

Version: 1 August 2018*

[*HomeGround reserves the right to update this Procedure from time to time, and will seek to ensure the most up to date version is available to its customers and service users]



enquiries@homegroundonline.com
www.homegroundonline.com

HomeGround
PO Box 6433
London W1A 2UZ

HOMEGROUND MANAGEMENT LIMITED COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaints Procedure

Introduction: what happens if we have got something wrong?

HomeGround is committed to providing you with a good standard of service, whether you are leaseholder, a resident owner, a solicitor or you have to contact us for any other reason. However we recognise that there may be occasions when we do not meet the high standards we set for ourselves. If you believe this has happened, you have every right to make a complaint.

If you do want to complain, we commit to carefully reviewing what happened, and to then provide you with a full and transparent explanation. If we have failed to provide good service we will acknowledge this and apologise. Our aim is to learn from our mistakes, and use your feedback to continuously improve our procedures and training for our staff.

Independent regulation of our service standards and complaints handling – the Ombudsman

Homeground is a member of a Government approved redress scheme, The Property Ombudsman Service, or TPOS (“the Ombudsman”), to which unresolved complaints can be referred once you have exhausted this Complaints Procedure, or if at least eight weeks have passed since your original complaint was made, and we have not dealt with it satisfactorily. Further information about the Ombudsman appears below.

Before making a complaint - what is it that you are unhappy about?

This Complaints Procedure, and referrals to the Ombudsman, are designed to deal with situations involving our service to you. This includes issues like:

- Significant delays or failures in dealing with communications and requests, or we have failed to respond to you within a timescale we promised
- Inaccurate or unhelpful communication from us
- If one of our staff has been rude, dismissive or unprofessional in dealing with you
- You believe you have been discriminated against or treated unfairly by us

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Please note that the Procedure is **not** suitable for other issues you may wish to raise which are not related to our performance or service standards, such as:

- The level of the fees we charge for the functions we carry out on behalf of our clients
- Ground rent disputes or matters which relate to breaches of obligations in a Lease or title document for your property

Whilst you may have the right to refer such matters to a different body, such as a Court, we will not normally handle them as complaints, unless the circumstances involve some form of service or performance failure by us.

In addition, if your complaint relates to our insurance services, these will be dealt with separately, under the requirements of the Financial Conduct Authority (“FCA”). We can, on request, provide details of our procedure for dealing with insurance related complaints, and the separate independent redress scheme provided by the Financial Ombudsman Service (“FOS”).

How to make a complaint, and the information we need

You can send a complaint either by post, or by e-mail. Our contact details for this purpose are as follows:

Email: enquiries@homegroundonline.com

Post: HomeGround, PO BOX 6433, London, W1A 2UZ

To help us investigate your complaint efficiently, we would be very grateful if you could address your e-mail or letter for the attention of *‘The Customer Service Manager’*. Please also make sure that you include the full property address with post code to which the original query related, as well as your unique 12 digit reference number.

It would also be very helpful if you could summarise in your complaint exactly why you feel we have failed in our service delivery, provide dates of previous contacts with us, and attach copies of any relevant correspondence which support your concerns.

Handling your complaint – our commitment to you

Our handling of complaints is dealt with in two principal stages. Whilst our aim is to provide a full and satisfactory resolution to every complaint in one response, we recognise that after receiving that response you may consider there is more relevant information that we have not taken into account, or that we have made an error in our review. For these reasons, and to ensure the procedure is robust, we have introduced a second review stage, to which complaints may be referred as described below.

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Complaints Stage 1

Your complaint will first be reviewed by a Customer Service Manager within the company, who will fully investigate the issues you have raised, contact you for further information if necessary, and review the circumstances with any staff involved. What we will do is as follows:

- We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days, and will also ask you for any additional information we think we need to fully investigate what happened.
- Our aim is then to provide you with a full response to your complaint no later than 15 working days from the date we first received it
- If we need longer to respond to you we will tell you before the 15 working days are up
- We will clearly explain our reasons for the resolution or outcome we believe to be appropriate as a result of your complaint
- If we have made a mistake or provided poor service we will acknowledge this and apologise, confirm how we intend to avoid such errors moving forward and may in appropriate circumstances offer additional redress

At this stage of the process we aim to have almost all complaints resolved. However, as stated above we recognise that this may not be possible. If you are not satisfied with the resolution we have set out in our response letter, you have a further 15 working days to refer your complaint, together with any other material you want us to take into account, to the review stage: Stage 2.

Complaints Stage 2

Any complaints that are referred to Stage 2 will then be reviewed by the company's Complaints Officer. Any such referrals should be sent using the same contact details as supplied above, but should be clearly marked "*Stage 2 Complaint*".

What the Complaints Officer will do, amongst other things:

- Acknowledge receipt of your referral of the complaint to Stage 2 within 3 working days
- Aim to provide you with a full response within 10 working days of your referral, and keeping you informed if additional time is required
- Review our original response and resolution, together with any further representations or material received from you
- Check the handling of your complaint generally and our response times from the original date of receipt

The response you receive from the Complaints Officer will confirm whether or not they uphold the original resolution of your complaint, and if not, how we now intend to resolve it.

We are confident that this process will enable us to deal with our customers and service users' concerns properly and give you confidence that any issue you have experienced has been appropriately addressed.

Registered Office: 5 Market Yard Mews, 194-204 Bermondsey Street, London, SE1 3TQ

HomeGround Management Limited is an Appointed Representative in respect of its insurance mediation activities only of Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance Brokers Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Registered Office: Spectrum Building, 7th Floor, 55 Blythwood Street, Glasgow G2 7AT Registered in Scotland. Company Number: SC108909

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If we cannot agree, or you remain unhappy: “final viewpoint letter” and the Ombudsman

Whilst our intention is to resolve all complaints to the satisfaction of all parties as much as possible, we recognise that in some cases this will not be possible. For this reason, we may at any stage of the above process inform you in writing that we regard the matter resolved, and that we do not consider any further referral or review under this Procedure to be appropriate. This is known as a “final viewpoint letter”.

If you are not satisfied with the resolution or outcome we have communicated, you are at that point able to refer your complaint to the Ombudsman, even if less than eight weeks have elapsed since your original complaint was made.

Before approaching the Ombudsman we strongly advise you to read the guidance provided by them as to what types of complaint they will investigate and what you should do before referring a complaint.

You can find information about the Ombudsman, including the procedure for making a complaint, as well as materials to help you on their website: <https://www.tpos.co.uk/>. The Ombudsman’s website includes an electronic contact form for you to submit a complaint. For your convenience we also include the Ombudsman’s address and telephone number below:

The Property Ombudsman
Milford House
43 - 55 Milford Street
Salisbury
Wiltshire, SP1 2BP
Phone: 01722 333306

HomeGround Management Limited
1st August 2018