

# Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Procedure

March 2023

Complaints, compliments and feedback procedure

<b>Company</b>	Thirteen
<b>Lead Manager</b>	Bobby Usher
<b>Date of final draft and version number</b>	March 2023
<b>Review Date</b>	March 2026
<b>Officer responsible for review</b>	Michelle Younger

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Thirteen welcomes complaints, compliments and feedback from customers as they provide information which helps us to improve our services and culture.
- 1.2 Effective complaints management provides a powerful tool to measure performance and to show Thirteen's commitment to providing excellent customer services. It also ensures that feedback whether negative or positive is used to improve service delivery.

## **2. AIM AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- 2.1 This procedure applies to services that are provided by Thirteen or anyone providing services on behalf of Thirteen.
- 2.2 If a matter is raised that is not covered by the procedure, the reasons for this will be explained and guidance will be provided on alternative options.

### **The procedure will:**

- Be reviewed every 3 years to ensure it meets Thirteen's objectives and satisfies customers' needs;
- Be easy to access and widely advertised;
- Ensure that service users are advised of the following:
  - The standard of service they should expect;
  - Appropriate timescales for complaint handling;
  - Where a complaint has been received, a final decision is provided with information on who to contact should the person feel that their complaint has not been resolved; and
  - The process if they are not happy with the outcome of their complaint.
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly, efficiently, and courteously;
- Ensure that complaints are recorded, monitored and reported appropriately;
- Ensure that information received from feedback is used to manage performance and develop service improvements.

### **Thirteen will:**

- Ensure staff are appropriately trained on the objectives and use of policies and procedures;
- Ensure procedures are easy for customers to access and understand;
- Ensure information is available in different formats if this is requested;
- Ensure information is treated as confidential;
- Provide staff with achievable timeframes, with the aim of providing an early resolution where a complaint has been received;
- Ensure feedback is given to customers to let them know what we have learned and what has been changed as a result;

- Ensure that employees are sensitive to the needs of customers and that they deal with feedback promptly, and where feedback is from a complaint that they deal with this in a positive manner.

### 3. PROCEDURE CONTENTS

#### 3.1 Complaints / Enquiries / Requests for Service

##### **DEFINITION**

“A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, action or lack of action by the Company or its staff affecting an individual customer or group of customers”

*Housing Ombudsman Service*

##### **Enquiry / Request for Service**

A routine enquiry or request will be dealt with as such and will not go through the complaints process.

##### **Informal complaint/Expression of dissatisfaction**

If we have failed to deliver a service, we will aim to resolve this at the first point of contact. These interactions should be logged on Orchard (CRM), and when closing the case, you should click the ‘completed myself’ button.

3.1.1 Complaints from customers, regardless of how they are received, will be logged on the Feedback Manager system by whoever receives the complaint.

3.1.2 If a complaint is received by a third party on behalf of a customer, the third party must have a Third Party Authorisation form completed and signed by the customer before we can correspond with them or take any action.

##### **Stage 1 Complaint**

Customers can make complaints through the following methods:

- Letter
- Telephone call or email
- Via the online form on the website
- In person

3.1.3 The person taking the complaint should always try and resolve the matter at first point of contact. If this is not possible, the complaint should be allocated to the Customer Recovery Team for investigation.

- 3.1.4 On receipt of the complaint the customer will receive an acknowledgement confirming the details of the complaint, the timescale of the complaints procedure and who the complaint has been referred to for investigation.
- 3.1.5 Following receipt of the complaint, the Customer Recovery Team will carry out a full investigation to decide on any action required and ensure this is carried out. The team will provide a response to the customer within 5 working days, endeavouring to speak to the customer at the point of notification, during the investigation and before the final response is sent out. The response will be provided in the customers preferred method of communication or telephone in the first instance if a preferred method has not been provided. After this has been completed a check list will be uploaded to Orchard (CRM) to confirm the investigation has been completed by the co-ordinator.
- 3.1.6 If the complaint cannot be fully investigated and responded to within this timescale the Customer Recovery Team will inform the customer via their preferred method of communication, (or telephone if no preferred method is given) of the reason for the delay and when they will be able to provide a response.
- 3.1.7 The decision letter will include;
- confirmation of the nature of the complaint;
  - the actions taken during the investigation; including any interviews held, use of systems and reference to any relevant policies or procedures;
  - the decision reached and why, including an apology where we have found that we have not done something;
  - a determination as to whether we have been liable;
  - Negotiation arrangements to mitigate damage including professional cleaning or temporary repairs;
  - Valuation (if applicable) of damaged items by means of research and appropriate depreciation methods;
  - the steps planned or already taken to resolve the complaint if we have done something wrong;
  - timescales involved where actions are yet to be carried out;
  - confirmation of the stage the complaint is at, and what action should be taken if the complainant feels the complaint is still not resolved.
  - Any actions to be carried out as a result of the complaint are followed up and completed by the co-ordinator dealing with the complaint.

## **Stage 2 complaint**

- 3.1.8 If the complainant feels that the complaint has not been resolved it will be referred to a senior manager for a review.
- 3.1.9 On receipt of the request for review the reason for the request will be established and logged on the Feedback Manager system in Orchard (CRM).
- 3.1.10 If the review is received from a third party on behalf of a customer, the customer will be contacted to confirm their request for the review before any action is taken.

3.1.11 The review request will be passed to a senior manager who will review the decision reached and carry out any further investigations if required. They will attempt to contact the customer by their preferred method of contact or by telephone if no other method is given to obtain more information if required.

3.1.12 Receipt of the complaint review request will be acknowledged and will confirm:

- what the review will cover and if any part of the complaint has been resolved,
- who will carry out the review,
- the timescale by which we will aim to provide a full response.

3.1.12 The senior manager will then aim to respond in writing to the complainant within 10 working days. The senior manager will contact the customer via their preferred method of contact or telephone in the first instance if no other method is requested.

3.1.13 If the complaint cannot be fully investigated and responded to within this timescale, the senior manager will inform the customer, through their preferred method of communication, of the reason for the delay and when they will be able to provide a response.

3.1.14 Within the response, the senior manager will:

- confirm what the review covered i.e., why the resident remained dissatisfied and whether any part of the complaint had previously been resolved,
- confirm who has completed the review,
- confirm who needs to be kept informed,
- confirm what evidence has been gathered i.e. comments from those involved, relevant policies and contemporaneous records, inspections etc,
- review the actions and investigation findings from the initial review,
- review the original decision made, and decide if the original decision was correct, noting the reasons for the decision,
- decide what further actions, if necessary, are to be taken to resolve the matter if the review overturns the decision,
- confirm the stage the complaint is at and a fact sheet detailing what action should be taken if the complainant feels the complaint is still not resolved.

### **Beyond this Procedure**

#### **Next steps**

3.1.16 If, after exhausting the complaints procedure, the complainant feels the complaint has still not been resolved, they may choose to refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman, details of which are found on our website.

#### **Housing Ombudsman**

3.1.18 If a complaint is received from the Housing Ombudsman, this should be directed to the Customer Recovery Team to be logged on the Feedback Manager system within Orchard (CRM) and a response coordinated within the timescale given.

## **Commissioned Service Complaints**

- 3.1.19 If, after exhausting the complaints procedure, customers of services carried out by Thirteen that are contracted by third parties feel the complaint has still not been resolved, they may choose to refer the complaint to the commissioning body.

## **MP Complaints**

- 3.1.20 If a complaint is received from an MP or Councillor, they should be directed straight to the Customer Recovery Team. The team are then responsible for logging the complaint on the Feedback Manager system in Orchard (CRM), conducting the investigation and coordinating the response in line with the complaint procedure. Informal complaints/Expressions of dissatisfaction and queries from MP's or councillors are handled by the Customer Success team.

## **3.3 Compliments**

- 3.3.1 Whilst complaints received from our customers are always welcomed as they allow us to take appropriate action and improve our services, compliments are equally important as they confirm the quality of our services and employees and let us know what we are doing right.

### **DEFINITION**

“An expression of thanks or appreciation with an individual or team for a job well done. The standard of service provided would, however much appreciated, be an expected part of the individual or teams normal duties and responsibilities.”

- 3.3.2 A compliment can be received through a number of different channels including:

- Letter or thank you card
- Telephone call or email
- Via the online form on the website
- Verbal feedback

- 3.3.3 Employees can make a compliment about a colleague, but they can also be made by tenants, customers, councillors or anyone who has received a service from the Group.

## **What to do if a compliment is received**

- 3.3.4 Compliments received from customers, regardless of how they are received, will be logged on the compliments section of the Feedback Manager system in Orchard (CRM) by whoever is taking the compliment.

3.3.5 The compliment will then be referred to the relevant service manager who will pass on to the individual/team for which the compliment is received.

### **3.4 Feedback**

#### **DEFINITION**

“A remark, however made, about the standard of service, action or lack of action by an organisation affecting an individual customer or group of customers”

3.4.1 Comments and feedback are valuable to us in order to drive service improvement and can be submitted in a number of different ways and can be captured by all members of staff, for example:

- At events
- Forums
- Via email
- Website
- In person
- Surveys
- Questionnaires

These instances are captured as Informal complaints/Expressions of dissatisfaction. This data is then used to analyse themes and trends to help address emerging issues and aid continuous improvement.

#### **Avoidable Contact**

3.3.5 There are instances where a complaint is not made but could result in dissatisfaction of the service, known as avoidable contacts.

3.3.6 This data is also collected to determine the demands on the service and through using trend analysis is used to inform service improvements and to address emerging issues.