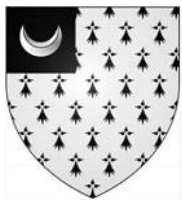


Shepton Mallet United Charities

www.alm1627.org.uk

SMUC/ILPoI/102/10.24

Independent Living Policy



Shepton Mallet United Charities

www.almshouse1627.org.uk

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1. Introduction

The Trustees of Shepton Mallet United Charities (the charity) provide almshouse accommodation to those who meet the charity's criteria, are able to live independently and with dignity in such a way that they are not a danger to themselves or others, and are able to take personal responsibility for their own physical and mental wellbeing.

This policy will set out:

- what the Trustees consider to be independent living;
- the charity's duty of care to its residents;
- adaptations that can be made to facilitate independent living;
- and any action that might be taken when it is considered that a resident is no longer able to live independently.

2. Independent Living

The charity expects residents to be capable of independent living and to take responsibility for their own physical and mental well-being. Residents are expected to be able to perform the following functions, either independently or with the assistance of a care worker:

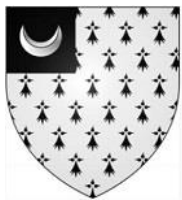
- feed themselves properly;
- take care of their personal hygiene (for example, be able to keep clean, use the toilet, shower, conduct appropriate toothcare, and dress);
- keep the almshouse clean and safe; and
- use various external services (for example, shops, GP practice, pharmacy, banking facilities and utility matters online or via telephone).

Residents are also expected to be able to act safely at all times in the almshouse, especially when a care worker is not present.

While the charity has a duty of care to all its residents, it is not responsible for a resident's health and well-being, and will not take on responsibility for providing any of the services or personal care features, or for dispensing medicines, changing dressings, or for performing any other form of medical assistance. The charity's duty of care extends to providing a weekday visit by the Warden, providing a safe and secure property, and summoning emergency services where necessary.

Via the Warden and Trustees, the charity will monitor all residents regularly so that it is aware of any potential issues with respect to the functions outlined above. The Warden's role is to:

- visit each resident once per week day (unless requested not to by the resident) and to inform the Trustees of those residents who wish not to be visited;
- keep an eye on the health of individual residents;
- recognise signs of need and suggest the resident contacts the doctor or seeks appropriate help as necessary;
- deal with personal emergencies from residents by answering emergency calls and, where appropriate, contact medical help and/or the resident's Personal Support Contact (a person who agrees to their responsibilities for the resident's well-being and who might be a next of kin or other family member, nominated friend, or Council appointee).



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3. Almshouse Adaptations

The charity recognises that where residents have physical limitations or are experiencing increased frailty it may be possible, where practical and legally permissible, to make minor adaptations to their almshouse to facilitate their ability to live independently: for example, installing hand rails, minor bathroom revisions, charging points for mobility scooters, stair lifts, and ramps.

Residents or their Personal Support Contact must seek the permission of the Charity for adaptations to be made.

4. Health and Well-Being (Care Needs)

Residents may be able to arrange personal and medical care packages via their GP, Social Services, or Personal Support Contact. They must inform the charity if they are receiving a care package (for example, via Social Services) which enables them to continue to live independently. Trustees may require residents to arrange a social care package as a condition of being able to continue to live in the almshouse.

Where trustees have concerns about a resident's health or well-being then the charity will contact the resident's Personal Support Contact, who should contact their GP and Social Services to arrange a Care Needs Assessment.

If the charity is concerned that a resident may be suffering with dementia, or may lack the mental capacity to make rational decisions, then it will discuss the situation with the resident, Personal Support Contact and/or the resident's GP.

5. Resident Appointment Conditions

On appointment, Trustees will explain to prospective residents and their Personal Support Contact what the criteria for independent living are, and the consequences for the resident when they are no longer able to meet those criteria. A resident will be appointed only on acceptance of these terms both by the resident and Personal Support Contact. The criteria for independent living are included in the Independent Living section of this policy.

As a condition of appointment, residents will be required to give permission for the charity to approach their GP, Social Services and Personal Support Contact should the Trustees ever have any concerns about their health and well-being, mental capacity, or ability to live independently. Trustees will confirm the name of the resident's GP and Personal Support Contact annually.

On appointment, residents will be strongly recommended to arrange for a Lasting Power of Attorney, the two forms being Property and Financial Affairs, and Health and Welfare, both of which may be arranged online or by instructing a solicitor.

6. Setting Aside a Resident's Appointment

If increased frailty or ill health makes it impossible for a resident to continue to live independently, or where Trustees are concerned that a resident has become a danger to themselves or others, then after full consultation with the resident, Personal Support Contact, and medical and Social Services practitioners, Trustees may feel it necessary to request the resident to move to more appropriate accommodation where care is provided.

If agreement is not reached, the advice of the GP, Social Services and, if appropriate, mental health services will be required to enable trustees to reach a judgement about whether the resident should be allowed to remain in the property, or their appointment set aside. In such instances, it will be the responsibility of the Personal Support Contact (with possible input from Social Services) to find appropriate alternative accommodation for the resident within an agreed timescale.



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While the charity requires every resident to have a nominated Personal Support Contact, in the very exceptional case where there is no Personal Support Contact and the Council has not agreed to nominate one, it is likely that a multi-disciplinary meeting organised through the Local Authority will be arranged at which the Charity will make it clear that it is not responsible for the resident's care, and that it cannot permit the resident to continue to live in the almshouse if they are not able to live independently.

The judgment as to whether the resident is able to live independently will be made by Trustees taking into account all medical and Social Services advice and evidence available, the context of the almshouse configuration, and their duty of care to other residents.

Trustees consider that setting aside a resident's appointment will be a last resort when efforts to remedy the situation have failed. In such instances, the Charity will consult the Almshouse Association and will, if considered necessary, appoint a solicitor who not only specialises in Charity Law, but also has knowledge and experience of almshouse charities, to ensure a correct and fair procedure is followed.

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Trustee Board.

7. Privacy statement

The information that you give to us will not be used for any purpose other than for helping the Trustees to consider your application, to manage your residency and to handle any of your issues. For more information about how SMUC handles your data, please ask to see our 'data protection policy', which gives full information about your rights under General Data Protection Regulations or GDPR. It is available on the SMUC website or you can request a paper copy.

8. Contact details

Clerk to Trustees :

Mrs Gill Baker

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Fir Tree House, Coxley, Wells, BA5 1QZ

Member with Responsibility for Independent Living

Chair of Trustees, Mr P G H Davies

Mr Paul Davies

pghd Davies@yahoo.co.uk Bowermead House, Whitstone Hill,
Pilton, BA4 4DT

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Trustee Board

Last updated September 2024