

## **GUIDANCE FOR ALMSHOUSE APPLICANTS**

The following information is a guide to the application process for applicants for almshouse accommodation.

1. On receipt of the completed application form, we will firstly check that the applicant(s) meets the criteria for accommodation. To be accepted on to the waiting list applicants must either:

### **For Harpur House, Cardington Road, Bedford**

- Have been born in Bedford *or*
- Be normally resident in Bedford (on the electoral roll etc.) *or*
- Have been resident in Bedford for a period of not less than 30 years at some stage

### **For Randalls Close, Bromham**

- Have been born in, or normally resident within Bedford or North Bedfordshire including Marston Moretaine *or*
- Previously been employed within the Agricultural Trade *or*
- Previously been employed within the Construction Trade *or*
- Previously been employed by Randalls Industries or within the distribution trade

In addition, applicants will normally only be considered if they are of retirement age or consider themselves to be disabled as defined within the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

Applicants to both schemes can only be considered if they are planning to move within two years of the date of application.

Applicants not meeting the above criteria may be considered in exceptional circumstances.

2. Having checked that the applicant(s) meets the above criteria, we will write to you informing you that we are placing your name(s) on our waiting list, we will also arrange a home assessment. We will endeavour to write to you within 28 days of receipt of your application form.

3. The Scheme Manager will visit you at your home to assess your needs, this will be an informal visit, and will be an additional opportunity for you to ask any questions that you may have regarding the almshouses. The visit will also enable us to assess your level of priority on our waiting list.
4. In the event of an appropriate property becoming vacant, the applicant assessed as being in greatest need will be offered the property. Should they decline, the next applicant on the waiting list will be offered the property, this will continue until an applicant accepts the property.
5. Periodically we will send you an 'update' form to enable you to confirm your continued interest and desire to remain on our waiting list. This will give you an opportunity to inform us of any changes in your circumstances. However should your circumstances or needs change at any time, please let us know as soon as possible.
6. If you are not satisfied with the way in which we deal with your application, you are entitled to complain. In the unlikely event that you should need to complain, you should in the first instance contact the Scheme Manager, explaining the circumstances of your complaint. The Scheme Manager will investigate your complaint and respond in writing within 28 days.
7. In the event that you continue to be dissatisfied with the way in which your complaint has been managed you should write explaining the circumstances to:

Chief Executive  
The Bedford Charity (The Harpur Trust)  
Princeton Court  
Pilgrim Centre  
Brickhill Drive  
Bedford  
MK41 7PZ

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

***Q. I am having difficulty in completing the application form, where can I get help?***

A. If you are experiencing difficulty in completing the form, please feel free to contact the Almshouse Manager who will be pleased to help. (Tel: 01234 369500)

***Q. We are applying as a couple, must we both meet the criteria for applicants?***

A. No, as long as one of you meet the qualifying criteria we can accept your application, however, you must both be either of retirement age or disabled (or both), for us to be able to offer you accommodation.

***Q. We are interested in the almshouses, but would not wish to move now, can we still apply now?***

A. Yes, you can apply now. As we prioritise our waiting list on the basis of needs, if you are not in need of accommodation now, you will not be considered a priority. However should your needs change in the future it is important that you inform us.

***Q. How do you decide who is in the greatest need?***

A. We assess needs by considering the information that you give us on the application form as well as during the home visit. We use a 'points' system, which will be explained during the home visit.

***Q. What happens during the home visit?***

A. The home visit is very informal, an opportunity for you to ask questions as well as for us to assess your needs. The almshouse manager will also advise you of other options that you may have in seeking appropriate accommodation, and provide you with

information about other organisations that may be able to help you whilst you are waiting to move. Advice will also be available regarding financial assistance that may be available.

***Q. I live with my son / daughter, can they move into the almshouses too?***

A. Unfortunately, the accommodation is not appropriate for people under retirement age, however, if your son / daughter is above retirement age, we can consider a joint application.

***Q. I have heard that people who own a property will not be considered for almshouse accommodation, is this true?***

A. No, this is not true! We accept applications from home owners as well as people who do not own a property. However, if your property is of high value, (or if you have a high level of capital / savings), you may not be assessed as being in priority need. This is because you would be able to purchase appropriate retirement accommodation. We may be able to advise you further about this during the home visit, and this may not apply if you are applying for 'extra care' accommodation as this is not currently available to purchase in the North Bedfordshire area.

***Q. I need help with personal care, will I be considered too frail for almshouse accommodation?***

A. Just as you are able to receive care in your own accommodation, care can be provided within the almshouses. Almshouse staff are unable to provide personal care, but may be able to assist you in requesting this help from other organisations.

***Q. What would happen if my circumstances change after I make an application and I become in need of a greater level of care?***

A. It is important that you inform us of any major change of circumstances, as this may affect your level of priority. In the unlikely event that your care needs are so great that we are unable to consider you for almshouse accommodation, we may be able to

nominate you to one of our partnership schemes able to offer a high level of care; Dame Alice Court or Sir William Harpur House.