

Terms of occupancy

Letter of Appointment

Your Letter of Appointment, that you signed when you moved in, sets out the terms of your occupancy and your obligations.

Almshouses charities do not issue a tenancy agreement and the equivalent is a Letter of Appointment.

In law, a resident of an almshouse charity is known as a 'beneficiary' and not a tenant and therefore does not have a legal interest in the accommodation or security of tenure but occupies it with the permission of trustees under a licence.

This means that in exceptional circumstances the trustees can ask you to find alternative accommodation and leave.

Examples of such circumstances are:

- if you do not comply with the terms set out in your Letter of Appointment or elsewhere
- if you are no longer qualified to live in an almshouse. It is possible that your circumstances could change to make you no longer eligible. For example, if your financial position has improved significantly
- if you are no longer able to look after yourself, even with the help of your family, carers and Social Services. In such circumstances, we may ask Social Services to assess your needs and the appropriateness of you living in an almshouse.

The trustees will only set aside your appointment as a last resort after every effort has been made to help you to stay. They will give you as much time and help as possible to find alternative accommodation.

Transfer

We will consider request for transfer to another flat on medical or mobility grounds only.

We may ask you to transfer to another flat if:

- there is a need to refurbish your flat
- major building works necessitate that you transfer to another flat.

Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC)

Weekly maintenance contributions are payable in advance, and you may pay them by monthly standing order which we normally ask to be set up on the 8th of each month. If you receive Housing Benefit from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, you can choose for your Housing Benefit to be paid directly into the Trust's bank account. The amount of the WMC may be increased annually upon one month's notice.

WMC is a contribution towards the cost of running The Sheppard Trust. Items covered by the WMC include:

- building repairs and maintenance
- servicing and repair of water, gas and electrical installations, including fire precaution arrangements, lifts, TV aerial system
- upkeep of the garden

- cleaning of communal areas
- the community alarm service
- heating & lighting of communal areas
- external window cleaning
- building insurance
- laundry facilities
- staff time in administering these.

Housing benefit

If your income consists of the basic retirement pension and you have little or no savings you may be entitled to housing benefit to help with your housing costs, including council tax. You still may be entitled to housing benefit if you have an occupational pension in addition to the state pension. The WMC inclusive of the service charge is eligible for housing benefit.

Other benefits

There may be some other benefits that you are entitled to for example pension credit and attendance allowance, pension credit is means-tested, and attendance allowance is based on your health and the help that you need to live at home without support services.

The Resident Support Co-ordinator will be able to help you access other benefits if you are eligible.

Central heating and hot water

In addition to the weekly maintenance contributions you pay a monthly charge for heating and hot water. The heating and hot water charge is not eligible for housing benefit and you will need to make a separate payment to cover this.

Each flat at 14 Lansdowne Walk has its own thermostat, which allows residents to regulate the central heating. All residents in both properties can also control heating temperatures by means of the valves fitted to each radiator.

All hot water taps are fitted with thermostatic mixing valves to ensure that scalding water is not an issue.