

Amersham United Charities

Independent Living Policy

1. Introduction

The Trustees acknowledge that those accommodated in Drake's and Miss Day's almshouses should be able to live independently. The Trustees also recognise that circumstances sometimes arise, as a result of illness, infirmity or frailty, that make it inadvisable for residents to continue living in an almshouse.

Amersham United Charities (the Charity) does not provide personal care facilities for residents and this policy sets out the actions that will be taken when Trustees identify that a resident is no longer able to live independently in an almshouse.

2. Independent living

a. When appointing a new resident, the criteria include a requirement for the individual to be capable of living independently in the allocated almshouse. The key principle of independent living in an almshouse is that a resident must have sufficient ability and mobility to be able to carry out basic tasks for themselves and escape from the property to a place of safety in the event of an emergency, such as a fire.

The concept of independent living in an almshouse also includes the ability of a resident to live in alone in a property in a way that does not pose a risk to the resident themselves or to others.

Residents are also expected to be able to participate and enjoy living in the almshouse community. Although the almshouses are communities of residents, residents are not expected to act as carers for other residents. Where help or support is required by a resident on an ongoing basis, residents must make the necessary arrangements for themselves or use external providers or their next of kin.

b. The Trustees acknowledge that a resident may require care workers to provide personal support up to three times a day, funded by the local authority or arranged privately, although a resident must still be able to carry out basic tasks after a visit from a carer for their own wellbeing and safety.

c. In the case of residents experiencing increased mental or physical frailty, where practical (and legally permissible) Trustees will endeavour to authorise adaptations to their almshouse to make life easier provided that it remains safe for the resident to live independently. However, Trustees will inform residents that permission must be sought before any adaptations are made to the property.

d. If it is necessary for a care package* to be put in place by a resident, Trustees will ask the resident to inform the charity and provide details of the arrangements, to include contact information of the service provider.

** A care package refers to support services designed to meet the needs of an individual, typically after a care needs assessment, and may be funded privately or by the NHS or Social Services.*

e. If increased mental or physical frailty or ill health makes it impossible for a resident to continue to live independently then, after full consultation by Trustees with the resident, their relatives, (if applicable), medical practitioners and social services (as necessary), the Trustees will request that the resident moves to more appropriate accommodation where care is provided. In cases where residents do not have a next of kin, it is likely that a multi-disciplinary meeting organised through the local authority will need to be arranged.

f. The Charity owns and manages two sets of almshouses, seven terraced, two storey properties known as Miss Day's almshouses and four single level properties known as Drake's almshouses which are both located on the High Street in Old Amersham. Depending on a resident's personal circumstances with regard to their ability and mobility, the Trustees may request that a resident moves to a different almshouse for their own wellbeing and safety. Such a decision would be made by Trustees following full consultation with the resident, their relatives (if applicable), medical practitioners and social services (as necessary).

3. Recommendations for Residents

There are certain arrangements that the Trustees strongly recommend residents to make, that include:

- a. Nominating a next of kin or close friend whom the Trustees may contact in case of need.
- b. Arranging for a Lasting Power of Attorney for both 'Property & Financial Affairs' and 'Health & Welfare' which may be arranged online or by instructing a solicitor. Contact details of the person or people who have Power of Attorney should be provided to the Charity in order that the Trustees know who to contact in case of need.
- c. Advising the Charity of the name and address of their GP and provide the Trustees with a Letter of Authority enabling them to make contact with him or her in case of need.
- d. Informing the Trustees of the location of papers relating to their financial affairs.

These recommendations are also referenced in Letters of Appointment. The Clerk of the Charity will also contact each resident on an annual basis to ensure that the information is up to date, in line with GDPR requirements.

4. Setting Aside an Appointment

The Trustees may decide that it is necessary to set aside a resident's appointment on the grounds that a move to an alternative, more suitable form of accommodation is necessary for their safety and wellbeing. Trustees cannot permit residents to continue to occupy almshouse accommodation if they are not able to live independently. Setting aside a resident's appointment will be regarded by Trustees as the last resort when all other efforts to remedy the situation are not viable.

Policy to be reviewed September 2027