

# Our policy on Complaints

We aim to provide good quality services and to get things right first time. However, things do sometimes go wrong and, when this happens, we will do our best to put them right.

## What you can complain about

We define a complaint as being:

*An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by THCH, our staff, or those acting on our behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.*

We can accept your complaint, providing:

- the failure happened within the past six months – but we will consider your older examples if you are complaining about an ongoing problem
- you follow our process
- you don't try to launch a new complaint about an issue we have already dealt with, and
- you don't use a vexatious complaint as a way to harass staff or behave unreasonably.

## What this policy doesn't cover

This policy does not include:

- service charges – see our separate procedures
- claims that should go to our insurers or where courts or lawyers are involved
- dissatisfaction with our policies, or
- complaints about neighbours – see our separate policy on anti-social behaviour.

If we decide not to accept your complaint, we will give you a detailed explanation. You will have the right to challenge this decision by taking your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

If we judge your complaint to be vexatious, we will write to explain that we cannot take things further. We will not respond to any further calls, letters or emails.

## How you can complain

You can make your complaint in the way that works best for you: via our website, in writing (letter or email), by phone, or using other digital media.

You can ask someone to complain for you: for example, a friend, relative, or someone from a service such as the Citizens Advice Bureau. If you use a friend or relative, you must give written consent for them to handle



things for you. We will assume you have agreed if we hear from a councillor, MP or an advocacy service.

We will actively work to make things easier for you if English is not your first language, or if you have other difficulties with reading, writing or communicating.

We will not treat you differently in future, because you made a complaint.

## Our complaints process

When you first tell us you're unhappy, we will try to resolve the issue informally within two working days. If you are happy with the result, we will treat this as feedback to learn from, not as a complaint.

If you have made a complaint that we are unable to resolve informally, we will follow our formal, two-stage complaints procedure. We will always try to speak to you in person at some point, unless you ask us not to.

### Stage 1

When we receive your complaint, we will check the details, ask what you are hoping for and how you want us to keep you informed.

We aim to respond fully to complaints within 10 working days. We will let you know if we need longer to resolve a complex issue and provide updates.

Before closing the complaint, we will ask you whether you are happy with our response. If you aren't, you can ask us to move to a Stage 2 Appeals Panel. You must do this within one calendar month and normally in writing (we can help with this if needed).

## Our policy on complaints 2

The head of service for the issue you are complaining about will look at your reasons for wanting to go to Stage 2 and may ask their team to revisit the complaint instead.

In some circumstances a Stage 2 Appeals Panel may not be appropriate. For example, if you are dissatisfied with the amount of compensation we offered, we will ask another senior manager to review the decision instead. They will write to you with their decision, which will be final.

If we decide not to offer a Stage 2 Appeals Panel, we will explain the reasons and will put this in writing.

### Stage 2 – Appeals Panel

An Appeals Panel will check that during the complaints process we have kept our promises, in line with our policies and procedures. It will also consider what else we could do to resolve the complaint.

The Panel won't look at new problems or consider things that don't relate to the complaint itself.

When we agree to hold a Panel, we will give you the option of taking part. The hearing may take place in person or by video conference. We will try to find a time that works for you (if you are attending) and our Panel members, within 20 working days of agreeing your request.

You can bring a friend, family member or representative from your local resident's association. But we will limit the number of people. We will not allow legal representatives to attend and we may also exclude anyone who is likely to stop the Panel from operating effectively.

We can arrange for an interpreter or a translation service to take part if you need this.

We will send you and the Panel a report explaining the case, at least five working days before the hearing.

After the hearing, we will aim to send the Panel's decision in writing, within 10 working days.

We will let you know what your options are if you are not happy with the Panel's decision. This could include taking your complaint to a 'designated person' – usually an MP or councillor – or going to the Housing Ombudsman.

## Taking a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman

At any time during the complaints process, you can ask the Housing Ombudsman to look at your complaint.

The Ombudsman will normally want to see our process completed first.

### To contact the Housing Ombudsman, write to:

Housing Ombudsman Service  
PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ

Phone: 0300 111 3000

Lines are open Monday to Friday from 9.15am to 5.15pm (except public holidays).

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

You can also submit your complaint and download supporting documents using their online form.

## Learning from complaints

We will work closely with our involved residents to monitor the quality, outcomes and learning opportunities from our complaints process.

We will share information on complaints with our Resident Forum and via our website and the resident newsletter.

This leaflet provides a summary of our policy.

**For more information** send a message through your 'My Corner' account, or email [customerservices@thch.org.uk](mailto:customerservices@thch.org.uk)