



Homeseeker Plus Appeal Process

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Revision History:

Revision Date	Version	Description
September 2009	Version 1.0	Initial document agreed by Core Team
July 2011	Version 2.0	Flow chart & useful contact numbers added. Small amendment to panel make-up.
JULY 2012	Version 3.0	Reviewed and amended
1 ST August 2013	Version 4.0	Reviewed and amended
11 th October 2013	Version 5.0	Reviewed and amended
28 th September 2016	Version 6.0	Amended

Consultees:

Internal	External
GH Operational Group	GH Access & Inclusion Group
Housing Options Staff	Registered Providers

Distribution:

Name	Method
Placed on Homeseeker Website	Download PDF
Local Authorities Housing Options Staff	Emailed PDF
Registered Providers	Emailed PDF

1. Introduction

We aim to treat all our customers in a fair, equal and courteous manner, fully taking into account all of the circumstances surrounding their application for housing. We want to learn from all requests for review and complaints that are made to us and will use the outcome of your request or complaint to monitor performance and the service we provide.

2. Our Appeal procedure will:

- Be easy to access and widely advertised
- Ensure we monitor reviews and complaints
- Ensure we meet our standards
- Be regularly reviewed following your feedback
- Be fair and impartial

2.1. Getting Help

You may wish to ask someone to help you in requesting a review (an advocate). This could be a friend or relative or a voluntary agency such as Citizen Advice Bureau.

An advocate can help with the following:

- Understanding how the appeal process works
- Defining your grounds for a review/appeal
- Gathering evidence to support your case
- Writing your review/appeal request letter
- Explaining the paperwork
- Attending any meetings with you

If you think you will require help to find a suitable advocate please phone (FREEPHONE) 0800 644 6448 and they will direct you to the right organisation.

A more comprehensive list of organisations that might be able to provide support and advice can be found at the end of this document.

3. Stage 1 – Internal Review

If you disagree with the way we have assessed your application for housing, or with the housing need band in which we have placed your application, you may request a review with a senior housing officer (who was not involved in the original decision) from the local authority dealing with your application.

3.1. How can you request a review?

- You must complete an Stage 1 - Internal Review Request Form which can be downloaded from the Homeseeker Plus website www.homeseekerplus.co.uk and when completed in full, send to the Housing Service at your local authority within 14 days of receiving your letter or notification.
- We will deal with your request within 14 days or let you know if we will require additional time.
- We will write to you with the outcome of the review within a further 7 days of being determined.

4. Stage 2 – Appeal

If you disagree with the outcome of the review, you can request that your case be taken to the Homeseeker Plus Appeal Panel. The Homeseeker Panel is a Panel made up of 3 Senior Housing Officers from 3 of the Partner Councils. These Officers will not have been involved in the original decision or the Senior Housing Officer decision on internal review.

4.1. How to request an Appeal:

You should request an appeal by completing the Stage 2 - Appeal Request Form which can be downloaded from the Homeseeker Plus website www.homeseekerplus.co.uk and when completed in full, send to the Homeseeker Plus Co-ordinator at the address shown on the form within 14 days of internal review decision letter. Your form should set out your reasons for your appeal request, and you are encouraged to provide as much information as is possible in support of your case.

We will acknowledge receipt of your request for appeal within 14 days. This acknowledgement will provide contact details of the officer and council dealing with your case and the time it will take to reply to you. If the appeal cannot be completed within 56 days you will be informed and the timescales for the appeal set out.

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The appeal will consider the facts surrounding the case and your request should specify whether there are additional facts the Panel should take into consideration or whether you feel that the original facts you submitted with your application have not been fully taken into account. If you have additional evidence, such as additional medical reports, then these should also be submitted.

The Panel will consider the appeal on the papers submitted by both yourself and the housing officer from the local Council involved in your case. You do not need to attend this appeal hearing but occasionally the Panel may require additional information from either party and, should this be the case, you and the relevant Housing Officer will be asked to personally attend a further review Hearing. If this happens, you are entitled to bring along a representative should you so wish.

The Homeseeker Plus Co-ordinator (or a nominated representative) will be present at the appeal panel to ensure that all relevant information has been presented and is dealt with correctly.

Once the appeal has been determined, or if the Panel require you to attend a further review Hearing, the Homeseeker Plus Co-ordinator will write to you giving you full details within 14 days or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter.

We will only consider another appeal if there has been a substantive change in your circumstances.

Local Authority Complaints Procedures

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or you believe the process has not been carried out as described above you can use your Local Authority's Complaints Procedure to make a formal complaint.

Ombudsman Details

You are entitled to make a complaint directly to the Local Government Ombudsman, however before the Ombudsman will consider a complaint it will need to have gone through the 3 stages listed above.

Contact details:

The Oaks, 2 Westwood Way, Westwood Business Park, Coventry, CV4 8JB.
Tel: 024 7682 0000.

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Appeal Process Flow Chart

Stage 1

Applicant writes to the Housing Service dealing with their application within 14 days of notification

Senior Housing Officer will review the case within 14 days

Applicant informed of review outcome within a further 7 days

Issue resolved no further action required

Issue not resolved to the satisfaction of applicant

Stage 2

Applicant writes to Homeseeker Plus Co-ordinator to request appeal within 14 days of receiving review outcome letter

GH Co-ordinator will acknowledge receipt of request within 14 days

Appeal panel will meet within 56 days
(Or applicant notified of reasons & expected timescales)

GH Co-ordinator will write to applicant detailing appeal outcome, within 14 days of the hearing

Issue resolved no further action required

Issue not resolved to the satisfaction of applicant

Applicant goes through the Complaints procedure of the relevant Local Authority.

Organisations that may be able to provide help & advice to applicants:

Organisation	Phone Number	Website	Aimed at
Age UK (Formerly Age Concern)	01452 422660	www.ageconcernglos.org.uk	Older People
AtGlos	0845 0511 203	www.atglos.co.uk	People with learning disabilities
County Community Projects	01242 228999	www.ccprojects.org.uk	People with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health issues
Rethink	01452 891539	www.rethink.org.uk	People with mental health issues
Carers Gloucestershire	01452 386283	www.carersgloucestershire.org.uk	Offers support to carers
GOPA (Gloucestershire Older Persons Association)	01452 313999	www.gopa.org.uk	Older People
GDA (Gloucestershire Deaf Association)	01452 372999	www.glosdeaf.org.uk	Hard of hearing and deaf people
GARAS (Gloucestershire Action for Refugees & Asylum Seekers)	01452 550528	www.garas.org.uk	Refugees & Asylum seekers
Village & Community Agents	01452 426868 / 01452 528491	www.villageagents.org.uk	People in rural areas & ethnic minorities
CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau)	See website for different locations	www.citizensadvice.org.uk	Anyone can use this service
Shelter	0344 515 1286	www.shelter.org.uk	Anyone can use this service
Gloucestershire Lifestyles	01452 530184	www.gloslifestyles.co.uk	People with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health issues