

ELM Management Complaints Procedure

Why is a complaints procedure needed?

We take great pride in the management of our Estates but from time to time we do get things wrong. If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service, we'd prefer that you tell us so that we have the opportunity to put things right, learn from our mistakes and take steps to stop it happening again. Our aim is to continuously improve our service and achieve a high level of customer endorsement in our annual satisfaction surveys.

What should I do before submitting a complaint?

You can make a complaint at any time, however we will always recommend talking to your Estate Manager if you have one, or the Estate Service Adviser at our Frimley Office. If this does not seem appropriate, you may also contact the Area Manager either by telephone, email or when they visit.

There may be a simple misunderstanding that can easily be put right, and we would always prefer to resolve a complaint quickly by following an informal approach. Of course, we understand that at times making the complaint 'official' is the most appropriate course of action.

How can I make a complaint?

We recommend putting something in writing to us, but you can make a complaint in any way you like, either by letter, email, telephone or in person to your Estate Manager, Area Manager or to a team member at our Head Office. Overall responsibility for keeping a record of all complaints is the Customer Experience Lead. Our contact details are as follows:

- ELM Management, Building 2, Archipelago, Lyon Way, Frimley, GU16 7ER
- email; customerservices@elmgroup.org.uk
- telephone Customer Services Team on 01252 356000

Once we have received your complaint, we'll write to you within 2 working days and advise when to expect our full response.

Alternatively, you can make a complaint directly to the Landlord if ELM acts as a managing agent on your estate. Please ask us for further details if you are unsure.

Definition of a complaint:

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.

weeks has elapsed since the complaint was first made, then he/she can take the matter up the Property Redress Scheme without charge.

Property Redress Scheme (PRS) (where ELM are the Managing Agent)

Ground Floor, Kingmaker House

Station Road

New Barnet

Hertfordshire EN5 1NZ

Tel: 0333 321 9418 Email: info@theprs.co.uk

<https://www.theprs.co.uk>

ELM is obliged to follow any decision the PRS may make. The Association of Retirement Housing Managers (ARHM) can also deal with complaints against its members. Contact them by email on enquiries@arhm.org or by telephone 020 7463 0660 (website details: www.ARHM.org). The PRS or the ARHM may be unable to review your complaint until you have completed the Elm Complaints Procedure.

Will you consider mediation?

ELM is happy to arrange mediation. If we feel this would be helpful, we will suggest it to you, or alternatively you may request mediation yourself. Please note that mediation is only possible if both parties agree willingly to take part and the aim is to help the two parties find a solution for themselves. In this sense mediation is quite different from arbitration, in which an outside body imposes a solution. It should be noted mediation is not an alternative to the Property Redress Scheme.

Limitations and Exclusions

There are circumstances when may refuse to start or continue to investigate a complaint. This can include but is not limited to:

- Unreasonable behaviour (see Unreasonable Behaviour Policy in appendix A)
- Where a complainant repeatedly refuses to accept reasonable explanations for the time it takes ELM Management to act on a particular matter.
- Where a complainant repeatedly will not accept ELM Management's explanations for decisions made
- Where the same complaint, from the same complainant has been addressed previously.
- Where the contact is a service request (as opposed to a complaint about the service requested)
- Where legal proceedings have been issues on the matter (it would **not** be ELM Management's intention to disengage with the complainant where they have responsibility for undisputed, on-going repairs or property management responsibilities.)

Where can I obtain independent advice?

You may wish to seek independent advice. A local Citizens Advice Bureau or Housing Advice service such as www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk (0800 377 7070) or www.lease-advice.org (0207 832 2500) may be able to help. Additionally, your local MP or Councillor can also give you independent advice.

And finally ...

Most complaints arise out of misunderstandings. The ELM team genuinely wish to help, and we urge you therefore to discuss any problems with us at the earliest opportunity. Our aim is to provide you with fabulous service at all times.

Appendix A

Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

Introduction

This Policy applies to all stakeholders, employees, and customers of ELM Group, RLHA and ELM Management Ltd, which includes members of the Public, third parties and businesses. It should be read in conjunction with the ELM Group Complaints Policy that a complaint will not be investigated or continued if “ *in our opinion the complainant is acting unreasonably, is continuously missing deadlines, is abusive, has clearly fabricated evidence or if ELM Group, RLHA, ELM Management Ltd considers the complaint to be frivolous or vexatious* “

1. We are committed to dealing with complaints fairly and thoroughly and providing good service. We recognise that inevitably there will be occasions when a complainant will disagree with our decisions, advice, or processes.
2. Where an investigation has been carried out, and a response issued (One Touch stage 1), the complainant will have the opportunity to escalate the complaint for Chief Executive review (stage 2) and subsequently can request the RLHA to review the complaint. The Chief Executive and RLHA Board will consider very carefully any further representation after the initial response but may not continue to respond to complainants indefinitely where, in their opinion the correspondence raises no significant new issues which call the original response into question.
3. Very occasionally a complainant may behave so unreasonably that it is necessary to limit access to our company resources in some way. ELM Group recognise that there will often be strong feeling around disputes, however unreasonable behaviour is not accepted. Any decision to restrict access to company resources will be taken by the Customer Experience Lead after consultation with the Leadership Team. The complainant will be advised in writing of the exclusions / limitations, when they will be reviewed, and how to appeal the decision. The complainant can appeal by writing to the Chief Executive at our Head Office address, within 10 days of the notification of restrictions being implemented. The Chief Executive’s decision is final.
4. Unreasonable behaviour can include but is not limited to:
 - a. Rudeness (eg. swearing, persistent interruption, name calling or general discourtesy)
 - b. Anger (eg. shouting)
 - c. Aggressive behaviour (eg. threats of physical harm to person(s) or property or to self: behaviour which indicated that physical harm to person (s) or property or self is imminent or actual physical aggression)
 - d. Repeatedly requesting responses within unreasonable timescales
 - e. Insisting on speaking to a particular member of staff

- f. Refusal to accept explanations as to what ELM Group, ELM Management Ltd or RLHA can or cannot do.
 - g. Not accepting ELM Group, ELM Management Ltd or RLHA processes
 - h. Not accepting ELM Group, ELM Management Ltd or RLHA timescales
 - i. Repeated telephone calls
 - j. Sending repetitive and/or irrelevant emails or letters
 - k. Reiterating the same points in communications despite points being previously addressed
5. In the rare cases where unreasonable behaviour occurs, ELM Group Ltd, ELM Management Ltd or RLHA will tell the complainant why they believe that their behaviour is unreasonable and request that they change their behaviour. If the unacceptable behaviour continues, we may take action to limit the complainant's contact with the organisation and inform the complainant of the limitations and the reasons for it.
6. Any limitations imposed will be appropriate and proportionate and may be reviewed after a suggested period of time (usually 6-12 months). The limitations include but are not limited to:
- a. requesting contact in a particular format
 - b. limiting phone calls to specific days and times
 - c. asking the complainant to enter into an agreement about their conduct.
7. If the complainant continues to behave inappropriately, we may decide to terminate contact with that person all together.
8. Where behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and / or welfare of our employees or property other options will be considered including reporting the incidents to the Police or taking legal action. In these circumstances warning of this action may not be given

Signed:



Position:

Chief Executive