

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Complaints Policy

Making it easy to tell us when something goes wrong, and putting it right quickly, fairly and consistently.

Owner	Applies to	Status	Version	Date
Customer Resolution Manager	All employees and customers	Final	V1.4	August 2026

If something has gone wrong, tell us

We work hard to get things right. When we fall short, we want you to find it easy to tell us, and to trust us to put it right quickly, fairly and consistently. Every complaint is an opportunity to put things right for you, and to learn, adapt and improve the service we provide. Raising a complaint will never affect the service you receive from us.

If we've got something wrong, we'll listen, investigate what happened and work with you to put it right. We'll explain our decisions clearly and treat every complaint fairly and consistently.

What this policy covers

This policy applies to every Thirsty Work colleague and to anyone acting on our behalf. It covers any expression of dissatisfaction about our products, services or people, however it reaches us. Six matters are handled under their own policies or tracks:

- **Damage, loss or injury claims:** the Damage Claims Policy, the companion to this document. A case can be both a complaint and a claim; the Customer Resolution Manager owns both.
- **Water safety events:** legionella, contamination, water quality failures and boil-water notices escalate immediately to the Customer Resolution Manager and Operations under the water safety protocol (Approved Code of Practice L8), before anything else is classified.
- **Credit control:** chasing overdue payment is not a complaint; a billing dispute alleging error or unfairness is.
- **Internal HR and disciplinary matters:** the People function owns any internal process arising from a complaint about a colleague. This policy covers only the customer-facing resolution.
- **Data protection requests:** subject access and other UK GDPR requests follow the Data Protection Policy.
- **Supplier concerns:** complaints from suppliers are handled by the colleague who owns the supplier relationship, not under this policy.

What counts as a complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction where something has gone wrong, or fallen short of what you could reasonably expect, and you want it put right. The working test is:

A complaint IS	A complaint IS NOT
• An expression of dissatisfaction about our product, service or people, where you expect it put right. • A routine request that has failed repeatedly or been handled poorly; repeated contact about the same unresolved issue may be treated as a complaint. • A billing dispute alleging error or unfair treatment, or an allegation about a driver's or engineer's conduct or workmanship.	• A first-time, routine request for something we normally provide. • A decision to cancel, reduce or not renew, unless dissatisfaction is the cause; the complaint is then split out and handled under this policy. • A request for a goodwill gesture where nothing has gone wrong.

Online reviews are a channel, not a category. The Customer Resolution Manager owns the public response on Trustpilot, Google and social media, and the loop back to private resolution: we respond to the post, invite you to share your contact details, and make contact within 24 hours of receiving them. The underlying issue is classified and handled under this policy.

How to reach us

You can complain in whichever way is easiest for you, including in person to any member of our team, your delivery driver or engineer. It helps to have your account name or number, what happened and when, and what you would like us to do to put it right.

- **Phone:** 01392 877172, Monday to Friday, 8:00am–5:00pm (except bank holidays)
- **Email:** hello@thirstywork.com
- **Online:** <https://www.thirstywork.com/contact>
- **Post:** Customer Resolution Manager, Thirsty Work Ltd, Apple House, Apple Lane, Exeter, EX2 7HA

Whoever receives your complaint logs it in our case management system at first touch or passes it to our Customer Service team the same day. No complaint goes unrecorded, and no complaint is closed until it has been properly addressed.

Who will handle your complaint

Tier	Owner	What sits here
Tier 1	Front-line Customer Service	First-time, straightforward complaints caused by a single department. Resolved and logged at the front line, with the root cause identified.
Tier 2	Customer Resolution Manager	Escalated or complex cases: repeat failures, cross-functional failures, product or batch quality issues, personnel conduct, and any complaint linked to a claim.
Tier 3	Customer Resolution Manager with Director / Legal	Director-addressed complaints, litigation risk and cases of regulatory or reputational significance. The Customer Resolution Manager leads; Directors and Legal are engaged.

From Tier 2 you have one named owner, the Customer Resolution Manager, who holds your case to conclusion: establishing the facts, agreeing the remedy, tracking delivery and confirming closure with you.

What we will do, and when

Stage	Commitment
First contact	We aim to resolve straightforward issues on the spot, wherever possible, and normally within 24 hours.
Acknowledgement	We will acknowledge your complaint as soon as possible, and normally within 1 working day, with a unique case reference and a named contact who owns your case.
Full response	We aim to give you our full response within 7 working days of your complaint being logged: what happened, what we are doing to put it right, the remedy offered and what has changed to prevent recurrence.
Complex cases	Where investigation genuinely needs longer, we tell you before day 7, explain why and give you a revised date, never later than 20 working days, with an update at least every 5 working days.
Water safety	If your complaint involves the safety or quality of your water, we act immediately under our water safety protocol. This track is never queued.

Reclassifying a case never resets the clock: when a service request becomes a complaint, the history travels with it.

How we put things right

Where we have got it wrong, we will say so and fix it. Remedies match the impact of the failure and are applied consistently, so outcomes are fair between customers and sustainable for the business. Redress may include an apology and explanation, correction of the error, repair, replacement or redelivery, re-performance of the service, a goodwill gesture, or a credit note or refund. You always retain your statutory rights; nothing in this policy affects them.

Fair to the customer, fair to the business

We consider each complaint based on its individual circumstances and the evidence available. We aim to provide fair and consistent outcomes for all customers. We uphold complaints readily where we have failed, and we say no

clearly, respectfully and with reasons where we have not. Any goodwill gesture is a considered decision, made by the same standards for every customer.

If you are still unhappy

If you remain unhappy following our full response, you can ask us to escalate your complaint for further review. Where appropriate, this will be reviewed at Tier 3, and we will provide our final position in writing. Thirsty Work is not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, so complaints carry no right of referral to the Financial Ombudsman Service. Beyond our final position, we signpost the following routes:

- **The Water Dispenser & Hydration Association (WHA):** Thirsty Work is an accredited WHA member and complies with its code of conduct. You can raise an unresolved complaint about our service or water quality with the WHA at twha.co.uk.
- **Independent mediation:** where both sides agree it would help, we are open to independent mediation.
- **Certified ADR (domestic customers):** if your account is held in your personal name, you are a consumer under the ADR Regulations 2015. Our final position letter will give you the name and website of a certified ADR provider and confirm whether we are willing to take part.
- **Specific regulators:** data protection concerns go to the Information Commissioner's Office (ico.org.uk); water quality or safety concerns go to your local authority environmental health team.

A fair process, both ways

We will treat you with respect throughout, take your complaint seriously and never hide behind small print. Our colleagues apologise for the experience without pre-judging fault, own your case rather than passing you around, and keep every commitment they make. In return, we ask that our people are treated with the same courtesy. Persistence is legitimate; aggression is not. Threats, harassment or abusive language towards colleagues are never accepted, and in serious cases we may restrict contact to a single written channel. We are always happy to explain a decision, and if we have said no, we will always tell you why.

How we learn from complaints

Every case is recorded in the case management system and tagged by type, source and root cause. The Customer Resolution Manager reports monthly on volumes, themes, resolution times and upheld rates, and issues a closure report on every Tier 2 and Tier 3 case to the Leadership and Continuous Improvement team, so root causes feed service design, depot practice and supplier accountability. This policy is reviewed annually against actual case data, under the ownership of the Customer Resolution Manager with authorisation by the Head of Finance. Comments and suggestions on this policy are welcome at any time, addressed to the Customer Resolution Manager.

The standards we work to

This policy is built to meet the standards that apply to Thirsty Work as a UK supplier of goods and services:

- **Sale of Goods Act 1979 and Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982 (business customers) and Consumer Rights Act 2015 (domestic consumers):** goods must be of satisfactory quality, fit for purpose and as described; services must be performed with reasonable care and skill. Statutory remedies sit alongside this policy and are never contracted away.
- **Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 (unfair commercial practices):** our complaint handling and communications must never be misleading or aggressive.
- **ADR Regulations 2015:** these apply to disputes with consumers. Most of our customers are businesses, but where an account is held in a personal name the customer is a consumer, and our final position letter will give the name and website of a certified ADR provider and state whether we are willing to use it. Participation in ADR remains voluntary for Thirsty Work.
- **UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018:** complaint records are personal data – recorded accurately, access-controlled, retained to schedule and reported anonymously.
- **Health, safety and water hygiene:** the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Approved Code of Practice L8 (control of legionella) underpin the water safety track.

Consumer credit: position statement

Thirsty Work does not lend, broker finance or enter regulated consumer credit or consumer hire agreements. The Consumer Credit Act 1974, FCA complaint handling rules and the Financial Ombudsman Service therefore do not apply to our complaints.