

# If Things Go Wrong

## **Personal Problems**

If you have any personal problems over money or any other matter and you have no family or friend whom you feel able to consult, the Manager will be pleased to help or offer advice if possible. Your concerns will be treated in confidence.

## **Emergencies and Sickness**

- a) If you have a disability or become disabled while living in your property, it may be possible to obtain equipment or to make alterations to your home to help you live an independent lifestyle; ask the Manager about this.
- b) You must not make any structural alterations to your home (e.g. fitting ramps or stair lifts) without the Directors' permission.
- c) The Directors are unable to offer storage facilities for electric mobility scooters. If you feel you might need an electric mobility scooter, please see the Manager who can refer your request to the Directors.

## **Abuse**

- a) The Directors believe that all residents, visitors, contractors and staff have the right to be free from abuse.
- b) The Directors and staff will work to prevent abuse and, where preventative measures fail, to deal sensitively and effectively with incidents of abuse, which they will do with respect for the dignity, privacy, independence and individuality of the people concerned.
- c) The Manager, Chief Executive Officer and Directors are responsible for implementing policies and procedures if they suspect that abuse is taking place within the James Charities.
- d) Residents are asked to report any suspected incidents of abuse to the Manager.

## **Anti-Social Behaviour**

The Directors of the Charity will not tolerate anti-social behaviour that affects the quality of life of a resident or the management of the Charity for the benefit of all its residents:

- a) Residents are encouraged to report to the Directors any behaviour considered by them to be anti-social by any person. The Directors will investigate such reports (in confidence when this is appropriate). See the Communication section of the Residents' Handbook for how this should be approached.
- b) Should mediation be appropriate, the Directors may involve an external agency which specialises in such matters to resolve the problem.
- c) If anti-social behaviour is caused by another Resident in contravention of the letter of appointment, the Charity will follow its internal procedures.
- d) After a due process of verbal and written warnings, the Resident's appointment to the Almshouse may be set aside.
- e) In case of anti-social behaviour by visitors or neighbours, the Directors may seek an Anti-Social Behaviour Order on behalf of residents or staff.
- f) The Directors recognise that drunkenness can fuel anti-social behaviour. Alcohol is not an excuse. If you think you may have a drinking problem, please speak to the manager in confidence. The manager can refer you for specialist help to reduce your consumption of alcohol.

## **Concerns and Complaints**

- a) If you have any concerns, please bring them to the attention of the Manager who will do their best to resolve them.

- b) In most cases, minor issues can be dealt with informally, quickly and efficiently by the Manager to the Resident's satisfaction.
- c) Issues that cannot be resolved by the Manager will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer at the first available opportunity.
- d) Management can only resolve problems and improve the service if you let us know at the time when things go wrong.

This is the procedure if you wish to raise a complaint in connection with the occupation of your almshouse or about services provided by the Charity. All complaints should be made in a timely manner. Complaints may not be considered if the matter happened more than 12 months ago or if legal proceedings have started.

- a) Minor matters, such as small maintenance items, should be referred to the Manager.
- b) If the Manager is unable to resolve the matter, or if there is a persistent problem with pets, loud noise or matters affecting health and safety, it will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer.
- c) All communications about complaints will be treated in confidence.
- d) If you are dissatisfied with the response from the Chief Executive Officer, you should write formally to the Chair of Directors (via the Chief Executive Officer) asking the Directors to consider the matter. Please include the full details of your complaint. The Manager can help you write your letter, if you need it.
- e) The Directors may arrange for a meeting of the Complaints Panel. You will be invited to attend this meeting when your complaint is being discussed, accompanied by a friend or adviser.
- f) The Chair will write to you to advise you of the Directors' decision and to inform you of any action taken to resolve your complaint.
- g) If you have a complaint about a member of staff employed by the Charity, you should in the first instance put your complaint in writing to the Chair of Directors (via the Chief Executive Officer), with a formal request for it to be considered by the Directors at their next meeting.
- h) You will, if you wish to exercise that right, be entitled to attend when your complaint is being discussed, accompanied by a friend, advocate or professional adviser.

### **Housing Ombudsman**

If you remain dissatisfied with the Directors' decision regarding your complaint, you have the right to take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service whose address is:

Housing Ombudsman Service

81 Aldwych

London WC2B 4HN

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

You will need to give the Ombudsman your full name, address and telephone number and set out the details of your complaint. The Ombudsman will only be able to consider your complaint if satisfied that the Charity's own procedure for handling complaints has been exhausted.

### **Notes**

1. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Charity, its staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.
2. A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction, the Charity must give them the choice to make a

complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative will be handled in line with the Charity's complaints policy as set out above.

3. Service requests are not complaints. A service request is a request from a resident to the Charity requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.
4. A complaint is raised when a resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to a service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. We will not stop our efforts to address the service request if a resident complains.
5. An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not a complaint.
6. This policy forms part of the Residents' Handbook, provided to all residents.

### **2024 Record**

During 2024 we received no complaints from residents that match the Ombudsman's definition. In this year, we recorded 1,255 substantive interactions with residents. We responded to 171 service requests. The average time between a request and a repair was two-and-a-half working days.