

Thorngate Living

Residents' Handbook





Thorngate Churcher Trust

HOUSING AND CARE SINCE 1868

Providing comfort and security to those
in need since 1868, and committed to
developing the highest standards of housing
and professional care in a supportive,
respectful and friendly community.

150 HOUSING AND CARE
FOR THOSE IN NEED
years 1868-2018

Welcome

Welcome to your new home!

We hope that you, and your family and friends, will find this handbook helpful. Here at Thorngate Living, we have been providing comfort and security to those in need since 1868. We are committed to providing the highest standards of housing and professional care in a supportive, respectful and friendly community.

Contact details

Clare House, Melrose Gardens, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 3BZ.

Telephone: 023 9253 4999 • Email: info@thorngate.org.uk • Website: thorngate.org.uk

Useful telephone numbers

Chief Executive Officer

Mrs Anne Taylor 023 9253 4999

Housing and Support Manager

Mrs Jill Francis 023 9253 4999

Warden: Elizabeth Court

023 9252 8205

Warden: Thorngate Court

023 9252 7067

Warden: Melrose Gardens

023 9260 2329

Warden: Compigne Court

023 9438 1700

Benefits Agency 0800 882200

Pensions Agency 0845 060265

Gosport Borough Council
Housing Benefit Office 023 9254 5325

Age Concern 023 9251 1109

Citizens Advice Bureau 08701 264036

Careline 01243 785166

Contents

Section 1: About us	2		
What we do, who we house, who we are	2	What the wardens don't do	14
Who runs the Trust, and who we work with	2	Hours of work, out of hours cover, daily contact	14
Listening, keeping you informed, working with you to improve services	3	Emergency call system	16
Section 2: Your rights and responsibilities	4	Your Personalised Plan	16
Letter of Appointment	4	Your well-being, health and safety	17
What you pay for your housing	4	• Registering with a doctor	17
What the charges cover – and don't cover	4	• Information on health conditions and medication	17
Assistance with paying our charges and advice on benefits	4	• Emergencies and illness	17
If you fall behind with paying our charges	5	• Wills, Powers of Attorney and 'living wills'	17
Confidentiality and data protection	5	Keeping you safe	18
Compliments, comments and complaints	6	• Our responsibilities	18
	7	• Your responsibilities	18
Section 3: You and your home	7	Section 7: How we can help if your circumstances change	19
Living in your flat	7	Moving within our schemes	19
• Your security and safety	7	Moving on	19
• Smoking and vaping	7	Aids and adaptations	19
• Absences	8	Moving out	19
Looking after your flat – your responsibilities	8	Section 8: Our service standards	20
• Rubbish and recycling	8	Allocations, appointments and empty properties	20
• Alterations and additions inside your flat	8	• Allocations and appointments	20
• Insurance	8	• Empty properties	20
• Electricity meters	9	Setting weekly maintenance charges including service charges	20
Looking after your flat – our responsibilities	9	• Weekly maintenance contributions including service charges	20
• Repairs, maintenance, improvements	9	Repairs	21
• Reporting repairs: how soon will they be done?	9	Tackling nuisance and antisocial behaviour	21
Section 4: Your community and your neighbourhood	10	Customer care	21
Working with neighbours to improve your community	10	• Applicants	22
Living with neighbours	10	• Queries and complaints sent to Clare House	22
• Pets	10	Resident consultation	22
• Parking	10	• Resident interaction	22
Neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour	10	Maintaining your environment	22
Section 5: Living in our housing schemes – buildings, grounds and gardens	12	• Your environment	23
Facilities	12	Reporting on performance	23
• Grounds and gardens	12	• Annual Report to Residents	23
Health and safety	12	• Management reporting to the Board	
• Security of the building	13	Section 9: Other contacts	25
• Fire precautions	13	Local	25
Section 6: Living in our housing schemes – the support service and your wardens	14	National	25
What the wardens do	14		

Section 1 : About us

What we do, who we house, who we are

Thorngate Living has four housing schemes:

- Elizabeth Court
- Thorngate Court
- Melrose Gardens
- Compigne Court

Each scheme provides one-bedroom self-contained flats, communal facilities and resident wardens. This type of housing offers the benefits of comfort, security and independence within a friendly, supportive and respectful community. We also have a care home (Russell Churcher Court) for people who need 24 hour care.

This handbook is for residents in our housing schemes.

We house older people of limited means who are over 50.

The Thorngate Churcher Trust was founded in 1868 by two Gosport families: the Thorngates and the Churchers. The Trust was registered as a charity in its present form in 1981 and the name changed in 2017 to reflect the founding families.

Who runs the Trust, and who we work with

We have a voluntary Board of Trustees, and paid staff.

We are regulated by:

- the Charity Commission
- the Regulator of Social Housing
- the Care Quality Commission (for our care home, Russell Churcher Court).

We are a member of:

- the Housing Ombudsman Service (see Section 2, Compliments, comments and complaints, page 6)
- the National Housing Federation
- the Almshouse Association.

If you want to know more about these organisations, their websites are listed in Section 9 (Other contacts, page 25) or you can ask at the office.



We also work with our local authorities: Gosport Borough Council and Hampshire County Council. And we have links with local charities and other community organisations.

Listening, keeping you informed, working with you to improve services

We are committed to listening to our residents, keeping them informed and providing opportunities to help us improve services. There are many ways that we aim to achieve this.

Your first point of contact with us is through our resident and relief wardens. If you want to know something, or tell us something, you should contact the warden.

The Chairman has regular meetings with the senior management team.

The Chief Executive and Housing and Support Manager visit each scheme several times each month, and can also be contacted through your warden or the office.

Our Annual Report to residents tells you each year what we have been doing, our future plans, and how we have performed against the service standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing (for example the percentage of repairs carried out on time).

We provide a regular newsletter, and information on scheme noticeboards and on our website, thorngate.org.uk.

The residents' consultative committee meets every three months with resident representatives from each scheme. The committee is there to provide a formal channel of communication between residents, senior staff and Trustees. Key items are reported in the newsletter. You can read minutes of the meetings on the notice board in your scheme, or you can ask your warden for a copy. If you have a matter of concern that has not been resolved by the warden, you can refer it to a resident representative.



If you wish to move out, you must give the Trust a minimum of four weeks written notice. During this period you will still be liable for your housing charges, even if you have already moved out.

Residents (or their personal representatives after a death) are responsible for continuing to pay the housing charges until:

- the notice period has expired
- the flat is cleared of all personal possessions
- all keys are returned.

Section 2: Your rights and responsibilities

Letter of Appointment

This is the agreement you signed with us when you moved in. It sets out our responsibilities and your responsibilities. This handbook explains the agreement between you and us in more detail.

What you pay for your housing

You are responsible for paying the charges for living in our housing schemes. Your housing charges are called 'Weekly Maintenance Contribution' in your Letter of Appointment and not 'rent' because you are not a tenant. Charges are due for four week periods and are payable in advance. We prefer you to pay by bankers standing order.

We are responsible for keeping you informed about our charges and your payments, and we send you an annual statement. We usually need to increase our charges in July each year. This is because we are a 'Registered Provider' of social housing, and to cover some costs which may rise. The government (through the Regulator of Social Housing) controls our charges and we have received government grants towards the cost of the buildings.

What the charges cover – and don't cover

The amount you pay covers part of the cost of running our housing schemes, and some services in your own flat, including:

- central heating and hot water (most flats)
- water and sewage charges (most flats)
- repairs and maintenance
- the support service (wardens, Careline and emergency call system)
- staff costs
- buildings and contents insurance (see Section 3: You and your home, page 7)

- upkeep of the gardens
- cleaning of communal areas
- cleaning the outside of the windows of your flat.

Our charges do not cover everything. You have to pay:

- electricity bills for your flat
- Council Tax (although you may be able to get help with this: see advice on benefits, page 25)
- your own private telephone line (and perhaps internet connection and/or TV)
- for cable TV (and perhaps internet and telephone connection)
- for some residents, for a TV licence (there is a lower concessionary rate for people under 75; TV licences are free for people over 75)
- if you want a higher level of contents insurance than the level we provide (see Section 3: You and your home, page 7)
- for any extra help you may need to help you to live independently (such as a private cleaner or carer); we can suggest where to find extra help (see Section 6: Living in our housing schemes – the support service and your wardens, page 14).

Assistance with paying our charges and advice on benefits

To help pay our charges and any extra living costs, many of our residents find that they are able to claim benefits. Even if you have some savings, and perhaps a pension from previous employment, you may be entitled to some extra money. As well as helping with our charges, this can make your life easier in other ways (such as paying for housework, or for treats).

Older people sometimes feel uncomfortable about claiming, but with our charges and other costs going up each year, it can really help. Sometimes people find it is useful to remember that they and their families have paid taxes all their lives!



We can help you to get confidential advice on:

- help with our housing charges (Housing Benefit)
- reducing your Council Tax (by obtaining Council Tax Support)
- Pension Credit (extra money on top of your State Retirement Pension: a very small amount of Pension Credit can increase your income a lot, because of links to other benefits)
- benefits for ill-health and disability, which are not affected by the level of your income or savings, especially Attendance Allowance: this is money to help people over pension age to live independently: you choose how you spend it, and you don't have to have someone 'in attendance'!
- additional help for people getting some of these benefits (such as help with dental charges and new glasses).

You can ask your warden, or at the office. We can help you fill in the forms, and remember – it is confidential. If you prefer, there are helplines and websites that you or your relatives can contact (see Section 9: Other contacts, page 25).

We can also give you advice on the possibility of getting extra help from certain charities, especially for one-off events or purchases.

If you fall behind with paying our charges

When you signed your Letter of Appointment, you agreed to pay our charges. If you are struggling to pay these charges, or other bills, please don't ignore the problem. The sooner you talk to us, the sooner we can help. We will treat this confidentially and sensitively. We can also put you in touch with other sources of expert help.

If you are missing out on benefits that could help, you need to understand that payments can't usually be backdated. This means that it is especially important to claim as early as possible.

If you have problems paying and get into arrears with your housing charges, we will work with you to agree how you are going to clear the arrears and bring your account up to date. If the arrears continue and you do not co-operate with us in solving the problem, we cannot let the situation continue and you will be at risk of losing your home.

Confidentiality and data protection

We need to hold information about you that is relevant to our relationship with you. We have a clear policy on confidentiality and data protection which you can ask to see: this is a summary.

You are responsible for helping us to keep information about you up to date (for example if your next of kin change their address or phone number; if your doctor or medication changes). We are responsible for keeping all your information confidential and secure, and this is a legal obligation.

For example:

- the wardens will not tell other residents about you, or tell you about them
- paper files are kept in locked filing cabinets
- only certain people have access to information held electronically (such as data held on our computers).

You need to know that in some circumstances we are required to share information with other agencies, and they will also have their own confidentiality policies.

Compliments, comments and complaints

If there is something that you think we have done well, please tell us. This is very encouraging for our staff, and it helps us to know when we get things right.

If there is something you want to complain about (for example how we treat you, our service or the behaviour of a staff member) you have the right to complain. Many people are reluctant to complain, but it helps us resolve problems and improve our services if you speak up when things go wrong.

We have a clear policy and procedure for complaints which you can ask to see: this is a summary.

There are three stages:

- **Stage 1:** It is usually best to speak to your warden first. If the complaint is about a warden, you should contact the office at Clare House.
- **Stage 2:** If your complaint cannot be resolved at Stage 1, you can ask for it to be considered by the Chief Executive.
- **Stage 3:** If your complaint cannot be resolved at Stage 2, you can ask for it to be considered by the Trustees.

If you have been through every stage of our complaints procedure and you are still unhappy, you have the right to take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service (see Section 9: Other contacts, page 25). The Ombudsman Service can only consider a complaint if you have exhausted our complaints procedure and if it falls within their remit.



Section 3: You and your home

This section explains in more detail the agreement you signed with us when you moved in concerning your own flat. Matters concerning the scheme as a whole are covered in Section 5: Living in our housing schemes – buildings, grounds and gardens (page 12).



Living in your flat

Your security and safety

Please remember that everyone is responsible for the security of the building:

- keep your front door locked at all times
- check the identity of callers before releasing the catch on the main front door and opening your own door
- **do not** allow a stranger to enter your flat without proof of identity; if you are in doubt, please call the warden.

We have master keys which can open your front door. Master keys are held by the office and the warden. Master keys will only be used in an emergency, or with your permission. You must not fit extra locks or chains without asking in advance and obtaining our agreement. This is because they can delay help reaching you in an emergency, or us getting into your flat in an emergency if you are away (such as a leak into flats nearby).

Your privacy will be respected. Our staff will only enter your home:

- if you invite us to do so
- if you have given permission for work to be done in your absence
- in an emergency.

Your flat keys are security coded so you cannot get extra keys cut. If you lose your keys, or you want an extra set of keys to your flat (for example for family members) we need to order them, and you will have to pay for them.

Smoking and vaping

Smoking and vaping are allowed inside your flat and on your balcony. However, we ask you to show consideration by not smoking or vaping during staff visits. We have a duty to protect our staff from passive smoking (including wardens, repairs staff and contractors). Many organisations have similar policies (for example for care staff and cleaners). Smoking and vaping are not allowed in communal areas (see Section 5: Living in our housing schemes – buildings, grounds and gardens, page 12).

Absences

If you plan to be away overnight, please tell the warden. This is in case of fire or other emergency. If you are going away for more than 28 days, please let the office know well in advance because you will need our agreement. Please note that if you are away for a long period, this could affect your entitlement to benefits.



Looking after your flat – your responsibilities

You are responsible for:

- keeping your flat clean and dealing with your own rubbish and recycling (with help if needed from family, friends or paid help; for more information on finding paid help, see also Section 6: Living in our housing schemes – the support service and your wardens, page 14)
- cleaning the inside of your windows (with help if needed from family, friends or paid help)
- some minor repairs and replacements (such as light bulbs)
- allowing us access to your flat to carry out repairs, servicing and inspections (with your agreement and by appointment, unless in an emergency situation)
- paying for damage caused by you, your family or guests (an example would be the replacement of kitchen worktops damaged by hot cooking utensils that have been taken straight out of the oven or off the hob)
- making sure that sinks, basins, lavatories and drains don't become blocked (and telling us immediately if they do).

Rubbish and recycling

Rubbish bins or chutes and recycling areas are provided. Please make sure that these areas are kept clean and tidy. You are responsible for getting rid of rubbish and recycling (with help if needed from family, friends or paid help). All refuse should be double wrapped before putting it in the bin or chute. We will let you know collection days for household waste and for recycling.

Alterations and additions inside your flat

If you want to make any alterations inside your flat, or install extras (such as cable TV or telephone landline) then you must ask our permission.

Permission will not be unreasonably refused but we have to consider the building as a whole, and future residents. In some cases we will pay for work (especially if it is to help you manage better, for example a grab rail). In other cases (for example cable TV or an installation of a bath) you will have to pay.

Insurance

The Trust insures the buildings. The contents of your home are also insured up to a certain limit, and on an 'as new' basis (with some exceptions): for details contact the office.

Please do not keep more cash in your home than you need for your day-to-day expenses. Do not ask wardens to take care of money for you as they are not allowed to do so.

Electricity meters

Credit meters are installed in each flat. You can choose your energy supplier. Credit meters should not be changed to card or pre-pay meters without first asking our permission. If you are having problems affording your electricity bills, please talk to the warden or the office (see also advice on benefits in Section 2: Your rights and responsibilities, page 4). If your electricity supply is disconnected for any reason, please tell the warden at once.



Looking after your flat – our responsibilities

We have a legal duty to keep your flat and all our housing schemes safe and in a good state of repair. We are responsible for carrying out repairs, maintenance and improvements to:

- your flat
- the outside of the building
- the communal areas
- the grounds and gardens.

In your flat, as well as everyday repairs and maintenance, we are also responsible for internal decorations and improvements (for example upgrading kitchens and shower rooms).

Repairs, maintenance, improvements

We understand that repairs are very important to residents.

We are responsive to residents' requests for repairs, as well as having a system of planned maintenance on items such as boilers, gutters, water testing and so on. We employ an in-house repairs and maintenance team and can respond quickly to genuine emergencies.

Please report all repairs and maintenance requests through the warden: **do not** ask the maintenance staff directly when they are working in your scheme.

Maintenance staff will not be allowed to go into your flat whilst you are out unless you have agreed to this. The only exception is in the case of an emergency or an urgent problem (for example a leak into the flat below).

We usually redecorate flats between occupants, and if necessary if someone has been a resident for a long time. You will be consulted in advance about arrangements for redecoration.

We may need to ask you to move to another flat on a temporary basis. We will try to give you as much advance warning as possible (usually at least three months) and practical help if you need it (for example with moving your belongings). This usually happens when we are carrying out major improvements (for example to bathrooms or kitchens). Very occasionally it could be necessary if there is a serious problem within your flat or nearby.

Reporting repairs: how soon will they be done?

Wardens usually respond to repair requests from residents by raising a job ticket. Then we assess the level of urgency of the repair and how soon it needs to be dealt with.

Repairs are classified as:

- emergency (24 hour time frame)
- urgent (7 days time frame)
- non-urgent (30 days time frame).

Residents should be aware that at busy times, such as during cold weather, non-urgent tickets may take longer (within the 30 days target time) than in quieter times (such as summer months). Please note that if the repair is complicated, although it may be dealt with in the target time, it may not always be possible to resolve it completely within that time frame (for example if we have to wait for a part to become available).

We review our repairs performance regularly and compare it with other similar social housing providers. We report on our performance to the Board of Trustees and the Resident Consultative Committee regularly, and in our Annual Report to Residents.

Section 4: Your community and your neighbourhood

Working with neighbours to improve your community

There are many social activities at our housing schemes. These may be held in the common room and in the gardens (see Section 5: Living in our housing schemes – buildings, grounds and gardens, page 12). There are also organised excursions. It is for you and your neighbours to decide what sort of activities you wish to arrange. Some schemes have a residents' social committee to do this. The warden may advise and help too (see Section 6: Living in our housing schemes – the support service and your wardens, page 14).

Living with neighbours

We hope that living in your housing scheme will be a positive experience, and part of that experience is the normal give and take of everyday life. Everyone has the right to enjoy their life in their own way providing they do not annoy or disturb others.

Although this section includes information about problems and how to resolve them, it is important not to lose sight of the benefits of living in neighbourhoods with a strong sense of identity.

Pets

We understand that pets can provide pleasure and company, but problems can sometimes arise, especially in flats. For this reason, dogs and cats are not allowed. We will normally give permission for you to keep a small caged bird inside your flat, but you must ask in advance. You will also need to tell us what arrangements you have made about caring for your pet if you are away on holiday or become ill.

Parking

Cars: There are limited car parking spaces for residents and visitors. Residents are not entitled to a specific, allocated space. Please do not park elsewhere in the entrance and grounds, or allow your visitors to do so, because they may block the

way for ambulances or fire engines in an emergency. Car parking is for residents' family or friends whilst visiting only, and not for other reasons.

Mobility scooters: Scooters cannot be stored within your flat or within the communal areas (except the designated spaces) under any circumstances.

We provide areas for charging and storage of mobility scooters but:

- you do not have the right to a scooter space
- spaces are very limited
- spaces are allocated by the Trust for residents who need a scooter at that time
- allocation of scooter spaces will be reviewed regularly.

If you wish to acquire a scooter, **you must apply in advance and in writing** to the office **before you acquire a scooter**. Scooters must be insured by residents and we will need to see your insurance documents each year.

Neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour

We have a legal duty to get involved if there are problems between residents that affect anyone being able to live quietly and securely within our housing schemes.

All our residents have the right to enjoy their home. The behaviour of others should not reduce anyone's quality of life. If there is any problem between you and other people in the scheme (including their visitors), or you are upset by someone's behaviour, please don't ignore the problem. The sooner you talk to us, the sooner we can help. We will treat your concerns confidentially and sensitively.

You are responsible for living peacefully and not causing any problems to other residents and their visitors. This also includes treating our staff with respect. You are also responsible for the behaviour



of your family, friends and other visitors. When you signed your Letter of Appointment, you agreed to this.

If you or your visitors cause problems such as noise nuisance, harassment or abusive behaviour (for example using racist or other offensive language), we will work with you to agree how to address these issues. If problems continue and you do not co-operate with us in finding a solution, we cannot let the situation continue indefinitely, and you will be at risk of losing your home.

Depending on the nature of the problem, it may also fall within our policy and procedure for keeping you and others safe (see Section 7: How we can help if your circumstances change, page 19).

Section 5: Living in our housing schemes – buildings, grounds and gardens

Facilities

The common room is provided for the use of all residents and their visitors. This can include private family events (such as a special birthday party or anniversary) but please book the room with the warden well in advance. The warden is responsible for the common room, so should be kept informed of future plans, and will give help and advice if asked.

The laundry room is available to all residents. The warden will show you how to use the machines. Use of the laundry is restricted to certain times so that you and your neighbours are not disturbed by noise. The laundry room is for residents' laundry only. It is available to residents and to people helping them (agency staff, family, friends). Outside drying areas are also provided at some sites.



Guest rooms are available for one or two relatives or friends visiting you for a short period (normally up to seven days). We would not expect children and young people under the age of 16 to stay in the guest room unaccompanied, except in exceptional circumstances and with the prior permission of the Chief Executive (or if absent, another member of the senior management): see also Section 6, page 18 on 'Keeping you and others safe'.

Each guest room has an en-suite shower, twin beds or one single bed and facilities to make drinks. Guests are asked to provide their own towels and to leave the room as they would hope to find it. If you wish to book the guest room, please let the warden know as far in advance as you can. A small charge is made. Priority is given to people caring for a sick resident, or (occasionally in exceptional circumstances) for a relief warden.

Grounds and gardens

The gardens have been laid out for the use and benefit of all residents. Major work (especially grass cutting and pruning) is the Trust's responsibility. However, there are areas where residents can do some gardening themselves if they so wish. If you would like to help with the gardens, please ask your warden.

Health and safety

We are responsible for carrying out regular health and safety checks in the communal areas (inside and out) and acting on any recommendations. Please take special care outside in winter weather (especially in case of snow and ice).

Smoking and vaping are not allowed in internal communal areas. We ask you to be considerate if you are smoking or vaping outside in the grounds, gardens and car parks. Please do not smoke or vape near to people's windows or outdoor seating areas. Please ensure you remove any cigarette butts safely.

Smoking and vaping are allowed inside your flat and on your balcony (see Section 3: You and your home, page 7).

Security of the building

Please remember that everyone is responsible for the security of the building:

- keep your front door locked at all times
- check the identity of callers before releasing the catch on the main front door and opening your own door
- **do not** allow a stranger to enter your home without proof of identity; if you are in doubt, please call the warden before letting a stranger inside.

Fire precautions

Our housing schemes comply with the appropriate fire regulations. A fire alarm is installed in each scheme and is tested regularly. There is also a notice in each flat.

Wardens also carry out regular fire drills. Please co-operate as this is in everyone's interest. The warden will show you what to do.

When you hear the fire alarm or notice obvious signs of an outbreak of fire, please follow the fire drill.

Please:

- ask the warden what to do if the alarm rings, or if you discover a fire
- dispose of smoking materials safely
- observe the No Smoking signs in the communal areas.

Please do not:

- wedge fire doors open, including the front door to your flat; they prevent fire and smoke spreading only when shut
- leave any pans (and especially chip pans) unattended
- attempt to fight any fire: fire blankets are provided in your kitchen for the warden to use in the event of a pan fire.



Section 6: Living in our housing schemes – the support service and your wardens

What the wardens do

The role of wardens has changed. Wardens often used to be described as being like a 'good neighbour'. Now our wardens are trained for a professional role:

- welcoming and involving new residents and explaining how things work
- contacting each resident every day
- providing residents with information, advice and support
- making sure that the scheme is safe (see for example page 13 on fire precautions)
- helping residents to arrange social activities
- contacting other agencies on your behalf (with your agreement) and liaising with them if your needs change (for example if a resident needs more help with housework, or personal care; when residents go into or come out of hospital)
- providing you with sensitive and flexible one-to-one support to help you to maintain an active and independent life (see page 16 Your Personalised Plan)
- managing minor disputes (see page 10 about neighbour nuisance)
- housing management duties (for example when residents move in or move out)
- checking the building
- reporting repairs and letting staff in to carry them out.

What the wardens don't do

Our housing schemes are just that: housing for people to live independently, with support. They are not care homes. Wardens cannot:

- provide a comprehensive 24 hour service: when off-duty, they are only on call for real emergencies

- act as a home carer, nurse or night sitter (for example providing personal care, such as helping a resident to wash and dress, or get ready for bed)
- administer drugs or medication of any kind (including eye or ear drops)
- do your washing, shopping, cleaning or cook your meals, or look after any pets
- dispose of your rubbish and recycling
- fetch prescriptions or shopping (except where there is no-one else available to do this in an emergency situation)
- look after valuables, accept gifts, act as 'next of kin' or witness legal documents (such as Wills).

Hours of work, out of hours cover, daily contact

At least one of our wardens is on duty between 9am and 5pm every weekday (and for a limited time at weekends) and on standby **only for emergencies** outside these times. Out of hours cover is provided by a Careline service with on-site support from one of our wardens covering all our sites. We have resident scheme wardens and non-resident relief wardens. Our non-resident relief wardens carry out the same duties as the resident wardens. There is a warden's office at each scheme.

Your scheme warden or relief warden may sometimes have to cover another scheme. They may also be away attending a meeting or training, away on holiday or off sick. This means that your scheme may be covered by a warden working from another site.

If you plan to be away (for example on holiday) you need to inform the warden. If you don't want to receive a visit or call through the call system every day, you will be asked to sign a form of disclaimer. If we feel that this could be a risk to the health and welfare of you or other residents, we may need to review your Personalised Plan (see page 16).





Emergency call system

You will be shown how to use this when you move in. When wardens are on duty, they will take emergency calls. At other times Careline provides out-of-hours cover will answer and get help to you.

Please:

- use the call system by day or night to get help for a sudden illness, accident or other emergency
- ask your warden about having a pendant or other portable device if this would be helpful: there will be a small charge and we will have to order this for you because it will have to be programmed into the emergency call system in your scheme.

Please do not:

- use the call system to make normal contact with the warden
- tie up the pull cords, because if you need help they may be out of reach.

Your Personalised Plan

Personalised Plans are completed for all residents (regardless of levels of independence or receipt of benefits) because this enables us to ensure we are offering suitable support to all residents.

Your Personalised Plan is a confidential document which you agree with your warden within two weeks of moving in. Your individual Plan helps us to help you in the way that you want. This may change over time (see also Section 7: How we can help if your circumstances change, page 19). The warden will work with you to make sure that your Personalised Plan is updated regularly and whenever there are significant changes. You can also ask for a review at any time if you feel your circumstances have changed.

Your Personalised Plan will include:

- what's important in your life: your personal details and information about family, friends, previous employment and experiences

- how your life is now: what's good, what's not so good, and what could make things better
- important things we need to know to help you (such as what you like and don't like; health, medication)
- making decisions (your preferences for the future, any involvement of family or friends, practical matters such as Wills, Powers of Attorney).

Your well-being, health and safety

Registering with a doctor

If your doctor is nearby, you will not need to change when you move in. If you do not have a doctor, or you are moving from another area, you will need to register with a local GP practice. When you move in, the warden will tell you about doctors nearby who may specialise in the care of older people. You must tell us the name of your doctor so that we know who to contact in an emergency, and if you change doctors.

Information on health conditions and medication

If you have any health condition or problem, the wardens need to know so that they can help you, especially in an emergency. As explained in the section on Confidentiality (Section 2: Your rights and responsibilities, page 4), we will keep this information confidential, unless another agency needs to know (for example the emergency services if you are taken ill and cannot give them the information yourself).

Emergencies and illness

If you are ill or in difficulties, the warden will make every effort to get in touch with relatives, friends, the doctor, ambulance or social services on your behalf. To do this, wardens need to know who your doctor is, and the names, addresses and contact details (landline, mobile phone, e-mail) of your nearest relatives or friends.

Please make sure that you (or someone on your behalf) tells the warden if you are ill. This is particularly important if you are going into hospital or returning home after a stay in hospital.

Wills, Powers of Attorney and 'living wills'

We advise you to make a Will, and this is essential if you wish to leave personal property to relatives or friends.

You may wish to consider making a Lasting Power of Attorney or an Advance Directive (popularly known as a 'living will'). These are all ways of telling people what you want to happen in the future if you are not able to communicate your wishes for a time (for example if you are unconscious after an accident or because of illness).

Wardens and other Trust staff are not allowed to witness Wills, Powers of Attorney, living wills or other legal documents.

If you have a Power of Attorney or a living will, it helps us to help you if we know about this. You can tell us when we are working with you on writing or reviewing your confidential Personalised Plan.





A solicitor is the best person to help you make a Will, Advance Directive or Power of Attorney. If family or friends cannot help, we can advise you how to find a solicitor.

Keeping you safe

Our responsibilities

We have a legal duty to ensure that vulnerable adults (including some older or disabled people) and minors (including visiting children) are not put at risk of abuse by anyone within our housing schemes. This includes the possibility of abuse by residents or visitors, other agency staff and our own staff.

We have a policy and procedures which you can ask to see, based on that produced by three local councils in Hampshire: this is a summary.

Abuse is not just physical and can take many forms (including financial, sexual and psychological abuse and neglect). Some types of anti-social behaviour

may also be abusive (see Section 4, page 10) and therefore fall within this policy.

If our staff have concerns that abuse is taking place, they cannot do nothing. They have an individual responsibility and a legal duty to consider how to ensure the safety of the person being abused, and to report it to senior staff and relevant agencies.

Your responsibilities

If you (or your family or friends) have concerns that abuse is taking place, please remember that if you (or they) do nothing, things may get much worse. We will treat any report of potential abuse seriously and sensitively. Comments will be treated confidentially but concerns may have to be shared if someone is at significant risk. Residents will be given immediate protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation.

Section 9: Other contacts (page 25) has details of sources of advice on elder abuse.

Section 7: How we can help if your circumstances change

As we get older, things can change. For example, you may want to move, or need some additional help or adaptations to your home.

Moving within our schemes

If you are interested in moving within our schemes, talk to your warden or to the office. We cannot guarantee that this will be possible but we will discuss it with you and see if we can help.

Some residents choose to move flats permanently within their scheme, or to another of our schemes. There can be many reasons for such moves:

- wanting to live on the ground floor, or first floor
- to save money
- wanting or needing a smaller or larger flat
- preferring to move to a different scheme.

We will not ask you to move to a smaller flat if you moved in to a larger flat as a couple and then you lose your partner, although we will try to help if you choose to do so.

We may need to ask you to move to another flat on a temporary basis (see Section 3: You and your home, page 7), perhaps if we are carrying out improvements.

Moving on

Your flat is your home. Even if you start to need some help in later life, we hope that you will be able to stay as long as you choose to do so. Obviously this also depends on meeting your responsibilities, for example paying our charges and behaving responsibly towards other residents and our staff (see Section 2: Your rights and responsibilities, page 4 and Section 4: Your community and your neighbourhood, page 10).

Aids and adaptations

Our flats and communal areas are designed for people in later life. If you need adaptations to your

flat (such as handrails) or things to make life easier, we will try to help. This may be by providing them ourselves, or by helping you to get them through social services or other sources.

Many of our residents stay in their flat until the end of their life, with help from family and carers if needed. The wardens (and sometimes other Trust staff) may be able to help you to arrange extra help and equipment if needed. Sometimes this can be provided through social services or other organisations but sometimes the resident has to pay. We can also help people to claim benefits (such as Attendance Allowance) that can help to pay these costs (see advice on benefits, Section 2: Your rights and responsibilities, page 4). Sometimes, help and care can be provided at reduced cost or free of charge by a charity.

In certain circumstances it isn't possible to provide sufficient help for residents to enable them to stay living in their flats, usually because it isn't safe for them to do so. In such cases, wardens and perhaps other Trust staff will discuss other options with the resident, with professionals who are helping them (often a social worker, or a family doctor) and with any close family or friends (if the resident has agreed to this). Some residents move into our care home, Russell Churcher Court (if there is a room and funding available) or to other care homes.

Moving out

If you wish to move out, you must give the Trust a minimum of four weeks written notice. During this period you will still be liable for your housing charges, even if you have already moved out.

Residents (or their personal representatives after a death) are responsible for continuing to pay the housing charges until:

- the notice period has expired
- the flat is cleared of all personal possessions
- all keys are returned.

Section 8: Our service standards

Allocations, appointments and empty properties

Performance indicator:

- Average time between licensees: target 21 days
- Void percentage: target 2.5%

Allocations and appointments

Thorngate Churcher Trust maintains its own waiting list distinct from those of Gosport Borough Council, or Hampshire County Council Adult Services.

The Trust allocates its vacant properties on the basis of **need** and the suitability of premises to a prospective applicant. In sheltered housing this is based on the state of current housing an individual is currently living in. Once need has been satisfied the Trust then allocates on the basis of flat size, for example a couple will take priority for a double flat unless the need of a single occupant is deemed greater.

Empty properties

The Trust aims to fill its properties within 21 days of their being vacated, unless major refurbishment such as a new bathroom or kitchen is needed.

Setting weekly maintenance charges including service charges

Performance indicator:

- Percentage of residents satisfied with the value for money of their maintenance contributions: target 85%
- Percentage of residents satisfied with the value for money of their service charges: target 85%

Weekly maintenance contributions including service charges

For most properties, maintenance contributions are set according to a government formula – this is known as the social rent scheme. Some remodelled





flats that have attracted social housing grant have maintenance contributions that are determined as a percentage of market value for an area; this is known as the Affordable Rent scheme.

Repairs

Performance indicator:

- Percentage of residents satisfied with the way the Trust deals with repairs and maintenance: target 89%
- Completion of emergency repairs: target time 24 hours, completion targets 100%
- Completion of urgent repairs: target time 7 days, completion target 95%
- Completion of non-urgent repairs: target time 30 days, completion target 95%

Repair

Repairs and maintenance are a key part of the Trust's commitment to residents.

The Trust is responsive to repairs requested by residents as well as maintaining a system of planned maintenance on items such as boilers, gutters, water testing and so on.

Thorngate Living's own in-house repair and maintenance team ensures that issues are handled as they arise. Repairs emergencies are responded to professionally and rapidly. The uniformed repairs team are recognised by residents and inspire confidence, reassurance and trust.

In general wardens respond to repair requests from residents by raising a job ticket. Together with the maintenance team, they make an assessment as to the level of urgency of the repair. The repair is then classed as Emergency (24 hour time frame), Urgent (7 days time frame) or Non-Urgent (30 days time frame).

The Trust management team reviews repairs performance regularly and reports on it to the Board quarterly. Residents should be aware that at busy times, such as during cold snaps, non-urgent tickets may take a longer time within the 30 days to clear than they perhaps might during the summer months.

Tackling nuisance and antisocial behaviour

Thorngate Living's relatively small self, contained sheltered schemes are set within their own grounds and tend not to suffer from anti-social behaviour issues. Any instances of issues are dealt with locally by wardens or where necessary, the housing manager. As anti-social behaviour is not an issue there is currently no reporting against performance targets for this element of the Trust's service.

Customer care

Applicants

The Trust aims to provide details of Thorngate Living to potential applicants, who cannot download documents from the website, within five working days of a telephone enquiry or a visit by an applicant to the administration office at Clare House.

Queries and complaints sent to Clare House

The Trust's management aims to respond to complaints and queries sent to Clare House within five working days. However residents should be aware that resolution of a query or complaint may take much longer than the initial response depending on the nature of the issue. There is a specific complaints procedure (see page 6) which should be followed. Should any resident be dissatisfied with the resolution of their complaint, they are entitled to bring their complaint to the attention of the Housing Ombudsman.

Resident consultation

Performance indicator:

- Number of residents who are satisfied that the Trust management listens to their views and act upon them: target 80%

Resident interaction

There are a number of ways Thorngate Churcher Trust's management team interacts with residents:

1. Residents' wardens
2. Residents Consultative Committee
3. Annual Survey
4. Residents visits to Clare House and management visits to schemes

The key way in which the management team listens to views of residents is via the Thorngate Living wardens. The wardens work in each sheltered housing scheme every day and are best placed to respond to issues and queries from residents.

The Residents' Consultative Committee meets quarterly. Each scheme has a representative on the committee and residents are encouraged to refer major issues that have not been resolved by the warden to their resident representative to be raised in the meeting. Meeting minutes are provided on the display boards within schemes.

A survey in the STAR format recommended by Housemark is now carried out periodically.

The size of Thorngate Churcher Trust's schemes means that managers are able to get around the various sites on a regular basis and that Housing and Executive staff are familiar to many residents. In addition we welcome visitors to Clare House with any queries.

Maintaining your environment

Performance indicator:

- How satisfied are you with the safety and security of your home: target 80%
- How satisfied are you with facilities at your scheme: target 80%

Your environment

This consists of a number of elements, the flat in which you live, the facilities within your individual scheme and the external areas around your scheme over which Thorngate Churcher Trust has control.



Thorngate Living aims to provide you with a safe and secure home as well as maintenance of the external environment to your flat, in other words the communal areas, gardens and car parking. This is operated through the Thorngate Living in-house professional maintenance team and internal and external contractors such as the gardeners.

Reporting on performance

Annual Report to Residents

The Trust reports on performance through its annual report to residents. This is issued to a minimum prescribed format set by the Regulator of Social Housing which is Thorngate Living's Housing Regulator.

Management reporting to the Board

The management team reports monthly to the Board of Trustees in areas of financial performance, allocations and voids. It also reports to the Board quarterly on matters relating to repairs.



Benchmarking

Thorngate Churcher Trust is a member of a benchmarking group called Housing for Older People. This is a national group for smaller housing providers that meets quarterly and to which the Trust, like other members, submits quarterly data on performance targets such as repairs and empty properties. This facilitates transparency as to how Thorngate Churcher Trust's performance compares to similar organisations and national targets. This data is published within the Annual Report to Residents.



**Homes
England**

Homes England

Homes England is the government department responsible for regulating social housing. Thorngate Churcher Trust annually submits data to Homes England with regard to housing stock and financial viability, and the Trust meets targets related to Decent Homes legislation.



Charity Commission

As a registered charity Thorngate Churcher Trust submits a performance review and annual return to the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission is entitled to visit the Trust and its premises to ensure adherence to the requirement for public benefit.



National Housing Federation

We are members of the National Housing Federation, the sector specific organisation for not-for-profit housing. Membership of the NHF enables us to access training, conferences and experts for help and advice as and when we need them.



Elderly Accommodation Counsel

The Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC) is a national charity that aims to help older people make informed choices about meeting their housing and care needs. We liaise with the EAC on best practice and information standards and have received accreditation for clarity of information.



Section 9: Other contacts

Local

Age Concern Hampshire

ageconcernhampshire.org.uk

For people over 50 in Hampshire: information and advice, including benefits by Freephone and by drop-in or appointments (nearest office Havant, or Winchester).

Age Concern Gosport

Help with benefits forms at the Gosport office.

Citizens Advice Gosport

gosportcab.org.uk

For Gosport residents: information and advice, including benefits by phone (Hampshire-wide), by drop-in at the Gosport office and via the national CAB website.

adviceguide.org.uk

Gosport Voluntary Action

gva.org.uk/individuals

For Gosport residents: a range of services for older people including domestic help and befriending.

Gosport Borough Council

www.gosport.gov.uk

For Gosport residents: information and advice about local services and the local area including libraries.

Gosport Leisure Centre

www.placesforpeopleleisure.org/centres/gosport-leisure-centre

For Gosport residents: information on local events and healthy living.

Hampshire County Council

hants.gov.uk

For Hampshire residents: information and advice about local services and the local area.

Gosport Older Persons Forum

www.gosport.gov.uk/sections/your-council/council-services/housing/older-persons-services/

For older Gosport residents: information about local events if registered by email.

Gosport Ferry

gosportferry.co.uk

For Gosport residents: Gosport to Portsmouth ferry details.

National

Action on Elder Abuse

elderabuse.org.uk

Specialist information and advice on abuse of older people by Freephone helpline and website.

Age UK

ageuk.org.uk

Information and advice, including benefits by Freephone, website calculator and detailed booklets.

FirstStop (Elderly Accommodation Counsel)

firststopcareadvice.org.uk

Specialist information and advice on housing, support and care for older people by Freephone helpline and website.

Diabetes UK

diabetes.org.uk

For people affected by diabetes: specialist information and advice for those living with the condition and their families.

Alzheimers and Dementia

alzheimers.org.uk and dementiauk.org

For people affected by dementia and Alzheimer's: national charities with specialist advice and information for those affected by Alzheimer's and Dementia.

Housing Ombudsman Service

housing-ombudsman.org.uk

For residents in social housing. Dispute and complaint resolution for residents after a provider's own procedures have failed.

Silverline

thesilverline.org.uk

Free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people. 24/7, 365.

Please note: Organisations' website addresses are provided as telephone numbers may change over time. For an up to date telephone number or postal address, please ask your warden or the administration office. All the services listed are available to older people and to family and friends who are helping them. And all the organisations have policies on confidentiality.



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