



Tiverton Almshouse Trust

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023/24

Review of Complaints 2023/24

During 2023/24 the Trust received nine complaints from 11 residents living in the 85 homes owned by Tiverton Almshouse Trust.

- Five complaints related to our repairs and maintenance service.
- One complaint related to how the Trust dealt with anti-social behaviour issues.
- One complaint related to how the Trust dealt with an organisational re-structure.
- One complaint related to how the Trust dealt with a noise issue in an adjacent yard.
- One complaint related to how the Trust dealt with some residents experiencing sickness and diarrhoea following a resident Xmas lunch.
- Zero complaints related to rents and utility supplies after moving into a new home.
- Zero complaints additionally related to how the Trust dealt with WMC (rent).

In Zero% of these cases, the complainant was not satisfied with the Tiverton Almshouse Trust reply at Stage 1 of the Complaints Policy and so asked for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2.

Outcomes at Stage 2: N/A

None of our complaints were referred to or investigated by the Housing Ombudsman Service in 2023/24.

Learning from complaints to improve services

Issue	Learning point
The majority of complaints (five out of 11 - 45%) were regarding the repairs and maintenance service provided to residents.	In all five cases the Trust should have done better in keeping residents updated as to the status of their job or repair.
In two cases, ongoing gas/heating interruptions due to an old and antiquated heating system supplying multiple blocks of flats. The residents rightly became increasingly frustrated with not just the lack	The Trust realises that not knowing what's going on has a big impact on residents therefore we have put in place a Service Requests Log, accessible to all members of the team that monitors checks all active jobs on a daily basis. Should there

<p>of heating, but also the regularity with which supply was interrupted.</p> <p>In one case a contractor failed to turn up with the resident staying in all day waiting for them to arrive.</p> <p>In one case door security timers failed to adjust with a change in the clocks resulting in a family member being unable to gain access to the block within which their family member lived.</p> <p>In one case a residents front door needed replacing due to condensation issues. The door took 9 months to replace due to specific supplier issues.</p>	<p>be any form of delay in resolving the request, the delegated individual on duty at that time - either the Warden, Housing Manager or Repairs and Maintenance Manager will notify the resident.</p> <p>The two cases regarding interruptions to gas/heating supply highlighted the need for a formal compensation policy to be put in place at the Trust. Whilst this may not have helped to solve the ongoing system issue, the Trust could and should have been able to offer affected residents a form of compensation for disruption and for additional electricity costs incurred. This policy will be in place by the end of 2025.</p>
<p>One complaint was a result of an organisational / structural change affecting residents at one site.</p> <p>The Chief Executive decided to remove the 'live-in' Warden service, in favour of keeping the warden service, however the Warden living off-site.</p> <p>Despite the change and the rationale for the change being communicated to residents both via open sessions and the regular newsletter, a small group of three residents took it upon themselves to raise a petition on behalf of all on site.</p> <p>The Chief Executive met with, listened to, and further explained the change to the petition 'representatives' who conceded that they understood the rationale for the change but could not agree to it.</p> <p>The change was fully implemented at the beginning of 2024.</p>	<p>Communication wise, on reflection, I'm not sure that the Chief Executive / Trust could have done any more as to informing residents as to the need for the change and how the change progressed.</p> <p>This did though again re-iterate to all of the team the importance of regular communication to those affected by this and any further change interventions at our sites - change directly impacts these folks lives and we should appreciate this as we work in their homes; they do not live in our work.</p>
<p>A resident complained directly to the Chief Executive regarding the behaviour of some fellow residents and the speed at which they travelled around the site on their mobility scooters.</p> <p>Whilst we were to specifically unable to evidence this and the fact that the complainant would not divulge the name</p>	<p>Our key learning to this point was the importance / value in 'targeted' communication.</p> <p>The Housing Manager and Warden jointly wrote specifically to only those residents with a mobility scooter, reminding them of their responsibility to other residents</p>

<p>of the 'culprit(s)', the Trust took the complaint at face value.</p>	<p>regarding their scooter, speed and the general safety of all residents. The Trust did follow this up with a more general communication in the newsletter with regard to health and safety on the site.</p>
<p>One resident couple, whose property is adjacent to the neighbouring M&S yard at the rear of the store, complained to the Trust as to the excessive noise made by certain drivers when completing delivery drop offs.</p>	<p>This again highlighted the Trust team the importance of taking and dealing with all complaints seriously.</p> <p>Also, the importance of fostering positive relationships with neighbouring businesses / communities.</p> <p>On investigation and whilst speaking with other residents living in the vicinity, they all reported as to the noise being 'no big deal' but this was certainly an issue to the one resident couple affected by the noise.</p> <p>The Chief Executive and Housing manager arranged to meet with the manager of M&S and asked if, when deliveries are made, their drivers are mindful of neighbouring residents.</p>
<p>The day after our 2024 residents Xmas lunch event, nine out of 40 residents who attended reported having experienced the effects of sickness and diarrhoea following a resident Xmas lunch.</p> <p>The effects of this varied from mild stomach pains to vomiting, sickness and diarrhoea.</p> <p>The same meal was served to circa 30 residents at the Trust's other main site with no residents reporting any ill effects.</p>	<p>Again, this re-iterated to the Trust team the importance of taking all the complaints seriously - the majority of folk who attended the event were not affected in any way and so this potentially have been 'labelled' as a few folk 'over doing it'.</p> <p>The Chief Executive and Housing Manager instigated a full investigation as to the cause of the upset. The facts did show that all nine of those affected had the same starter - prawns. The investigation did though ascertain that the same again number of residents had also had prawns but with no ill effects. And on speaking with the caterer, the prawn starter was batch prepared. So, whilst the prawn starter may have been the cause of the illnesses, we could not ascertain that this was definitely the case.</p> <p>This highlighted to the team the importance of a full and thorough investigation to establish the facts.</p>

	Throughout the investigation a daily update to those affected was completed and was imperative to satisfactory resolution.
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Conclusions:

The complaints received by Tiverton Almshouse Trust covered a range of issues, but the common themes of dissatisfaction which the Trust attempted to resolve were:

- Repairs and maintenance - both remedial and ongoing
- Communication - keeping residents updated with their specific issue
- Treating each complaint / service request individually
- Involving a full and thorough investigation to ascertain the facts

The Trust should be easy to contact via telephone on 01884 251444 and always reply to an email within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours at weekends.

The Trust is keen to know if we fall short and grateful for any feedback on our complaints process.

Please let us know at Trust@tivertonalmshouse.org.uk