

Making a complaint



Colne aims to provide you with excellent customer service at all times, so we need you to tell us if we make a mistake.

This leaflet explains how you can make a complaint and how Colne will treat your complaint to ensure that you are fully satisfied.

Any customer of Colne is able to make a complaint.

If you, your family, your carers or your friends have any concerns about the level of service you have received from Colne or its contractors, you should raise them with a member of staff at your earliest opportunity.

We will try to put things right as quickly as possible.

A full copy of our Policy for Complaints and Compensation is available on request.



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What can I complain about?

You can complain about any of the services Colne provides.

This includes:

- The way we have assessed an application for housing
- The management of your rent account
- The conduct of our staff or contractors
- The quality of our repairs service
- The management of our properties and estates
- Failure to meet our regulator's standards

If your complaint relates to services provided by other agencies, organisations or individuals they will deal with your complaint.

If your complaint is about a resident, please speak to us about our anti-social behaviour policy.

Compensation

If your complaint is upheld, and you have been inconvenienced or suffered financial loss, you may be entitled to compensation.

Compensation will not be paid if Colne is unable to achieve its service standards due to circumstances beyond its control, for example: exceptional weather conditions or accidental damage where Colne is not at fault.

Compensation payments are set at the following limits:

Service Failure	Set Payment
Additional electricity consumption where portable heaters or dehumidifiers have been provided	£3 per appliance, per day
Total loss of heating and/or hot water for each day beyond Colne's published service standards	£5 per day
Failure to keep appointments	£10 per missed appointment
Delay by staff in delivering a service or following a procedure* (excludes repairs)	£30
Total failure to deliver a service or follow a procedure* (excludes repairs)	£50

*Complaints about the repairs service will be compensated under the terms of the Right to Repair scheme. Any compensation paid is considered to be inclusive of an award for a reasonable level of stress and inconvenience incurred through a failure in our services.

Compensation is not intended as a replacement for Home Contents Insurance

How do I complain?

In the first instance, speak to a member of staff; we will always try to resolve your complaint quickly and informally. If your complaint is about a member of staff, you can ask to speak to their Manager.

If you are not happy with the initial response you receive you can ask for the complaint to be formally investigated. There are a number of ways you can make a complaint:

- In person
- On the telephone, by calling us on 01206 244700
- By email to complaints@colnehousing.co.uk
- In writing, Colne, Digby House, Causton Road, Colchester CO1 1RJ
- Via our website www.colnehousing.co.uk

We will register the details of your complaint and send you a copy of the record.

What happens next?

Within five working days of your complaint, Colne will send you a response by letter or email. Occasionally, we will need to consult another person or organisation in order to fully investigate your complaint. If this is the case, we will inform you of when we expect to provide a response.

If you are not satisfied following this response, you can ask for it to be reviewed. A Manager will then review our complaint investigation and will respond to you within 10 working days.

If you remain unhappy with the response you receive from the Manager, you can ask for your complaint to be referred to the Chief Executive or be heard by Colne's Complaints Panel. Should your complaint reach this stage, you will be invited to attend the meeting of the Complaints Panel, with your chosen advocate. The panel will be chaired by the Chief Executive along with two Non-Executive Directors from Colne's Board. The panel will normally make their decision within 20 working days of your complaint being referred.



What else can I do?

We hope that your complaint can be resolved quickly by our complaints process. If you remain dissatisfied, you can contact the Independent Housing Ombudsman Service. They can be contacted in the following ways:

- Post – Exchange Tower, Harbour Exchange Square, London, E14 9GE
- Tel: 0300 111 3000
- Email – info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

This is a free service, but the Ombudsman will not consider your complaint within eight weeks of Colne's final response, unless it has been through a process

known as a democratic filter. A democratic filter can be either a recognised tenant panel, a local councillor or an MP. They will either reject the complaint or agree for it to be transferred to the Housing Ombudsman.

Alternatively, you may approach the Ombudsman direct, provided eight weeks has passed since Colne's final response and your complaint has not passed through a democratic filter.

You may also wish to contact the following agencies:

- Citizens Advice
- Local Authority Housing Advice Services
- A solicitor.



We will make every effort to provide information in alternative formats on request, including audio, large print and translations.

Colne

**Digby House, Riverside Office Centre,
Causton Road, Colchester, Essex CO1 1RJ**

Tel: 01206 244700

Fax: 01206 760403

Text Service: 07539 114114

E-mail: info@colnehousing.co.uk

Website: www.colnehousing.co.uk

Registered with the Home and Communities Agency (LH1651) and under the Industrial & Provident Societies Act 1965 (20799R) with exempt charitable status.

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