

## **Amersham United Charities - Complaints Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

This Complaints policy has been written for Amersham United Charities to ensure that the Board correctly deals with any complaint received by the Charity, and to comply with the Charity's Governance Code.

### **2. Introduction**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the complaints process is flexible and responsive to the needs of individual complaints. The policy seeks to ensure that:

- residents, or others, who have a complaint are listened to and treated with courtesy and empathy
- residents will never be disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint
- complaints are investigated promptly, thoroughly, honestly and openly
- apologies are given as appropriate
- complaints handling will comply with confidentiality and data protection policies

### **3. Who can Complain**

Complaints may be made by residents, their carers and families or a representative of a resident.

The Charity will not be able to deal with an issue through the complaints process if:

- a complaint relates to a legal matter that is already being dealt with by a solicitor
- the complainant is anonymous, unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to substantiate the complaint.

### **4. Procedure**

Residents should be encouraged to raise minor complaints informally in the first instance, preferably verbally, as this can lead to better understanding and very often to a quick resolution of the issue.

If the complaint cannot be resolved quickly or if the complaint is more serious, it should be made in writing. A written complaint should include sufficient detail to enable the Charity to investigate.

Complaints should be made to the Clerk in the first instance, who will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within 10 working days. This acknowledgement will indicate the next course of action and the anticipated timescale. A Housing Trustee will seek to resolve the complaint as a matter of urgency. To maintain impartiality, the Chair and other trustees must not be included in correspondence concerning the complaint, other than informing them that a complaint has been made.

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, they have 10 working days to submit a written appeal, and the appeal will be dealt with by the Chair who will convene a special meeting within 10 working days of the appeal being submitted.

The Chair will respond in writing to the complainant within 10 working days advising of the action taken to resolve the complaint.

A written note of any meetings with the complainant or any other person involved will be recorded.

If the Clerk or Chair is not available to deal with complaints within these timescales, a nominated trustee will undertake the role.

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the response, then the complainant may raise the complaint through the Housing Ombudsman Service. This is an independent service.

## **5. Unreasonable Behaviour**

- If a complaint is pursued unreasonably or where a complainant's actions or behaviours are deemed to be unreasonable, the Charity reserves the right to close the complaint. A complainant who displays threatening or abusive behaviour or language (whether verbal or written), that causes trustees or the Clerk to feel threatened or abused, and/or continues to contact the Charity with unreasonable demands during or following a complaint investigation, the resident concerned may have their appointment set aside.
- In cases where the Board consider a complainant is being unreasonable and overly persistent and decide to bring the complaint to an end, they will inform the complainant of their reasons.

## **6. Review:**

The Board will review the contents of, and compliance with, this Complaints Policy on an annual basis.

## **7. Approval:**

This Complaints Policy has been approved by the Board of Amersham United Charities.

4 January 2019