



RESIDENTS' COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURES

Thorner's Homes - Almshouse Charity and Registered Provider of Social Housing

1. Introduction

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a statutory Complaint Handling Code (the Code). The Code took effect on 1 April 2024 and places duties on members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme, including a requirement to ensure that complaint procedures comply with the Code.

Thorner's Homes is an almshouse charity and a Registered Provider of Social Housing regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (registration number 5111) and a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. Although Residents of Thorner's Homes are beneficiaries of the Charity and do not hold a tenancy, the Charity complies fully with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

The Code refers to 'Landlords' but applies to all Registered Providers, including almshouse charities.

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is defined by the Housing Ombudsman as:

"An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents."

A Resident does not need to use the word "complaint" for it to be treated as such. Complaints raised by a third party acting with consent will be accepted.

3. Service Requests

A service request is a request to put something right (for example a repair). Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded and monitored.

If a Resident expresses dissatisfaction with a response to a service request, this becomes a complaint.

4. Accessibility

Residents may raise complaints verbally or in writing and with any member of staff. To prevent complaints being missed or treated as service requests, any verbal complaint will be recorded and a written summary will be provided to the Resident for confirmation.

Reasonable adjustments will be offered in accordance with the Equality Act. Residents may be represented by a family member or advocate and may be accompanied at any meeting.

Information about this policy is available on the website, in scheme information folders and in the Resident Handbook.

5. Exclusions



Complaints will be accepted unless:

- the issue occurred more than twelve months ago (unless discretion is applied),
- legal proceedings have started (Claim Form and Particulars filed at Court),
- the matter has already been considered under this policy.

Where a liability matter is being handled by insurers, the Charity may not comment on legal liability but will still consider and respond to any service failure (e.g. communication, delay or conduct).

If a complaint is not accepted, the reasons will be explained and the Resident advised of the right to contact the Housing Ombudsman.

6. Confidentiality

All complaints are dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the Privacy Notice.

7. Policy Principles

Thorner's Homes aims to:

- enable Residents to complain freely and easily
- ensure Residents are not disadvantaged for complaining
- resolve matters fairly and promptly
- learn from complaints
- improve service delivery
- promote transparency
- report learning to Trustees

Complaints are periodically reviewed by Trustees and reported annually.

8. Roles

The Complaints Officer and/or Housing Manager will normally handle Stage 1.

If Stage 2 is required, this will be handled by the Chief Executive unless the Chief Executive handled Stage 1, in which case Stage 2 will be handled by a Trustee not previously involved.

9. Complaint Handling

Investigations will be impartial, thorough and based on sufficient and reliable information. All parties will have the opportunity to comment on adverse findings before a final decision.

10. Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

- Acknowledge and define the complaint within 5 working days
- Log as Stage 1
- Full response issued within 10 working days of acknowledgement



- Extensions notified, with reasons and Ombudsman details, up to 10 further working days
- Remaining actions tracked and reported

Stage 1 outcome must be confirmed in writing including:

- definition of complaint
- decision
- reasons
- remedy
- outstanding actions
- right to escalate

Residents are not required to explain why they wish to escalate.

Stage 2 (Final Response)

- Acknowledged and logged within 5 working days
- Considered by CE or Trustee (as set out above)
- Final response issued within 20 working days of acknowledgement
- Extensions notified, reasons given, maximum 20 working days

Stage 2 outcome will confirm:

- stage
- definition
- decision
- reasons
- remedy
- outstanding actions
- right to approach the Ombudsman

11. Managing Unacceptable Behaviour

Contact may be managed (but not refused) if a Resident or representative displays abusive language, repeated unreasonable demands or behaviour causing distress to others.

Measures may include:

- a single contact route
- written-only communication
- designated officer
- restrictions proportionate to behaviour

All measures will take account of vulnerabilities and Equality Act considerations and be subject to review.

Complaints will continue to be considered in accordance with this policy.

12. Putting Things Right / Remedies

Where something has gone wrong, the Charity will acknowledge this and take appropriate action. Remedies may include:



- acknowledgement
- apology
- explanation
- correction or addendum
- re-considered decision
- practical action
- financial redress
- change of policy or procedure

Remedies reflect the impact on the Resident and must be followed to completion.

13. Housing Ombudsman

Residents may refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service if:

- the Charity's complaints process is completed, and
- they do so within 12 months of the Stage 2 decision.

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

14. Charity Commission

The Charity Commission does not investigate routine complaints but may investigate serious regulatory concerns relating to charity law, governance or loss of assets.

Online: www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity

Approved by: Trustees of Thorner's Homes CIO

Date: December 2025

Next Review Due: September 2027

Previous Review: July 2024