



Tiverton Almshouse Trust

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

Review of Complaints

2025

During the period 1st January to 31st December 2025 the Trust received eight complaints in total. Six complaints were from three individual residents and one resident couple and two complaints from a resident, supported by family members. At this time Tiverton Almshouse Trust had 85 almshouses housing, on average throughout 2025, 92 residents.

- One complaint related to the use of the on-site chapel by the Town Band.
- One complaint related to the refusal of additional opening hours for the on-site laundry.
- One complaint related to the quality of gardening provision.
- One complaint related to the specific timing of a resident social event.
- One complaint related to how the Trust dealt with a utilities under-payment.
- One complaint related to the wording in an edition of the monthly resident newsletter.
- One complaint from a resident supported by two family members related to an allegation of bullying and harassment.
- One complaint from a resident supported by a family member related to the removal of a fundraising poster from a communal area.
- No complaints related to the Trust's repairs and maintenance service.
- No complaints related to the Weekly Maintenance Charge.

In all cases, the complainant(s) was or were satisfied with the Tiverton Almshouse Trust response and reply at Stage 1 of the Complaints Policy. No complaints therefore required escalation to Stage 2 of the process.

Outcomes at Stage 2: N/A

In 2025 no complaints were referred to, or investigated by, the Housing Ombudsman.

In the same period 1st January to 31st December 2025, the Trust received and dealt with a total of **232 Service Requests** from almshouse residents; 79 Service Requests from the Greenway Gardens site and 153 requests from John Greenway Close.

Learning from complaints to improve services

Issue	Learning point(s)
<p><u>Summary of Complaints</u></p> <p>In 2025, Tiverton Almshouse Trust received the Trust received eight complaints in total. Six complaints were from three individual residents and one resident couple and two complaints from a resident, supported by family members.</p> <p>At this time Tiverton Almshouse Trust had 85 almshouses housing, on average throughout 2025, 92 residents.</p> <p>One complaint related to the use of the on-site chapel by the Town Band.</p> <p>One complaint related to the refusal of additional opening hours for the on-site laundry.</p> <p>One complaint related to the quality of gardening provision.</p> <p>One complaint related to the specific timing of a resident social event.</p> <p>One complaint related to how the Trust dealt with a utilities under-payment.</p> <p>One complaint related to the wording in an edition of the monthly resident newsletter.</p> <p>One complaint from a resident supported by two family members related to an allegation of bullying and harassment.</p> <p>One complaint from a resident supported by a family member related to the removal of a fundraising poster from a communal area.</p> <p>However, No complaints relating to either the Trust's repairs and maintenance service</p>	<p><u>Summary of Organisational Learning</u></p> <p>In all cases where a complaint is received, the Trust continues to work on always doing better with communication - keeping residents updated as to the status of their complaint, job, or repair.</p> <p>The Trust realises that not knowing what's going on has a disproportionate impact on our residents lives and well-being therefore, the Service Requests Log, put in place last year and accessible to all members of the team, monitors all active jobs on a daily basis.</p> <p>Should there be any 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>Continually striving to improve our communication to residents ensures tw-way clarity, the opportunity for both parties to listen to each other's point of view and adapting the Trust's message to different audiences ensuring understanding and connection to the charity.</p> <p>From an investigative point of view, the complaints involving an allegation of bullying and harassment and the untimely removal of a fundraising poster, both raised by residents, supported by family members involved the Trust following due process with regard to the taking of statements and an ensuing formal investigation. Following the process diligently did allow for a full and thorough investigation that was guided by the facts of the matter not opinions.</p>

<p>or the Weekly Maintenance Charge were received in 2025.</p> <p>In all cases, the complainant(s) was or were satisfied with the Tiverton Almshouse Trust response and reply at Stage 1 of the Complaints Policy. No complaints therefore required escalation to Stage 2 of the process.</p> <p>Outcomes at Stage 2: N/A</p> <p>In 2025 no complaints were referred to, or investigated by, the Housing Ombudsman.</p> <p>In the same period 1st January to 31st December 2025, the Trust received and dealt with a total of <u>269 Service Requests</u> from almshouse residents.</p>	
<p><u>Complaint 1</u></p> <p>One complaint was the result of related to the use of the on-site chapel by the Town Band.</p> <p>One of the Trust's volunteer Directors, who is also a member of the Town Band, made a last-minute request of the Chief Executive as to being able to use the John Greenway Chapel for band practice that evening; this after their usual venue cancelled late in the day.</p> <p>The Chief Executive granted this request however, with this being so late in the day, did not have time to update residents living in the vicinity of the chapel that this would be taking place.</p> <p>On the evening in question, residents began to notice an amount of unknown / unannounced people arriving on site - for some deemed as both a security and safety issue (despite then carrying musical instruments).</p> <p>One resident wrote to the Trust complaining / asking why residents did not know this was taking place.</p>	<p><u>Trust learning from the complaint</u></p> <p>Re the communication of this to residents, on reflection, the Chief Executive / Trust could not really have done anything to inform residents as to the band practice taking place as the request / stat of the practice was literally withing an hour.</p> <p>With the complaint being made that evening / the following day, the Chief Executive met with the resident who made the complaint immediately to explain and re-assure them around the circumstances to there being an amount of unknown / unannounced people arriving on site - for which, this was not either a security or safety issue.</p> <p>The Chief Executive did though re-assure that if this were to happen again, the Trust would do their best to let residents know by word of mouth.</p>
<p><u>Complaint 2</u></p> <p>One complaint was as a result of the denial by the Chief Executive to allow</p>	<p><u>Trust learning from the complaint</u></p> <p>The Trust's key learning to this complaint was the importance / value in 'targeted' communication.</p>

<p>additional opening hours for the on-site laundry.</p> <p>One resident complained as to asking why the Trust could not extend the on-site laundry opening hours on a Sunday further - currently open for use seven days and for over 100 hours.</p> <p>The Chief Executive met with and explained to the resident that in his view the current number of days / hours for the laundry was adequate and that in addition, the reason for reduced hours on a Sunday was to give residents residing in the surrounding properties a respite from its use.</p>	<p>The Chief Executive met specifically with the one individual who had made the complaint - resisting 'sheep=dipping' all residents with the response.</p> <p>The Housing Manager and Warden also made the point to meet with the residents residing in the properties in the vicinity of the laundry to re-assure them that there would not be an additional inconvenience to them on a Sunday.</p> <p>The Trust did follow this up with a more general communication in the newsletter with regard to the use of the laundry and opening hours.</p>
<p><u>Complaint 3</u></p> <p>One complaint was the result of the quality of gardening provision from external contractors.</p> <p>A resident raised a concern as to the Trust's gardener continuing to mow grass across the sight when raining with the ensuing scattering of damp grass.</p> <p>An additional concern was raised about the lack of raking of leaves and the slip hazard that may ensue.</p>	<p><u>Trust learning from the complaint</u></p> <p>This again highlighted the Trust team the importance of taking and dealing with all complaints seriously and on an individual, and formal basis.</p> <p>What at first seemed like a 'niggle' around to the Trust's gardener continuing to mow grass across the sight when raining with the ensuing scattering of damp grass. On further investigation it materialised that there was within this a legitimate concern about the lack of raking of leaves and the slip hazard that may ensue.</p> <p>The Chief Executive communicated back to the resident that their comments were well received explaining that the Trust's Maintenance Manager had subsequently spoken to and reminded the gardener of our health and safety concerns for both mowing and raking in the wet.</p>
<p><u>Complaint 4</u></p> <p>One complaint was the result of the specific timing of a resident social event.</p> <p>The resident highlighted that the traditional monthly quiz for December was so late in December is not really appropriate. An ask was made of the Trust</p>	<p><u>Trust learning from the complaint</u></p> <p>Again, this re-iterated to the Trust team the importance of taking all the complaints seriously even though the majority of residents who attend the event on a monthly basis did not raise a concern. The Housing Manager responded to the resident that unfortunately, the Trust was unable to change the date of 'quiz and fizz'</p>

<p>to simply moved forward to an earlier date to the convenience of residents.</p>	<p>to an earlier date, with the only available date being 16th December due to team members already having commitments in the evening.</p> <p>The Housing Manager also highlighted to the resident that it is a busy time of the year with additional events throughout December. Normality would resume in the New year.</p>
<p><u>Complaint 5</u></p> <p>One complaint resulted from how the Trust dealt with a resident in arrears due to a utilities under-payment.</p> <p>The resident complained as to feeling 'insulted' as to the Trust writing / requesting that an underpayment of 83p for utilities be made.</p> <p>The resident considered the note sent was a 'very nasty e-mail considering such a paltry amount, I actually feel insulted. 83 pence, really & what will such buy you'.</p> <p>The resident said that they would leave the 83p with the Warden, and if that is not satisfactory - well hard luck!</p> <p>The finance team explained to the resident that for both completeness and audit purposes, the Trust are duty bound to recoup the shortfall.</p>	<p><u>Trust learning from the complaint</u></p> <p>Further leaning for the Trust regarding the importance of taking and dealing with all complaints seriously, formally and on an individual basis.</p> <p>What at first seemed like a 'simple' ask for the shortfall in payment (83p) this was taken by the resident as to being 'insulting'.</p> <p>The finance team and Housing Manager communicated back to the resident (via e-mail and face to face) that their feedback was understood and apologised unnecessary arm that this had caused.</p> <p>In response, the resident did acknowledge that their original reaction to the ask and did apologise to the member of the team they had spoken to initially.</p>
<p><u>Complaint 6</u></p> <p>One complaint resulted from a resident couple taking offence to the wording of a specific article in an edition of the monthly resident newsletter.</p> <p>In the newsletter in question, a column was written with regard to residents across both sites respecting each other's property - a resident is alleged to have used another's compost for their potted plants.</p> <p>The resident to which the allegation was made refuted this and stated that the article was aimed specifically at them.</p>	<p><u>Trust learning from the complaint</u></p> <p>Further learning for the Trust regarding the importance of taking and dealing with all complaints seriously, formally and on an individual basis.</p> <p>The Housing Manager met and spoke with the resident in question to point out that the column in the newsletter was not specifically aimed at them but to the general population - all of which outside of the resident who had complained and this individual, knew nothing about the allegation.</p>

Complaint 7

One complaint resulted from two family members reporting an alleged serious issue on behalf of their relative, a resident at Tiverton Almshouse Trust. Allegations were made as to bullying and harassment by another resident and that a potential assault had taken place.

An immediate investigation process was put in place in order to interview any affected parties and ascertain the facts from all involved.

At the outset, it was acknowledged by all parties that the relationship between the two residents had, over recent times, deteriorated.

Although there were no witnesses to any of the alleged events and the resident to which the allegations were made, strenuously refuted all allegations.

Family members felt that there was a safeguarding issue as to the behaviour of one resident toward another. To add, the family members had based their complaint on what their relative had told them - again with no witnesses - and that a potential assault may also have taken place.

With the seriousness of the assault allegation, the CEO and Housing Manager asked if the resident or family members affected had contacted the police? They said they had not, hoping that there could be a resolution to this matter via the Trust - as Tiverton Almshouse Trust has a duty of care to its residents.

The CEO repeated that that if the family felt strongly enough that an assault had taken place, that they contact the police.

Both resident(s) and the family member were informed that a process would be put in place for a full and thorough investigation.

Trust learning from the complaint

Further leaning for the Trust regarding the importance of taking and dealing with all complaints seriously, adhering strictly to a formal process and keeping all of those affected and involved fully up to date with regular and timely communications.

Once a full investigation had taken place with all the affected parties spoken to, and notes of the conversations taken, this enabled the organisation to establish the facts of the incident, albeit with there being no witnesses to the alleged 'offences'.

Whilst the allegations were of a very serious nature, there were no witnesses to these events and so the decision of the organisation was based on having to take one word against another.

Once due process had been followed and an outcome arrived at, the Chief Executive and Housing Manager met with all parties separately to inform them of the outcome.

All parties reported to being satisfied that a process had been followed and that a full and thorough investigation had taken place.

Remedial and suggested future actions into how each side of the issue manage the relationship between the two residents were given and readily accepted.

<u>Complaint 8</u>	<u>Trust learning from the complaint</u>
<p>One complaint resulted from a resident, supported by a family member, objecting to the removal of a fundraising poster from a communal area.</p> <p>The resident in question had partaken in a charity event and subsequently placed a thank you poster on the notice board in the communal area of the site.</p> <p>The poster was removed from display by a staff team member in error after only a short period of time of it being posted.</p> <p>The resident in question, supported by a family member, complained of the posters' somewhat hasty removal.</p>	<p>Again, learning for the Trust regarding the importance of taking and dealing with all complaints seriously, adhering strictly to a formal process and keeping all of those affected and involved fully up to date with regular and timely communications.</p> <p>The Chief Executive and Housing Manager met with the resident, supported by their member, to explain that the removal of the poster was in error and both apologised for any distress this may have caused.</p> <p>Whilst this did not make it any easier for the resident that their thank you poster had been removed, both they and the family member thanked the Trust for the time that had been taken to investigate this matter and for the apology that was graciously received.</p>

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:

- Treating every complaint / service request individually.
- Communication - keeping those residents and/or family members affected, updated with their specific issue.
- Treating each complaint / service request individually.
- The importance of a full and thorough investigation and process to ascertain the facts when potentially serious issues and/or allegations are made by either a resident or a family member.

Tiverton Almshouse Trust is contactable via e-mail trust@tivertonalmshouse.org.uk and by telephone on 01884 251444 and endeavours to reply to an email within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours at weekends.

The Trust is always 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

PRMD

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