

# Complaints procedure

## 1. Introduction

We are committed to building high quality homes in Staffordshire and Shropshire that come with a 10-year insurance backed warranty for added piece of mind.

We hope that you will be completely satisfied with your new home; however, we understand that sometimes things can go wrong and not live up to your expectations. If this happens, we want to resolve any issues quickly and put things right.

Our clear complaints procedure ensures that any concerns can be addressed professionally and efficiently. This complaints procedure complies with the Consumer Code for Home Builders. Further details can be found at [www.consumercode.co.uk](http://www.consumercode.co.uk)

Using our complaints procedure or the Independent Dispute Resolution Scheme does not affect your normal legal rights. Further details about this scheme can be found in section 5.

## 2. Scope of this complaint's procedure

This complaints procedure relates to home buyers who have signed a reservation agreement for the outright purchase of a new build property.

Complaints can be made where the home buyer believes there has been a breach of the Consumer Code for Home Builders requirements.

Complaints must be made within two years of the date on the Home Warranty Certificate, which defines the start of the period of cover for defects or damage caused by technical requirements.

Second or subsequent home buyers can also raise a complaint and benefit from the consumer code on after sales matters, they report within two years of the date on the Home Warranty Certificate.

## 3. Making a complaint

Complaints can be made in the following ways:

- ♦ By calling our customer care team on **01785 312 333**
- ♦ By emailing **Feedback@countytownhomes.co.uk**
- ♦ By writing to Customer Complaints and Feedback Team, County Town Homes (Stafford) Limited, Acton Court, Acton Gate, Stafford, ST18 9AP

Complaints will also be accepted from advocates and elected representatives.

Where a complaint is received from a third party, who is not an elected representative, we will seek to ensure that the person who the complaint relates to, wishes the complaint to be investigated and agrees to the responding to the complaint approach. We will not disclose information to a third party without the consent of the person to whom it relates.

## 4. The complaints Process

### 4.1 Stage 1 complaint

- ◆ A written acknowledgement will be issued within 5 working days of receipt.
- ◆ The complaint will be investigated by the Sales Manager.
- ◆ A response will be sent within **10 working days** of your complaint being acknowledged.
- ◆ The response will set out our decision or outline how we will investigate your complaint and provide an estimated time within which the work will be completed.
- ◆ If your concerns cannot be addressed within the time, you will be kept informed of the reasons for the delay and given a realistic timescale. Usually, a further **10 working days**.

### 4.2 Review – Stage 2 complaint

- ◆ If you are not satisfied with the response to your stage 1 complaint you can request that your complaint is reviewed by escalating it to stage 2 of our complaint's procedure.
- ◆ An acknowledgement will be sent within **5 working days**.
- ◆ Your complaint will be reviewed by a senior complaint investigation officer and signed off by a director.
- ◆ A response will be sent within **20 working days**.
- ◆ If your concerns cannot be addressed within the time, you will be kept informed of the reasons for the delay and given a realistic timescale. Usually, a further **10 working days**.

### 4.3 Referral to Home Warranty provider

- ◆ If you are still unhappy following the stage 2 response, we are unable to resolve the issues to your satisfaction, or you feel we have unreasonably delayed in resolving the issues to your satisfaction you can refer your complaint to your home warranty provider.
- ◆ Before contacting your home warranty provider, you must first have complained to the home builder and gone through their complaints process.
- ◆ The home warranty provider will, if appropriate:
  - deal with the complaint under its home warranty policy; or
  - if the complaint falls outside its own dispute resolution scheme for defects or damage, offer you the opportunity to refer the complaint to the Independent Dispute Resolution Scheme. You can only refer your complaint to the Independent Dispute Resolution Scheme after 56 calendar days have passed since first raising it with the home builder, and no later than 12 months after the home builder's final response.

## 5. Consumer Code Independent Dispute Resolution Scheme

When a dispute arises where a home buyer feels that the home builder has failed to meet the requirements of the consumer code, but their complaint falls outside the Home Warranty provider's resolution scheme for defects or damage, the dispute may be resolved by the home buyer applying to the consumer codes dispute resolution scheme.

This means that a trained adjudicator will decide whether a home buyer has a legitimate dispute and has suffered financial loss because their home builder has breached the consumer codes requirements.

The warranty provider will give you an application form and a set of adjudication rules so that your complaint can be referred to the Independent Dispute Resolution Scheme.

## 6. Accessibility

When a vulnerable customer is identified to us, we will take any appropriate steps to help the customer make informed decisions

If a customer requires additional help in making a complaint, we will provide help and support or customers can seek assistance through external agencies, such as Citizens Advice.

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01785 312333  
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