

THCH – SERVICE GUARANTEE

Our Mission

Our main goal is “to continue to be an excellent community based Housing Association working with stakeholders to provide safe, high quality affordable homes and value for money services, contributing to the social and economic regeneration of the local community”.

Service Guarantee

To provide safe, high quality, affordable homes and an excellent service. We will:

- Demonstrate our commitment to the best possible customer service by:
 - Providing an accessible service,
 - Treating all people in a fair and friendly way,
 - Dealing with your enquiry promptly
 - Treating your enquiry seriously

To help deliver this we have developed a set of service standards to which all at THCH will aspire to and for which targets will be set and monitored.

These service standards cover the following work areas:

- Customer Service
- Repairs
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Improving Your Home
- Letting Empty Homes
- Collecting Your Rent
- Estate Services
- Tenancy Management
- Leasehold Management
- Listening to You
- Working in the Community
- Wanting to Move?

We will aim to regularly measure our performance against these standards and report on that performance.

Service Standards

✓ Customer Service

These are the general standards of customer service you can expect when you contact THCH.

Our people will:

- Be polite, courteous and clear about what can and cannot be done.
- Give their name and always have an identity card.
- Deal with your enquiry sensitively and effectively, using agreed policies and procedures and in an easy to understand way.
- Keep appointments

Our offices will

- Be staffed 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.
- Our offices will be open at the following times

	Bethnal Green	Shadwell & Wapping	Spitalfields	HQ
Monday	10am to 1pm 2pm to 4pm	10am to 1pm 2pm to 4pm	10am to 1pm	9am to 5pm
Tuesday	10am to 1pm 2pm to 4pm	10am to 1pm 2pm to 4pm	10am to 1pm	9am to 5pm
Wednesday	10am to 1pm closed pm	10am to 1pm closed pm	10am to 1pm	9am to 5pm
Thursday	10am to 1pm 2pm to 4pm	10am to 1pm 2pm to 4pm	10am to 1pm	9am to 5pm
Friday	10am to 1pm 2pm to 4pm	10am to 1pm 2pm to 4pm	10am to 1pm	9am to 5pm

Our telephone service

- We will answer our telephones between 9am and 5pm.
- 90% of our calls will be answered within 10 seconds.
- The person who answers the telephone will give their name.
- We will always ring you back by the next working day:
 - if you ask us to
 - If the query cannot be dealt with immediately
 - If you leave a message on an answer-phone when the office is shut

Our offices

- We will aim to see you within 5 minutes of your arrival and deal with your enquiry there and then.
- If you need someone else to help you, an interview will be arranged with an appropriate officer within 3 working days.
- If a home visit is required that will take place within 10 working days
- If you need a signer, interpreter or translator, we will try to arrange this if you let us know in advance.
- Our reception areas will be kept clean, tidy and welcoming.

Access to information

- We shall ensure that leaflets and notices in our reception areas are clear, up to date and in plain English.
- We shall offer translations on request for leaflets and notices.
- We will provide access to information and to services through our website at www.thch.org.uk.
- We will publish Update, our residents' newsletter, every month, except December.

Correspondence

- We aim to reply to all letters and emails requiring a response within 10 working days. If this is not possible we will tell you so within 5 days.
- Letters will be written clearly in plain English, avoiding jargon.

Putting things right

If we have made a mistake we will:

- Put it right as quickly as we can and say we are sorry
- Provide compensation for broken repair appointments
- Have a clear formal complaints procedure – details available at our offices
- Provide residents with regular feedback on our performance and acknowledge what we are doing wrong as well as areas where we are performing well

✓ Repairs

These are the general standards of service you can expect when you contact THCH about the repairs service.

- We will provide an emergency repair service 365 days a year, 24-hours a day.
- We will offer an appointment for inspecting requests for repairs within 15 days
- We will offer an appointment for carrying out your repair which will depend on the job priority and when it is convenient for you.
- You can report a repair by telephone, letter, email, through our website at www.thch.org.uk or in person at your Community Housing Office.
- We will confirm the order has been raised by agreeing an appointment or sending a receipt.
- Repairs will be carried out to a high standard.
- You will be charged for the cost of the repair if you cause damage to your home and we choose to carry out the repair.
- We will inspect at least 10% of all completed repairs.
- If we are carrying out major repairs to your homes we will ensure there is a resident liaison officer to work with you, we will consult with you on the nature of the work and how it is to be carried out.

✓ Antisocial behaviour

These are the general standards of service you can expect when you contact THCH if you are affected by nuisance, harassment or other antisocial behaviour.

- We will take all reports seriously
- We will investigate reports of racial or sexual harassment, or domestic violence within 24 hours if it is on our property.
- We will not disclose information to any other party without your permission or without following agreed protocols.
- We will not get involved in minor neighbour disputes or where other remedies are available to the individuals.
- We will work in partnership with other agencies to either try to mediate or take other action where appropriate.

✓ Improving your home

These are the general standards of service you can expect when your home is to be modernised by THCH or if you want to carry out any home improvements.

- If you have to move out to allow major works to be carried out we will compensate you in accordance with our compensation policy, this includes reasonable costs of removals, disconnection and reconnection, redirection of mail and some disturbance costs.
- If we are carrying out security improvements we will consult with the Police's Secured by Design Officers.
- We will consult with you if we are carrying improvements to your home.
- We will aim to decorate the outside of our buildings every 6 years.
- We will send a short questionnaire for you to tell us what you thought of any major repairs to your home
- We will ensure our contractors comply with the Considerate Constructors Scheme when works are underway
- If you want to carry out home improvements yourself we will not unreasonably refuse our consent to those improvements.

✓ Letting empty homes

These are the general standards of service that THCH will aim to meet when managing empty properties to be let to assured tenants.

- We will let all available empty homes within 4 weeks
- Your new home will have a new lock on the front door; will have had the gas and electricity services checked; and will have had doors and windows serviced.
- Your new home will be clean and clear of rubbish.
- Your new home will be decorated to a reasonable standard or an allowance will be offered.
- Your Community Housing Officer will visit you within three weeks of moving into your new home.

✓ Collecting your rent

These are the general standards of service you can expect from our rent collection and debt recovery service.

- You can pay your rent at Post Offices using your 'rent swipe card', online or by telephone or by direct debit or standing order
- We will provide a rent statement every 3 months
- We will tell you about any money you owe by letter, telephone or personal visit
- We will offer advice on benefits or direct you to someone who can offer such advice. You do need to tell us if you are having difficulty paying the rent or keeping to an agreement.
- We will be firm but fair when seeking to recover debts. It is important you pay your rent regularly and on time. If you do not, you could lose your home

✓ Estate services

These are the general standards of service you can expect from THCH to keep your estate and your local environment tidy and attractive.

- We will aim to keep our estates clean and free from litter and refuse and we will check this daily.
- Offensive graffiti will be removed within 24 hours. Where practical other graffiti will be cleaned off within 5 working days.
- We will inspect lifts and door entry security systems daily and order any necessary repairs within one working day.
- We will carry out full inspections of estates every month and residents are encouraged to attend.
- We will provide controlled parking measures on all our estates.

✓ Tenancy Management

These are the general standards of service you can expect when you contact THCH about your rights and your obligations as a tenant.

- We will provide you with a Tenants Handbook which explains your rights and obligations as a tenant.
- We will provide advice and assistance if a tenant dies.
- We will provide advice and assistance about mutual exchanges or transferring your tenancy to another person.
- We will provide advice and assistance when you are moving home and on how you must end your tenancy legally.
- We will offer tenants the opportunity to view THCH service charge accounts annually.

✓ Leasehold management

These are the general standards of service you can expect when you contact THCH about your rights and your obligations as a leaseholder.

- We will provide you with a leaseholders handbook which explains your rights and obligations as a leaseholder.
- We will provide an estimated service charge in April of each year.
- We will provide an actual service charge account in October of each year showing a balance on the account
- Offer deferred payments terms on major works over £10,000 if you cannot pay in any other way
- Offer direct debit payment arrangements
- Provide an account balance over the telephone with written confirmation in 5 working days
- We will comply with statutory consultation periods for major works and for qualifying long term arrangements as set out in the Landlord & Tenant Act 1985 as amended by the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Provide a 5 year maintenance plan following major works,
- Provide an insurance certificate annually
- Provide an annual breakdown of communal repairs costs
- Provide an itemised bill based on the costs for each block
- In addition, we will:
 - hold events specially for leaseholders
 - publish features for leaseholders in “Update”
 - allow leaseholders to inspect the specification and supplying documentation for major works within 1 month of the request
 - consider buying back leaseholders in certain circumstances
 - offer a pre Right to Buy interview before purchase is completed.

✓ Listening to you

These are the general standards of service you can expect from THCH as we encourage our residents to become involved in the management of their homes.

- We will involve and listen to our customers on the service we deliver.
- Our leaflet on resident consultation will be available from our local offices.
- We will carry out telephone & postal surveys with residents to ask about our service – with particular attention to our repair service
- All residents are encouraged to attend the local Area Resident Boards (ARBs)
- All leaseholders are encouraged to attend Leaseholder Steering Group (LSG).
- We will advertise dates, times and venues of ARBs and LSG in our monthly newsletter, in our Community Housing Offices and on notice boards.

✓ Working in the Community

These are the general standards of service you can expect from THCH as we seek to provide a service which truly meets the needs of our diverse community.

- We will have a policy for decorating one or more rooms every few years for elderly and disabled residents.
- We will build new homes to mobility standards
- If you need a signer, interpreter or translator, we will try to arrange this if you let us know in advance.
- We shall offer translations on request for leaflets and notices.
- We will monitor the use of our services by different groups in the community to allow us to ensure that our service reflects the needs of the community.
- We will operate in a manner sensitive to the religious and cultural environment of Tower Hamlets

✓ Wanting a Move – (tenants only)

These are the general standards of service you can expect from THCH if you want to move home.

- We will advise you on options available to you if you want to move home.
- We will be clear about your realistic chances of getting a move, You do not have a right to transfer to another home and If you owe us money it is extremely unlikely we will agree to a move
- Where we may be able to help with a move we will complete your transfer form within 10 days of you contacting us
- We will visit before an offer is made to make sure you have kept your home in good repair
- Details of mutual exchanges and HOMES are available from our local offices