

How we'll handle your complaint

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Do you need this information in another format?

We'll work with you to improve accessibility, offering reasonable adjustments and adaptations to meet your needs and discussing ways that we can work to remove barriers that you may experience.

If you would like this leaflet in another language or format, including plain text or audio, please let us know by contacting us via email at **enquiries@bykerct.co.uk** or calling **0800 533 5442**. We are happy to discuss your needs and find the best option for you. We also provide this leaflet on our website alongside other formats.

This report has been approved for publication and we've made a digital version available on our website.

We've created a plain text version to support those using accessibility tools such as translation, audio, changes to the size of text, ruler and screen mask.

We also aim to make our information and services more accessible by using plain English in our communication and offering sign language and language interpreters where required.

Your feedback matters

At Karbon we work hard to give you a brilliant service.

But, we're only human and sometimes things do go wrong. If you feel like our service hasn't been up to scratch, please let us know.

We want to put it right.

In this leaflet you'll find everything you need to know about our complaints process and what to expect from us along the way.

In line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, our definition of a complaint is:

'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'.

Ways you can get in touch

☎ By telephone to our Customer Relations Team on **0800 533 5442** between the hours of 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday

✉ By email to our Customer Relations Team at:
enquiries@bykerct.co.uk or **info@karbonhomes.co.uk**

✍ In writing to our office address:
17 Raby Cross, Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2FF
or our Head Office address: **Number Five, Gosforth Park Avenue,
Gosforth Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 8EG**

● Face to face with any Karbon colleague or a contractor working on our behalf

🖱 Via our website **www.bykercommunitytrust.org** or **www.karbonhomes.co.uk**

📘 Via BCT's or Karbon's social media pages, using Twitter Direct Message and Facebook Messenger

👤 Via a Councillor or MP or other relevant third party (e.g., Housing Ombudsman or consumer rights organisation).

We'd encourage you to get in touch with us as soon as possible after the issue first arises, as they must be raised within 12 months of the incident, or when you first became aware of the problem.

This is so we can deal with the problem as quickly as possible.

Our promise to you

If something goes wrong, we'll apologise, explain what happened, and work with you to make it right.

We'll deal with your complaint as quickly as we can, keeping you updated along the way with what's happening.

If you want someone else to contact us for you, we're more than happy to speak to them. However, we do need your permission to keep your information safe.

We're keen to constantly improve so not only will we listen and act to resolve a problem, we'll also strive to learn from it to improve how we do things and continually enhance the services we provide.

Fast, informal resolutions where possible

Lots of problems can often be resolved the first time you contact us, and our aim is to make it right as quickly as we can for you.

You can make a **Service Request** which is a request for one of the services we offer customers, such as a request for a repair or support with an antisocial behaviour issue. It may also be a request for information or an explanation about something.

If we agree that you need us to resolve an issue quickly and informally, but not as a complaint, we'll treat it as a **'Make It Right'** request. It's a way for us to resolve your concerns efficiently at first contact so that you don't need to go through our formal two-stage complaints process. Where something has gone wrong, we will apologise, explain what happened, and work with you to make it right.

We act quickly to Make it Right. If possible we'll do this in one working day. But this can take up to five working days if its complex or another colleague needs to be involved.

If you would prefer to raise your issue as a formal complaint, you can do so. Also, if you're unhappy with the outcome of Make It Right, you may wish to escalate the issue as a complaint. Our team will let you know how to do this.

Raising a formal complaint

When you first get in touch we'll ask you to explain as clearly as you can:

- ① **What you're unhappy with**
- ② **The reasons why you're unhappy**
- ③ **What you would like us to do about it**

This is the beginning of the complaint process and we will strive to put things right with minimal delay. We can then make sure your complaint is recorded and the right person at Karbon will get things sorted, and keep you informed and supported. We'll always try to get things right for you as soon as we can.

Stage One

Responding to your complaint

If you wish for your concern to be recorded as a formal complaint, 'Stage One' is the entry point to our complaints service. We'll look to resolve problems and put things right with the minimum of delay. We'll acknowledge your Stage One complaint within 5 working days. This response will include the steps we're taking to investigate the complaint.

We'll aim to respond fully within ten working days. If we need more time, we may extend this up to ten more working days. If a further ten days is needed, we'll agree this with you. We'll always let you know why we need more time to respond to your complaint and when we expect to get the final response to you.

Stage Two

Reviewing your complaint

If you're unhappy with our response at Stage One you can move your complaint to Stage Two. To do this, we'll need a bit more information, so we can ensure we understand what you need from us.

- Ⓐ What specific parts of your original complaint have we not investigated?
- Ⓑ What part of our response do you disagree with and why?
- Ⓒ What would you like the outcome of your complaint to be (what would you like us to do)?

If we don't hear back from you, we'll complete this review, based on the information we have. Please be aware that any new or additional concerns or allegations that are unrelated to the Stage One complaint may need to be recorded as a separate complaint or be handled as a 'Make It Right'.

At Stage Two, the appropriate Head of Service, Assistant Director, Director or Executive Director will get involved and investigate your concerns.

At Stage One, if you're unhappy with the outcome please let us know as soon as you can after hearing from us, so we can act swiftly.

If you need more time, during or after the complaint, please let us know.

As with Stage One, in Stage Two we will acknowledge your complaint within five working days. This response will include the steps we're taking to investigate the complaint.

We'll aim to respond to your complaint fully within twenty working days. In some cases, we might need a bit more time to investigate and fully respond. If we need more time, we may extend this up to ten more working days. If a further ten days is needed we'll agree this with you.

We'll always let you know why we need more time to respond to the complaint and when we expect to get the final response to you.

The emphasis in Stage Two is on reviewing the Stage One investigation. We'll listen to what you feel has not been appropriately investigated or what you disagree with, and work with you to understand the outcome you are looking for. We'll offer to speak to you directly and then investigate your concerns. Then, we'll write to you with the outcome of the investigation and include any proposed solution.

Q After Stage Two concludes, if I'm still not happy what can I do?

A Stage Two is the end of our complaint process, however, if you are not satisfied with our response you can choose to take your complaint further. See the next page for details of a designated person and the Housing Ombudsman service.

Getting help from a designated person

You can approach a designated person for support during any stage of your complaint, including after going through the Stage Two process.

They could be a local councillor or your local MP, and we're happy to speak to them directly so they can find out a bit more about your complaint, what steps we have taken so far to help get it resolved and to talk through what more could be done. In some cases we may need to seek written permission to speak to them and we'll make you aware of this when necessary.

Your designated person can help in a couple of different ways

- ① By trying to resolve the complaint with us
- ② By taking the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service

You can find out who your councillor is by visiting your local council's website. You can find the contact information for your local MP by completing a postcode search online at www.parliament.uk

The Housing Ombudsman Service

This service looks at complaints made to housing organisations that are registered with them. The service is free, independent and completely impartial.

Karbon Homes are registered members of the Housing Ombudsman Service so you can contact them about your complaint. You may approach the Ombudsman for advice during any stage of your complaint, or for their determination of your complaint after we've responded to you at Stage Two.

To find out how and when to refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service, visit **www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk**

Independent advice

Charitable organisations such as Citizen's Advice are also there to help you understand your options when it comes to taking a complaint further.

You can find out more about the advice and guidance that Citizen's Advice provide at **www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/social-housing**

The Financial Ombudsman Service

Our Money Matters service is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and has separate guidance.

To find out how and when to refer your complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service, visit **www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/**

Call us: 0800 533 5442

Email: enquiries@bykerct.co.uk or info@karbonhomes.co.uk

Website: bykercommunitytrust.org or karbonhomes.co.uk