Review

The record of reviews are as follows:

Date of change	Who updated	Details of change
03.02.26	Alison Brown	Updated previous version and separated the procedure form the policy document..

Appendix 1 – Impact remedy examples

1. We carry out a fair and impartial assessment which seeks to resolve the complaint. As part of the investigation, we will provide fair and proportionate remedies which are appropriate to the circumstances of the complaint. This policy is aligned with the Housing Ombudsman guidance on appropriate remedies.
2. Questions that may help us to decide an appropriate remedy includes (but are not limited to) the following:
 - What is the customer seeking as a resolution to their complaint?
 - Has the customer been adversely affected by HFW actions or omissions? If so, how and over what period?
 - Does the customer or their household have any attributes which meant that they were more adversely affected?
 - Were there any other circumstances which meant that the nature of the complaint was more detrimental to the customer?
 - Is it possible to restore the customer to the position they would have been in before the issue giving rise to the complaint? If not, what could we do to put matters right for the customer?
 - Is there an actual, quantifiable financial loss? For example, has the customer incurred costs because of what happened, or not received payments that they should have?
 - What remedy would be proportionate, appropriate and reasonable in the circumstances of the case?
3. A remedy is how we put things right after something has gone wrong. There are several measures that can be considered to put things right for the complainant, which may include:
 - **Personalised Apologies:** A sincere, personal apology from a senior member of staff that acknowledges the failure, accepts responsibility, explains why it happened, and expresses genuine regret, rather than a standard, impersonal response. We utilise the Housing Ombudsman's 'Apologies Guidance' for best practice: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/centre-for-learning/key-topics/our-orders/apologies-guidance/> If there is no service failure identified, we may still apologise for the situation without accepting fault, as recognition of the impact a customer has felt, depending on the circumstances.
 - **Specific Action to Rectify the Failure:** This involves practical, time-bound measures to correct the problem.
 - Carrying out specific repair work, such as fixing a long-standing leak.

- Providing alternative appropriate accommodation (e.g., a hotel or different flat) if the home is uninhabitable due to disrepair or a major issue.
- Fast-tracking a repair or service delivery
- Amending a record or changing a decision that was wrongly made eg removing unfair rent arrears or amending vulnerability flags to prevent future service issues.
- **Financial Remedies/Compensation:** This is used to address quantifiable financial loss and the non-monetary impact on the resident.
 - **Reimbursement of Costs:** Covering actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the resident, such as increased heating bills due to a broken boiler, the cost of temporary accommodation, or paying for cleaning services.
 - **Discretionary Payments:** Compensation for the distress, inconvenience, and detriment caused by the landlord's failure. The amount is proportionate to the severity and duration of the impact, taking into account factors such as the effect on physical or mental health, disruption to family life, or loss of use of a room. The [Housing Ombudsman's Guidance on remedies](#) provides a framework for these calculations.
 - **Rent or service charge Adjustments:** Offering a rent-free period or adjustment to their rent account or service charge.
 - **Statutory Payments:** Home loss Disturbance
- **Systemic and Policy Changes:** To prevent similar failures for other residents, a remedy may include an order to:
 - Review and revise specific policies or procedures (e.g., the anti-social behaviour or repairs policy).
 - Implement staff training to address identified shortcomings and to develop competences.
 - Improve communication practices, such as providing a single point of contact during the complaints process.

4. Key Considerations for Implementation

- **Focus on the individual:** The impact on the resident, including any vulnerabilities (e.g., disability, young children), must be a primary factor in determining the remedy.
- **Clarity and Timeframes:** The remedy offered must be clearly set out, with specific deadlines for actions to be completed, and agreed upon with the resident where appropriate.
- **Transparency and Learning:** The policy should demonstrate that the organisation learns from complaints and implements changes to improve future service delivery.

- **Proportionate Response:** Remedies should be appropriate and proportionate to the severity of the service failure and the resulting impact.

Appendix 2

Housing Ombudsmen determination Apology Letter Template

[Date]

[Tenant

Name]

[Tenant Address]

RE: Formal Apology – Housing Ombudsman Determination [Reference Number]

Dear [Tenant Name],

1. Personal Opening and Sincere Regret

I am writing to you personally to apologise for the failures in service you experienced regarding [mention specific issue, e.g., delayed repairs/complaint handling]. Having reviewed the Housing Ombudsman's determination dated [Date], I am deeply sorry for the [distress/inconvenience/impact] this has caused you.

2. Acceptance of Responsibility

We unreservedly accept the Ombudsman's findings of [Service Failure/Maladministration]. We recognise that we failed to meet the standards you should expect from us when [briefly describe the failure, e.g., we did not respond to your reports of damp for six months]. We take full responsibility for these shortcomings.

3. Acknowledging the Impact

I understand that our failure to [specific action] meant that you [describe impact, e.g., were unable to use your living room/felt ignored for several months]. We recognise that this has been a difficult time for you, and we truly regret the impact this had on your [well-being/home life].

4. Explanation (Without Excuses)

The failure occurred because [provide a clear, non-defensive reason, e.g., our internal records were not updated correctly]. While this explains the delay, it does not excuse it. We should have [state what should have happened], and we did not.

5. Putting Things Right (Remedy)

To resolve this matter and in line with the Ombudsman's orders, we are taking the following actions:

- **Compensation:** We will pay you £[Amount] in recognition of the [distress/inconvenience] caused. This will be paid by [Date/Method].

- **Service charge**
- **Outstanding Work:** [If applicable] We have scheduled the remaining [repairs/actions] for [Date].

6. Lessons Learned and Future Prevention

We are committed to learning from this experience. To ensure this does not happen again, we have [describe specific changes, e.g., updated our repair tracking system / provided mandatory staff training on complaint handling].

7. Closing

Thank you for your patience throughout this process. We value you as a resident and are dedicated to improving our service to you.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Senior Position, e.g., Chief Executive / Director of Operations/Support Housing]

[Contact Details]

Appendix 3

Date

Address

Address

Address

Address

My reference:
Please ask for:

Dear (Resident Name),

RE: Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Investigation – HFW Complaint (Ref Number) / (HOS Ref Number)

1. Acknowledgment of Referral

We have been notified by the **Housing Ombudsman Service** that you have referred your complaint to them for independent investigation following our Stage 2 Final Response issued on (**Date of Stage 2 Letter**).

2. Our Cooperation with the Investigation

We respect your right to seek an independent review of your concerns. We have received a request from the Ombudsman to provide all relevant documentation, including:

- Copies of your original complaint and our responses at Stage 1 and Stage 2.
- Internal records, repair logs, and correspondence related to your case.
- Relevant policies and procedures.

We will provide this information within the timescales requested by the Ombudsman to ensure they can conduct a thorough and fair investigation.

3. Reasonable Adjustments

During our internal process, we applied the following adjustments: (**e.g., telephone updates / documents in Large Print, advocate**). We have informed the Ombudsman of these agreed adjustments to ensure their investigation remains accessible to you. Please let us know if you require any different support during this period.

4. What Happens Next?

The [Housing Ombudsman Service](#) will now investigate your complaint to determine if there has been any service failure or maladministration by HFW.

- **Timescale:** The Ombudsman currently works towards completing most investigations within 12 months, though some sensitive cases may be prioritised.
- **Direct Contact:** The Ombudsman's casework team will communicate directly with you regarding their findings and any potential orders they may issue to us.

5. Housing Ombudsman Contact Details

Should you need to contact the Ombudsman during their investigation, please use the following:

- **Online:** www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk **Phone:** 0300 111 3000
- Online complaint form: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/.

Yours sincerely,

Electronic Signature

Name

Job title

Appendix 4

Date

Address

Address

Address

Address

Please ask for:

Dear

Stage 1 Complaint Acknowledgement, Case Ref -

1. Acknowledgement and Your Complaint Definition

Thank you for contacting us on [Date Received]. We have formally logged this as a Stage 1 Complaint. We aim to provide our services right first time but accept that sometimes things go wrong. Complaints help us understand this and we use them to put matters right, and improve our services. Using the information provided, and or our telephone conversation on XXXXX we understand the key issues of your complaint to be:

- [Issue 1, e.g., failure to repair the heating system since 1st December 2025]
- [Issue 2, e.g., lack of response to three emails sent in January 2025]

The outcome you are seeking to resolve this matter is

[desired outcome, e.g., a fixed heating system and compensation for the delay].

If any part of the above is incorrect or if we have missed anything, we want to provide further information please contact us quoting your complaint reference number so we can ensure our investigation covers all your concerns. Use your preferred method of communication but for reference our details are by email at customer.service@h4w.co.uk or call us on 020 7501 6120, using your tenant portal access.

1. Clarifying Our Responsibilities

To ensure a clear investigation, we must clarify which aspects of your concerns we are responsible for under your tenancy agreement and our policies:

- **Issues we are investigating:** We are responsible for and will investigate [e.g., the maintenance of your heating system and our communication standards].

- **Issues we are not responsible for:** (If applicable) We have noted your concerns regarding [e.g., noise from the public highway]. As this is a matter for the [e.g., Local Authority Highways department], it falls outside our responsibility as a landlord and will not be part of this formal complaint investigation.
- *If you disagree with these exclusions, you have the right to contact the [Housing Ombudsman](#) to challenge this decision.*

2. Our Commitment to Early Resolution

We aim to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity. We will continue to progress any outstanding repairs or actions related to your reported issues or service request while this complaint is being investigated. If we can provide a solution sooner, we will contact you to discuss an early resolution

3. Your Wellbeing and Access Needs (Equality Act 2010)

We are committed to ensuring our complaints process is accessible and fair for everyone. Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to remove any barriers you may face.

Vulnerability: From our records and from our discussions we have noted [insert any known vulnerability, e.g., your health condition/disability] and will take this into account when investigating the urgency and impact of your complaint.

Reasonable Adjustments: To ensure you can fully engage with this process, we have confirmed the following adjustments, such as:

- Advised about availability of translation to alternative languages, large print and audio.
- Your preferred communication method (insert e.g., email only or telephone only).
- Allowing more time for you to respond or scheduling meetings at specific times.(insert what was agreed)
- Having the option of a support worker or advocate present during any discussions or to act as your representative (Insert details of who if applicable).

4. What happens next?

[Name of Investigator] will investigate your concerns in line with stage 1 of our complaints policy. Details of which can be found on our web site [Complaints & compliments](#) and a summary leaflet will be sent with this acknowledgement letter. We will provide a full written response by [Date: 10 working days from acknowledgement]. If we require an extension, we will explain the reason and provide a new deadline, which will not exceed a further 10 working days without a valid reason.

5. Independent Advice

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any time for advice on your rights and reasonable adjustments. You can find details on Housing Ombudsman website about their

complaints code of conduct that we need to follow. [Complaint Handling Code 2022 | Housing Ombudsman Service \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/complaint-handling-code-2022)

Phone: 0300 111 3000

Online: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Electronic Signature

Name

Job title

Appendix 5

Date

Address

Address

Address

Address

My reference:

Please ask for:

Dear

Stage 1 Complaint Response Extension – Reference

I am writing regarding your Stage 1 complaint, which was acknowledged on (Date).

Under the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, we aim to provide a full response within 10 working days. However, we require additional time to investigate your concerns thoroughly for the following reason(s):

- **(Option A: Complexity)** The complexity of the issues raised, specifically (insert detail), requires coordination between multiple departments to ensure a thorough response.
- **Option B: Third-Party Info]** We are currently awaiting critical information or a technical report from an external contractor/specialist regarding (insert detail).
- **(Option C: Staff Availability)** A key staff member involved in the case is currently unavailable due to (e.g., leave/sickness), and their direct input is essential for a fair review.
- **(Option D: Awaab's Law Hazards/ Building/Fire Safety]** To comply with health and safety standards, we are conducting a specialist technical survey for (e.g., damp/mould/structural hazard) before we can finalise our decision.
- **(Option E: Exceptional Events)** We have experienced a major operational disruption, (such as a cyber-attack or significant business continuity events), that has temporarily impacted complaint-handling capacity

New Response Deadline

We have extended the deadline for our response by (number) working days. You can now expect to receive our full Stage 1 response by (New Date – must be within 10 working days of original deadline). We will provide you with a further update on (Date). We understand that delays can be frustrating and we apologise for this extension.

Compensation and Redress

Please be assured that as part of our final Stage 1 response, we will assess whether any service failure has occurred. If so, we will consider appropriate redress, which may include financial compensation for distress, inconvenience, or "time and trouble" in line with our Compensation Policy. (Link to Policy).

Reasonable Adjustments & Support

We are committed to ensuring our complaints process is accessible. We have recorded your preferred

adjustment as **(e.g., telephone updates/large print)**. Please let us know if this extension causes you particular difficulty or if you require additional support to access our services during this delay.

Your Rights

If you are dissatisfied with this extension or feel the delay is unreasonable, you can contact the [Housing Ombudsman Service](#) for independent advice:

- **Online:** www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- **Phone:** 0300 111 3000

the Ombudsman no longer accepts email for new complaints; they must be submitted via online form or phone

Yours sincerely,

Electronic signature

Name

Job title

Appendix 6

Date

Address

Address

Address

Address

My reference:

Please ask for:

Dear

Stage 1 Complaint Response Extension – Reference

Attempted Contact

I am writing regarding your Stage 1 complaint, which was acknowledged on (Date).

Under the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, we aim to provide a full response within 10 working days. We attempted to contact you on (Dates/Times) via (Method, e.g., telephone/text) to discuss your complaint and to explain that we needed additional time to investigate your concerns thoroughly for the following reason(s):

- **(Option A: Complexity)** The complexity of the issues raised, specifically (insert detail), requires coordination between multiple departments to ensure a thorough response.
- **(Option B: Third-Party Info]** We are currently awaiting critical information or a technical report from an external contractor/specialist regarding (insert detail).
- **(Option C: Staff Availability)** A key staff member involved in the case is currently unavailable due to (e.g., leave/sickness), and their direct input is essential for a fair review.
- **(Option D: Awaab's Law Hazards/ Building/Fire Safety]** To comply with health and safety standards, we are conducting a specialist technical survey for (e.g., damp/mould/structural hazard) before we can finalise our decision.
- **(Option E: Exceptional Events)** We have experienced a major operational disruption, (such as a cyber-attack or significant business continuity events), that has temporarily impacted complaint-handling capacity

New Response Deadline

We were unable to reach you; to discuss a new suitable deadline for our response so we are now providing this formal notification of an extension in writing. We have extended the deadline for our response by (number) working days. You can now expect to receive our full Stage 1 response by (New Date – must be within 10 working days of original deadline). We will provide you with a further update on (Date). We understand that delays can be frustrating and we apologise for this extension.

Compensation and Redress

Please be assured that as part of our final Stage 1 response, we will assess whether any service failure has occurred. If so, we will consider appropriate redress, which may include financial compensation for distress, inconvenience, or "time and trouble" in line with our Compensation Policy. (Link to Policy).

Reasonable Adjustments & Support

We are committed to ensuring our complaints process is accessible. We have recorded your preferred adjustment as **(e.g., telephone updates/large print)**. Please let us know if this extension causes you particular difficulty or if you require additional support to access our services during this delay.

Your Rights

If you are dissatisfied with this extension or feel the delay is unreasonable, you can contact the [Housing Ombudsman Service](#) for independent advice:

- **Online:** www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- **Phone:** 0300 111 3000

the Ombudsman no longer accepts email for new complaints; they must be submitted via online form or phone

Yours sincerely,

Electronic signature

Name

Job title

Appendix 7

Date

Address

Address

Address

Address

My reference:

Please ask for:

Dear **(Resident Name)**,

RE: Stage 1 Complaint Final Response – (Reference Number)

I am writing to provide our final response to your Stage 1 complaint, which was acknowledged on **(Date)**.

1. Reasonable Adjustments

We are committed to making our service accessible. To support you during this process, we have applied the following agreed adjustments: **(e.g., providing documents in Large Print / holding a meeting in person / telephone updates)**. If you feel these adjustments did not meet your needs, or if you require different support should you wish to escalate this matter, please let us know.

2. Complaint Definition

We understand your complaint is about:

(Point 1, e.g., The failure to address damp and mould in the bedroom within Awaab's Law timelines).

(Point 2, e.g., Poor communication regarding your repair appointments). **(list all points from acknowledgement letter)**

You are seeking the following outcomes: **(e.g., an apology, compensation, and a fixed date for the repair – as agreed in acknowledgement letter)**.

3. Our Investigation

To ensure a fair and thorough review, we took the following steps: **(List activities undertaken)**

Reviewed all internal repair logs and communication records from (Date) to (Date).

(Site Visit/Survey): Conducted an in-person inspection of the property on (Date).

(Interviews): Spoke with the attending contractor and the Housing Officer involved.

(Policy Review): Compared our actions against our (Repairs Policy) and Awaab's Law 2026 hazard standards

4. Investigation Findings

Using the information available to me our findings are:

Issue 1: (Upheld/Partially Upheld/Not Upheld). We found that (Reasoning—e.g., under Awaab's Law 2026 standards, the investigation should have occurred within 10 days; we failed to meet this).

Issue 2: (Upheld/Partially Upheld/Not Upheld). (Reasoning).- complete for each issue

5. Putting Things Right (Remedy)

To resolve this matter, we will take the following actions:

Apology: We offer a sincere apology for the distress caused by (specific failure)

Outstanding Actions: The following actions are still pending: (e.g., Contractor to attend on Date). We will track these until completion

Compensation: We are offering (Amount) for [e.g., distress/inconvenience/time and trouble], in line with our Compensation Policy. (provide link to and provide a breakdown of what the financial compensation is for eg loss of use of room, physical). Should you wish to accept our offer of compensation, please email your bank details to customer.service@h4w.co.uk to be processed in line with our compensation policy.

We will check your rent and service charge account and, if in arrears, any discretionary compensation awarded may be paid into your rent account towards these. Any remaining balance will be paid into your bank account. Please note, we can only pay compensation to the person named as the tenant, if you are complaining on behalf of the tenant or leaseholder, please ensure you provide their bank details rather than your own, for compensation to be processed without delay.

6. Learning and Improvement

To prevent this happening again, we have (e.g., updated our contractor monitoring system / retrained staff on the Equality Act).

7. How to Escalate

We hope the remedies we have identified will address the issues you have raised. If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to escalate your complaint to Stage 2 within 12 months of reporting the issue to us. You do not need to provide a reason for requesting an escalation. However, if you choose to share why you remain unhappy, it will help us focus our Stage 2 review.

You may also contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any time for advice:

Online: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk, Phone: 0300 111 3000

Yours sincerely,

Electronic Signature

Name

Job Title

Appendix 8

Date

Address

Address

Address

Address

My reference:

Please ask for:

Dear **(Resident Name)**,

RE: Stage 1 Complaint Final Response – (Reference Number)

I am writing to provide our final response to your Stage 1 complaint, which was acknowledged on **(Date)**. We attempted to contact you on **(Dates/Times)** via **(Method, e.g., telephone/text)** to discuss your complaint and to explain the findings and next steps but were unable to reach you.

1. Reasonable Adjustments

We are committed to making our service accessible. To support you during this process, we have applied the following agreed adjustments: **(e.g., providing documents in Large Print / holding a meeting in person / telephone updates)**. If you feel these adjustments did not meet your needs, or if you require different support should you wish to escalate this matter, please let us know.

2. Complaint Definition

We understand your complaint is about:

(Point 1, e.g., The failure to address damp and mould in the bedroom within Awaab's Law timelines).

(Point 2, e.g., Poor communication regarding your repair appointments). **(list all points from acknowledgement letter)**

You are seeking the following outcomes: **(e.g., an apology, compensation, and a fixed date for the repair – as agreed in acknowledgement letter)**.

3. Our Investigation

To ensure a fair and thorough review, we took the following steps: **(List activities undertaken)**

Reviewed all internal repair logs and communication records from **(Date)** to **(Date)**.

(Site Visit/Survey): Conducted an in-person inspection of the property on **(Date)**.

(Interviews): Spoke with the attending contractor and the Housing Officer involved.

(Policy Review): Compared our actions against our (Repairs Policy) and Awaab's Law 2026 hazard standards

4. Investigation Findings

Using the information available to me our findings are:

Issue 1: (Upheld/Partially Upheld/Not Upheld). We found that (Reasoning—e.g., under Awaab's Law 2026 standards, the investigation should have occurred within 10 days; we failed to meet this).

Issue 2: (Upheld/Partially Upheld/Not Upheld). (Reasoning).- complete for each issue

5. Putting Things Right (Remedy)

To resolve this matter, we will take the following actions:

Apology: We offer a sincere apology for the distress caused by (specific failure)

Outstanding Actions: The following actions are still pending: (e.g., Contractor to attend on Date). We will track these until completion

Compensation: We are offering (Amount) for [e.g., distress/inconvenience/time and trouble], in line with our Compensation Policy. (provide link to and provide a breakdown of what the financial compensation is for eg loss of use of room, physical). Should you wish to accept our offer of compensation, please email your bank details to customer.service@h4w.co.uk to be processed in line with our compensation policy.

We will check your rent and service charge account and, if in arrears, any discretionary compensation awarded may be paid into your rent account towards these. Any remaining balance will be paid into your bank account. Please note, we can only pay compensation to the person named as the tenant, if you are complaining on behalf of the tenant or leaseholder, please ensure you provide their bank details rather than your own, for compensation to be processed without delay.

6. Learning and Improvement

To prevent this happening again, we have (e.g., updated our contractor monitoring system / retrained staff on the Equality Act).

7. How to Escalate

We hope the remedies we have identified will address the issues you have raised. If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to escalate your complaint to Stage 2 within 12 months of reporting the issue to us. You do not need to provide a reason for requesting an escalation. However, if you choose to share why you remain unhappy, it will help us focus our Stage 2 review.

You may also contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any time for advice:

Online: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk, Phone: 0300 111 3000

Yours sincerely,

Electronic Signature

Name

Job Title

Appendix 9

Date

Address

Address

Address

Address

My reference:

Please ask for:

Dear (Resident Name),

RE: Stage 2 Complaint Acknowledgement – [Reference Number]

I am writing to acknowledge your request to escalate your complaint to Stage 2, which we received on (Date).

1. Our Understanding of Your Complaint (Complaint Definition)

As part of our Stage 2 process, we have reviewed your escalation request alongside your original Stage 1 complaint. Following our telephone conversation on DATE XXXX We understand your outstanding concerns are:

(Issue 1): [e.g., You remain dissatisfied with the repair delay to your communal door].

(Issue 2): [e.g., You feel the Stage 1 compensation offer of £X was insufficient to reflect the distress caused].

We understand that to resolve this, you are seeking the following outcomes:

(Outcome 1): (e.g., A fixed date for the repair to be finished).

(Outcome 2): (e.g., An increased compensation offer of £Y).

2. Next Steps in Our Investigation

As this is the final stage of our internal complaints process, we will take the following steps to ensure a fair review:

Independent Review: Your case has been assigned to (Name/Job title), who was not involved in the Stage 1 decision. They will review all previous evidence and your reasons for dissatisfaction.

Information Gathering: We will review internal records and may contact you if we need further clarification on any points.

3. When You Will Hear From Us

We will provide you with a final written response within 20 working days, which is (New Date).

If we cannot meet this deadline due to exceptional circumstances, we will contact you before this date to explain why, provide a new deadline (which will not exceed a further 20 working days), and provide the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman Service.

4. Reasonable Adjustments

We will continue to support you with the following agreed adjustments: (e.g., email communication / large print). Please let us know if these no longer meet your needs or if you require any new support during this stage.

5. After Stage 2

Once you receive our Stage 2 response, our internal complaints process will be complete. If you remain dissatisfied at that point, you will have the right to refer your case to the Housing Ombudsman Service for an independent investigation.

You can contact them for advice at any time during this process:

Online: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk, Phone: 0300 111 3000

Yours sincerely,

Electronic Signature

Name

Job title

Appendix 10

Date

Address

Address

Address

Address

My reference:

Please ask for:

RE: Stage 2 Complaint Extension – (Complaint Reference Number)

Our Conversation on (Date)

Thank you for speaking with me on (Date). As discussed, we are currently conducting a final review of your Stage 2 complaint which was acknowledged on (Date). Under our complaints policy and the Housing Ombudsman's Code, we aim to provide a final Stage 2 response within 20 working days. During our conversation, I explained that we needed additional time to complete our final review for the following reason(s):

- **(Select the relevant reason(s) below):**
 - **Complexity:** The issues raised are multifaceted and require coordination across multiple departments to ensure a thorough final review.
 - **Third-Party Information:** We are awaiting a final specialist report/information from an external contractor regarding (Issue) which is essential to our decision.
 - **New Evidence:** You have provided significant new information on (Date) which we need additional time to verify and investigate.
 - **Staff Availability:** A key staff member required for the final investigation is currently unavailable due to unexpected (e.g., emergency leave).

New Response Deadline

We agreed that you can now expect to receive our full and final Stage 2 response by (New Date—**must be no more than 20 working days from the original deadline**). We will provide a further update on (Date).

Reasonable Adjustments & Support

We are continuing to provide this information in (insert adjustment, e.g., Large Print / Email) as previously agreed. If this extension causes you particular difficulty, or if your accessibility needs have changed, please contact us at customer.service@h4w.co.uk or call 020 7501 6120.

Your Rights

If you feel this delay is unreasonable, you have the right to contact the **Housing Ombudsman Service** for independent advice:

- **Web:** www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- **Phone:** 0300 111 3000

We thank you again your patience and understanding why we complete this review of your complaint.

Yours sincerely,
Electronic signature

Name
Job title

Appendix 11

Date

Address

Address

Address

Address

My reference:

Please ask for:

Dear Resident Name

RE: Stage 2 Complaint Extension – (Complaint Reference Number)

Attempted Contact

I am writing regarding the final review of your Stage 2 complaint which was acknowledged on (Date). Under our complaints policy and the Housing Ombudsman's Code, we aim to provide a final Stage 2 response within 20 working days. We attempted to contact you on (Dates/Times) via (Method, e.g., telephone/text) to discuss your complaint and to explain that we needed additional time to complete our final review for the following reason(s):

- (Select the relevant reason(s) below):
 - **Complexity:** The issues raised are multifaceted and require coordination across multiple departments to ensure a thorough final review.
 - **Third-Party Information:** We are awaiting a final specialist report/information from an external contractor regarding (Issue) which is essential to our decision.
 - **New Evidence:** You have provided significant new information on (Date) which we need additional time to verify and investigate.
 - **Staff Availability:** A key staff member required for the final investigation is currently unavailable due to unexpected (e.g., emergency leave).

New Response Deadline

We were unable to reach you; to discuss a new suitable deadline for our response so we are now providing this formal notification of an extension in writing. You can now expect to receive our full and final Stage 2 response by (New Date—must be no more than 20 working days from the original deadline). We will provide a further update on (Date).

Reasonable Adjustments & Support

We are continuing to provide this information in (insert adjustment, e.g., Large Print / Email) as previously agreed. If this extension causes you particular difficulty, or if your accessibility needs have changed, please contact us at customer.service@h4w.co.uk or call 020 7501 6120.

Your Rights

If you feel this delay is unreasonable, you have the right to contact the **Housing Ombudsman Service** for independent advice:

- **Web:** www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk **Phone:** 0300 111 3000

- Online complaint form: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/

We thank you again your patience and understanding why we complete this review of your complaint.

Yours sincerely,

Electronic signature

Name

Job title

Appendix 12

Date

Address

Address

Address

Address

My reference:

Please ask for:

Dear [Resident Name],

RE: Stage 2 Final Complaint Response – [Reference Number]

This is our final response regarding your Stage 2 complaint escalation, received on **(Date)**. This investigation was conducted by **(Name/Job Title)**, who was not involved in the Stage 1 decision.

1. Reasonable Adjustments

Throughout this stage, we applied the following adjustments: **(e.g., provided updates via telephone / scheduled meetings around your health needs)**. We have recorded these on your file for future interactions.

2. Complaint Definition & Scope

We understand you escalated your complaint because:

- **(Point 1):** (e.g., You felt the Stage 1 investigation into the boiler repair was inaccurate).
- **(Point 2):** [e.g., You feel the compensation offer of **£X** does not reflect the 3 weeks you were without heating).

3. Our Investigation Steps

To ensure a fair and final review, we have:

- Re-examined all repair logs, contractor reports, and phone recordings.
- Reviewed the Stage 1 decision against our **(Repairs/Compensation)** policies and **Awaab's Law 2026** standards.
- **(New Evidence):** Considered the additional photographs/information you provided on **(Date)**.

4. Final Decision & Reasoning

Our final decision for each point is as follows:

- **Point 1:** (Upheld/Partially Upheld/Not Upheld). [Provide clear reasoning. E.g., "While Stage 1 found the delay was 5 days, our final review shows it was 12 days, which exceeds our service standard.")
- **Point 2:** (Upheld/Partially Upheld/Not Upheld). (Provide reasoning).

Overall Outcome: (Upheld / Partially Upheld / Not Upheld)

5. Putting Things Right (Final Redress)

To resolve this matter finally, we will:

- **Final Apology:** [Provide a sincere apology for any identified failures].
- **Final Compensation:** We are offering a total of (Amount). This replaces/adds to the Stage 1 offer and is calculated as follows: (Breakdown, e.g., £X for delay, £Y for distress). Should you wish to accept our offer of compensation, please send your bank account details by email to customer.service@h4w.co.uk where it will be processed in line with our compensation policy. In line with our policy, we will check your rent and service charge account and, if it is in arrears, any compensation awarded may be paid into your rent account to clear any debt owing.
- Any balance will be paid into your bank account. Please note, we can only pay compensation to the person named as the tenant. If you are complaining on behalf of the tenant, please provide their bank details rather than your own, so compensation can be processed without delay. (Remove this paragraph if no compensation is being awarded)
- **Outstanding Actions:** (List any repairs or actions still pending and provide a guaranteed completion date).

6. Learning and Improvement

Following this final review, we have (e.g., changed our contractor management process) to ensure this issue does not recur for you or other residents.

7. Next Steps: Housing Ombudsman Service

This concludes our internal complaints process. If you remain dissatisfied, you now have the right to refer your complaint to the **Housing Ombudsman Service** for an independent investigation.

- **Online:** www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk **Phone:** 0300 111 3000
- Online complaint form: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/.

Yours sincerely,

Electronic Signature

Name
Job title