



Complaints

Dunton's Almshouse Complaints Policy

The aim of the 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 who complain 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

Complaints may be made by residents, their carers and families or a representative of a resident. The Dunton's Almshouses 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.
- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over six months ago, unless relating to safeguarding or health and safety issues
- The matter has already been considered under the complaints policy

If a complaint is not accepted a detailed explanation will be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Housing Ombudsman Service at Exchange Tower, Harbour Exchange Square, Isle of Dogs, London E14 9GE or at info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may instruct the landlord to take on the complaint.

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 solved 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 *Official Visitor* 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. The charity will seek to resolve the complaint within 20 working days. This is stage 1 of the complaints process. If it will take longer than this then it should be clearly explained to the resident with a clear timeframe for when to expect a response. This should not exceed a further 10 days.



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 of Trustees* who will convene a special meeting within 10 working days of the appeal being submitted.

The *Chair of Trustees* will respond in writing to the complainant within 10 working days advising of the action taken to resolve the complaint. This is stage 2 of the complaints process.

The decision of the trustees will be final.

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

This policy has been approved for issue by the board of trustees of Dunton's Almshouses charity

Signature:.....

Name:.....

Date:.....