



NEW HOMES  
OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

# Service Standards Summary Statement



# Service Standards

These are the Service Standards which have been adopted by the New Homes Ombudsman Service. They are derived from the Ombudsman' Association Service Standards framework.<sup>1</sup>

NHOS confirms that it complies in full with these Standards and will publish an Annual Report each year, which will include information on how these Service Standards have been met. If for any reason a Service Standard is not met this will be explained in the Annual Report together with an Action Plan setting out how NHOS intends to regain compliance.

## 1. Accessibility

- The NHOS Service is free to customers.
- NHOS procedures are customer focused.
- NHOS takes an investigative approach and will provide support to customers to access the service,
- NHOS has a reasonable adjustment policy and works with customers to help them access the service. NHOS will allow representatives to act for customers in the process. The policy is available on the NHOS website.
- The NHOS complaints process is structured in such a way that NHOS will be able to understand the nature of the complaint. Where the complaint cannot be considered by NHOS then the customer will be referred to another ombudsman scheme or other body who may be able to assist

## 2. Communication

- NHOS will treat all those who use the service courteously, respectfully and with dignity.
- NHOS will communicate with complainants through complainants' own chosen method where possible.
- NHOS will explain to customers how the Service works through leaflets, the website and in other communication channels.
- NHOS will let complainants know what they can and cannot do, and, if they are unable to help them explain why.
- NHOS will clearly explain to complainants its process for handling complaints about Registered Developers and likely timescales.
- NHOS will keep customer and service users regularly informed of the progression of their case, and how long things are likely to take.
- NHOS will tell customers and service users who they can contact if they have any questions at different stages in the handling of the case, and how they can do so.
- NHOS will be accurate in its communications with customers and service

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ombudsmanassociation.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Service%20Standards%20Framework.pdf>



users using plain and clear language.

### 3. Professionalism

- NHOS will ensure that the staff who consider complaints have the relevant knowledge, training and skills to make decisions, or have access to suitable professional advice.
- NHOS will deal with complaints in a timely manner, taking into account the complexity of the case.
- NHOS will ensure that remedies are appropriate and take account of the impact of any identified faults have had on the complainant.
- NHOS will use the outcomes of complaints to promote wider learning and improvement to the service and the sector.
- NHOS will ensure its record keeping is accurate and that they hold data securely.
- NHOS will ensure that if and when sharing of information is necessary, it is done appropriately.
- NHOS will follow its published processes when dealing with complaints about its own service, and will acknowledge and apologise for any mistakes it makes.
- NHOS will actively seek feedback about the service and use it to improve.

### 4. Fairness

- NHOS will work with service users without discrimination or prejudice.
- NHOS will make decisions on cases based on their independent and impartial evaluation of the relevant evidence.
- The reasons for decisions will be documented and explained to relevant parties.
- NHOS will publish information about the process it uses to reach decisions and advise complainants and users that the Final Decision of the Ombudsman cannot be appealed. It will advise all users that complaints can be made about the service provided by NHOS.
- NHOS will make clear to service users its approach to unacceptable behaviour.

### 5. Transparency

- NHOS will publish information about the most senior staff in charge of decisions on complaints within the organisation, including the rules under which it operates.
- NHOS will have procedures in place to deal with any conflicts of interest around the handling of complaints.



- NHOS will be transparent about their investigation with the relevant complainants and service users.
- NHOS will publish the learning that can be drawn from the complaints they handle in order to drive service improvement across the sector.
- NHOS will provide complainants and service users with information explaining the approach they take to handling complaints about their own service.
- Members should explain to complainants the procedures in place about what action can be taken if remedies are not implemented by the organisation complained about.

## **6. Meeting these service standards**

- NHOS will assess and report on its performance towards meeting the service standards set out above and publish this on a regular basis, at least annually.
- As part of this reporting, NHOS will demonstrate how performance information is used to support learning and improvement in the organisation.





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