

# COMPLAINTS POLICY - RESIDENT GUIDE



Our aim is to work with residents to “deliver well managed local housing and community services” through a flourishing financially strong organisation

## Introduction

We aim to provide all customers with a quality service and to get things right first time. However, we recognise that things do go wrong and we can sometimes fall short of our expected standards.

When this happens we want to resolve your complaint in a timely and efficient manner, keeping you informed throughout.

This guide explains our Complaints Process.

## WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

It's when you tell us you're not satisfied with our services and something needs to be done to put it right.

The complaint could be about an action, lack of action or about the standard of service received from us or an organisation working on our behalf.

We will accept a complaint from anyone who receives or requests our services.

## WHAT IS NOT COVERED UNDER THIS POLICY

- Complaints concerning service charges – these are covered by a separate procedure.
- Complaints which involve a personal injury claim or third party liability claim – valid claims are dealt with by our insurers.
- Complaints relating solely to a policy principle.
- Complaints from one resident about another (this would normally be dealt with under the Anti-Social Behaviour policy).
- Requests for a service - this would only become a complaint if THCH failed to deal with the request within specified timescales or in accordance with the service offer.
- THCH will also not accept any complaint that comprises or includes any issues that are currently or have been subject to litigation or an enforcement notice.

## SORTING IT OUT BEFORE IT BECOMES A COMPLAINT

In the first instance we will always try to resolve the issue there and then or within two working days. If this is possible then we would record this as a service failure or service feedback.

If you have contacted us to let us know that you are dissatisfied but the issue requires no further action or it solely relates to your disagreement with a THCH policy then this will also be classified as a service feedback.

Both service failures and service feedback are routinely monitored by us and they are used to inform our future service improvements.

## MAKING A COMPLAINT

We will accept complaints made in person, in writing, by phone, email and other digital media. We will also accept 'third party' complaints but we will require the subject's authorisation to provide a response in line with our obligations set out in the Data Protection Act. Complaints need to be received in a timely manner within 6 months of when the issues occurred; we reserve the right to dismiss any complaint outside of this time period.

### STAGE 1

Our aim is to respond to your complaint in a timely manner, keeping you informed throughout. On accepting a complaint we will pass it to an appropriate member of staff who will aim to contact you within two working days. They will let you know who they are and find out from you what actions you would like us to take to resolve the matter. We aim to give you a full response to your complaint within 15 working days.

Where actions are required to resolve the complaint we will work proactively with our colleagues, contractors and partners to ensure that these are carried out as quickly as possible.

Before closing your complaint we will contact you to find out if you are happy with the action proposed or taken and if the matter has been resolved.

If you remain unhappy, we will explore with you if there is anything more that could be done to resolve the complaint.

If we feel we've taken all reasonable actions to resolve the complaint or we're not able to deliver the outcome you'd like then you can ask for your complaint to go to Stage 2 the Appeal Panel. You need to explain why you're not satisfied and also the outcome you are seeking. We need this in writing but can provide assistance if needed. In some instances we might feel your issue is not appropriate for the Appeal Panel.

If the reason for dissatisfaction concerns compensation, we will not escalate the case to Stage 2. Instead we will arrange for another Senior Manager to review the complaint and consider if the decision should be changed. The outcome of this review will be provided to the complainant in writing. If after this review the complainant remains unhappy then the complaint would be closed as it would have exhausted our procedure.

### STAGE 2 – APPEALS PANEL

The Appeals Panel is the second and final stage of THCH's internal complaint process.

The purpose of the Appeal Panel is to review the decisions made at the previous stages of the complaint. It will look to see if we have carried out the agreed actions, checking that we have followed our policies and procedures fairly and appropriately. They will also consider what further action might be taken to resolve the complaint.

The Panel is made up of three senior representatives of THCH.

If the hearing is in person then we will aim to make arrangements for the hearing at a location and time that is convenient for both you and the Panel members.

In some instances we may propose to conduct a "virtual" hearing of the appeal. Whereby the papers are circulated to the panel and consideration of the case takes place either by phone or by email. Neither the complainant nor the investigating officer is present. When this is the case we will always explain the reasons why we believe this is appropriate.

We'll provide all necessary papers at least 5 working days before the hearing is due to take place and arrange for the Appeal Panel to take place within 20 working days of the escalation request being agreed.

Following the hearing you will receive the decision of the Panel in writing and we will aim to provide this within 10 working days.

If following the outcome of the Appeals Panel you remain unhappy then you can elect for your complaint to be considered further by a Designated Person.

A Designated Person is an MP or Local Authority Councillor or a designated Tenant Panel. THCH does not have any designated Tenant Panels of its own.

Alternatively you can decide to wait 8 weeks from the date of the Panel decision and then ask the Housing Ombudsman Service directly to review your complaint. The Housing Ombudsman contact details are below:

**Housing Ombudsman Service**

**Exchange Tower**

**Harbour Exchange Square**

**London. E14 9GE**

Tel: **0300 111 3000**

Email: **[info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)**

Website: **[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)**

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you would like any more information on this or any of our policies or services please contact our customer service team via email **[customerservices@thch.org.uk](mailto:customerservices@thch.org.uk)**, or phone **0207 7780 3070** or go to our website **[www.thch.org.uk](http://www.thch.org.uk)**