

TIVERTON ALMSHOUSE TRUST
Version 4

APPROVED 14th September 2021

COMPLAINTS POLICY



<p>Objective</p>	<p>Tiverton Almshouse Trust is committed to providing an excellent service to residents, staff and the general public. Complaints are seen as a positive way to improve services for the benefit for everyone we work with, support or come into contact with.</p> <p>The aim of the policy is to ensure that that the complaints process is flexible and responsive to the needs of individual complainants. The policy seeks to ensure that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all complaints will be taken seriously • any complainant will be listened to and treated with courtesy and empathy • complainants will never be disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint • complaints are investigated promptly, thoroughly, honestly and openly • apologies are given as appropriate • complaints handling will comply with confidentiality and data protection policies <p>All complaints will be taken seriously. This policy is intended to ensure complaints are handled diligently, sensitively and fairly. The Trust will try and minimise any upset caused to the person with the complaint. If a member of staff has a complaint it will be dealt with using the Discipline & Grievance policy within the staff handbook.</p>
<p>Who can make a complaint</p>	<p>Complaints can be made by residents, their carers/families, professionals or a member of the public and may be about staff, Directors, other residents or about the Trust's services.</p> <p>The Trust will not be able to deal with an issue through the complaints process if;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A complaint relates to a legal matter already being dealt with by a solicitor • The complainant is anonymous, unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to substantiate the complaint.
<p>Confidentiality</p>	<p>All complaints will be investigated with due regard for confidentiality. The complainant should be made aware that assurances of confidentiality may not be offered if, for example, the complaint relates to matters of financial integrity, where a police investigation may be needed or if the complaint relates to a safeguarding matter.</p>

	In these circumstances the matter may be dealt with under different procedures.
Who to complain to	<p><u>Residents and families</u> In the first instance all complaints, whether verbal or written, should be made to the resident's Warden who will inform the Housing Manager without delay. Alternatively, the complaint can be given direct to the Housing Manager. If the Housing Manager is unavailable or the complainant is unhappy with contacting the Warden or Housing Manager, the complaint can be made directly to the Chief Executive. If the resident's complaint is about the Chief Executive then the matter should be taken to the Chair of the Board or another Director in his or her absence.</p> <p><u>Employees</u> All complaints should be raised as per the Discipline & Grievance policy contained within the staff handbook.</p> <p><u>External/Professionals/Members of the Public</u> Complaints being made by external parties must be made in writing to the Chief Executive.</p>
How to complain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints should be made as soon as the problem arises, or shortly afterwards (unless there is good reason to delay). • Initially, a complaint can be made verbally. Often the problem can be solved quickly this way and to everyone's satisfaction. • If the person making the verbal complaint is not satisfied by the initial response, or if the complaint is more formal, it should be put in writing. Written complaints should include as much detail as possible and include any relevant dates.
Procedure for staff on receipt of a complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parties must be shown respect and treated fairly. • Complaints must be seen as a positive form of feedback and can be used to improve services. • Verbal complaints should be recorded on the resident's file even if the outcome was satisfactorily concluded this is to enable any subsequent complaint to be put in context. • Written complaints will be investigated by the Chief Executive, who will inform the Board of any action taken or required. • Written complaints should be replied to in writing and given a reference number. • Replies should provide a summary of what is being investigated (to ensure clarity for the resident complaining) and outline the next steps with a timetable. • The complainant must be kept informed in line with the timetable. • Any investigations should be undertaken sensitively. • If the complaint is about a member of staff, the staff member should be informed without unreasonable delay and listened to as part of the process. • Legal advice from the Trust's solicitor should be taken if required or if in doubt. • The police should be contacted if a crime has, or may have, been committed. • The Trust's Safeguarding Policy should be implemented if relevant.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When a conclusion has been reached all parties will be informed.
Procedure for Directors	<p>As above with the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust administrative support should not be used if the complaint is about the Chief Executive.
Timetable for a resolution	<p>All written complaints will be acknowledged within five working days.</p> <p>An investigation may take longer than that but the acknowledgement will indicate the next course of action and the anticipated timescale.</p> <p>The Trust aims to investigate all written complaints within fourteen working days of acknowledgement. The Trust will seek to resolve the complaint as a matter of urgency and provide a written response to the complainant.</p> <p>If the complainant is still not satisfied by the outcome they have five further working days to submit a written appeal.</p> <p>The appeal will be dealt with by the Chair of the Board or a Director appointed by the Chair, who will convene a meeting within seven days of receiving the appeal. The Chair will respond in writing to the complainant within seven working days advising of any action taken to resolve the complaint.</p>
Further complaints	<p>The complainant can contact a designated person (MP, Councillor) who will help to resolve any disputes, if they cannot help they can refer the complaint to the Housing ombudsman</p> <p>A complainant can go directly to the ombudsman but only after eight weeks have elapsed after they were issued the Trusts final response to the original complaint. This service is free of charge.</p>
The Housing Ombudsman	<p>The contact details are:</p> <p>Housing Ombudsman Service Exchange Tower Harbour Exchange Square London E14 9GE Telephone: 0300 111 3000 Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk</p>
Tiverton Almshouse Trust contact details	<p>The Market House 18 Bampton Street Tiverton Devon EX16 6AA</p> <p>Telephone: 01884 251444</p> <p>Email: trust@tivertonalmshouse.org.uk</p> <p>Doreen Woodward – Chief Executive</p>

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John Pulford – Chair of Board

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Version 1 approved 3 September 2013

Version 2 approved 3 May 2016

Version 3 approved by the Board in Feb 2019

Version 4 September 2021

Note: this policy is referred to in the Residents' Handbook

Review date: September 2024