



SHREWSBURY DRAPERS HOLY CROSS LTD

REGISTERED CHARITY 1132671 | REGISTERED COMPANY 07000798

ALMSHOUSE RESIDENT'S HANDBOOK

SITES COVERED:

DRAPERS PLACE • FAIRFORD PLACE • HOSPITAL OF THE HOLY CROSS • HOSPITAL OF ST GILES

2026

Document control

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This handbook supersedes all previous site-specific resident handbooks issued by Shrewsbury Drapers Holy Cross Ltd. It is structured as a generic main handbook (which applies to every resident at every site) followed by appendices that describe the features, facilities and procedures specific to each individual almshouse site.

Where there is any conflict between the generic main handbook and a site appendix, the site appendix takes precedence for residents of that site.

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Foreword

Welcome to your almshouse, and to this handbook.

Shrewsbury Drapers Holy Cross Ltd has been providing almshouse accommodation in Shrewsbury since 1444. This handbook is one of the ways in which we live up to that long tradition: by giving you clear, accessible information about your home, the services we provide, your responsibilities, and your rights.

The handbook is divided into two parts. The main handbook covers everything that is common to all of our almshouses. The appendix for your site then sets out the things that are specific to where you live, the layout of the building, fire procedures, parking arrangements, communal facilities and so on. Please read both.

This handbook supplements (but does not replace) the Letter of Appointment which you signed when you accepted your appointment as a beneficiary. If anything in this handbook appears to conflict with your Letter of Appointment or with the charity's governing scheme, those formal documents take precedence.

The handbook has been prepared with reference to the Almshouse Association's Standards of Almshouse Management (SAM) and to the regulatory expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman. We update it periodically. If you spot anything that is unclear, out of date or could be improved, please tell us, we want to hear from you.

We hope you will be very happy in your home with us.

The Trustees Shrewsbury Drapers Holy Cross Ltd

Useful contacts

Please update the office immediately if any of your own contact details change, including your nominated next of kin and emergency contacts.

Shrewsbury Drapers Holy Cross Ltd.

Office: main number	01743 353503 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm, excluding bank holidays)
Office: out of hours	01743 874543 (evenings, weekends, bank holidays – emergencies only)
Main office address	Drapers Place, Horsefair, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6BP
Property and Compliance Manager (PCM)	David Wood – david@shrewsburydrapers.org.uk
Finance and Administration Officer	Jo Wood – jo@shrewsburydrapers.org.uk
Committee Chair	Care of the office address above
Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)	Company Secretary – coysec@shrewsburydrapers.org.uk
Website	www.shrewsburydrapers.org.uk

Please telephone the office in the first instance for non-urgent matters during office hours. The out-of-hours number is for genuine emergencies that cannot wait until the next working day, such as a flood, an electrical failure affecting your safety, a fire incident or an immediate safeguarding concern.

Emergency services and public services

Police, Fire, Ambulance (emergency)	999
Police (non-emergency)	101
NHS (non-emergency medical advice)	111
Shropshire Council	0345 678 9000 – www.shropshire.gov.uk
Shropshire Council (customer email)	customer.service@shropshire.gov.uk
Citizens Advice (Shrewsbury)	0344 499 1100 – Fletcher House, 15 College Hill, Shrewsbury, SY1 1LY
Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin	01743 233123

Adult Safeguarding (Shropshire)	0345 678 9028 (or 999 if there is an immediate risk)
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247 (24 hours, free, confidential)
Samaritans	116 123 (24 hours, free)

Regulators and external bodies

Housing Ombudsman Service	0300 111 3000 – www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
	Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET
Charity Commission for England and Wales	0300 066 9197 – www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission
Regulator of Social Housing	0300 124 5225 – www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing
The Almshouse Association	01344 452922 – www.almshouses.org

Your address and emergency contacts

Please provide the office with the address the names and telephone numbers of two people we should contact in an emergency. It is essential that you update the office if these next of kin details change over time.

Section 1: Introduction

Shrewsbury Drapers Holy Cross Ltd would like to extend a very warm welcome to you as a resident of our almshouses. We hope that you will settle in quickly and be very happy here. Inevitably there may be some teething problems, and the Trustees and staff will work with you to resolve them.

This handbook sets out useful information about the charity and its general administration and management. It also explains your responsibilities as a resident. Please do not hesitate to speak to the office if you need further information on any matter.

It may be necessary to amend the rules and regulations from time to time. Any material changes will be discussed with residents in advance, and you will be given the opportunity to express any views or concerns. Suggestions for improvements are very welcome and will all be considered carefully.

Your home is yours to enjoy. As far as reasonably practicable, we will aim to support residents in maintaining their independence and freedom to choose their own lifestyle, while benefiting from the quiet enjoyment and dignity that the almshouses provide. We ask that everyone in the community respects the wishes and privacy of others, and helps to ensure that rumour and gossip are not allowed to develop.

The Trustees have tried to keep these rules and regulations to a minimum. They are designed for the benefit of all residents and to ensure the safe and efficient management of the charity.

A note on terminology

Throughout this handbook, "the office" means the Property and Compliance Manager (PCM), the Finance and Administration Officer and any other staff member acting on behalf of the charity. Where the appendix for your site uses a more specific word for your home (ie. flat, apartment, house or bungalow) that more specific word applies in addition to the general term "your home".

Section 2: About the charity

2.1 History

By the late thirteenth century in Shrewsbury, the drapers (or cloth-traders), like other trades, had achieved independent guild status. As an organised body they sprang into prominence with the foundation of almshouses in 1444 and their incorporation by Royal Charter in 1462. By the mid-sixteenth century the Drapers were of major economic importance, and for the next 150 years they were dominant, socially and politically, in Shrewsbury. Because of its role providing almshouses, the Shrewsbury Drapers Company survived the Reformation. Its Guildhall, rebuilt in 1576, still stands in St Mary's Place. The almshouses there were demolished in 1964 and replaced by a block of then-new apartments at Fairford Place.

The Shrewsbury Drapers Company Charity (SDCC) is a linked Charitable Trust (Registered Number 1132671-1), administered by a corporate trustee, Shrewsbury Drapers Holy Cross Ltd (Registered Number 1132671). The charity was registered from 31 December 2015 and was formed from the amalgamation of the Hospital of the Holy Cross (1132671-1), the Hospital of St Giles (233903) and the Shrewsbury Drapers Company General Charities (2133372 – Fairford Place). Drapers Place was added in 2016.

In summary: Shrewsbury Drapers Company Charity owns the land and buildings as permanent endowments, and Shrewsbury Drapers Holy Cross Ltd administers the properties as corporate trustee.

Across all sites, we currently provide accommodation in approximately 60 properties at our four Shrewsbury sites, plus one further property in Newport, Shropshire. The exact number at each site is set out in the relevant appendix.

More information about the history and modern-day activities of the Shrewsbury Drapers Company and its guild hall is available at www.shrewsburydrapers.org.uk.

2.2 Trustee body and governance

Shrewsbury Drapers Holy Cross Ltd is a charitable trust, run in accordance with the scheme authorised by the Charity Commission. The scheme was sealed on 12 November 2009.

All directors / Trustees of Shrewsbury Drapers Holy Cross Ltd are members ("Freemen") of the Shrewsbury Drapers Company Guild. The Guild currently has up to 100 Freemen (men and women).

There is a Committee which carries out the day-to-day Trustee duties of the charity in respect of the almshouses. All members of the Committee are also Freemen of the Shrewsbury Drapers Company and are unpaid volunteers.

The names of current Trustees, the Committee Chair, and the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) are available from the office on request.

2.3 What is an almshouse?

Almshouses are unfurnished homes, usually designed with the needs of older people in mind. The aim is to provide a convenient and comfortable home in a setting which enables residents to live independently and to come and go as they please. Almshouses provide security, and residents are encouraged to make friends and to share a wider social life through the use of communal facilities (where they exist).

Our almshouses do not have a resident warden. Day-to-day operational matters are dealt with by the Property and Compliance Manager (PCM) and the Finance and Administration Officer, both based at the office at Drapers Place.

Your status as a resident

Almshouse residents are not tenants. You occupy your home as a beneficiary of the charity, under a Letter of Appointment. This means that you do not have the security of tenure that a tenancy would offer, but in practice the Trustees' approach is that your almshouse is your home for life or until you are no longer able to look after yourself even with help. Section 4.1 explains this in more detail.

Residents should feel confident in the knowledge that support is available, whether from the charity itself or from outside agencies, should the need arise. Above all, the charity respects residents' privacy.

2.4 Our team

Day-to-day management of the almshouses is carried out by a small employed staff team supported by volunteer Trustees:

- The Property and Compliance Manager (PCM) has lead responsibility for the running of the almshouses, including resident liaison, repairs and maintenance, lettings, health and safety and compliance.
- The Finance and Administration Officer is responsible for finance, Weekly Maintenance Contributions, accounts and general administration.
- Drapers are volunteers, some of whom are Trustees. Many Drapers maintain regular friendly contact with residents and act as a point of contact for those who would prefer an alternative to speaking with staff.

Staff are not trained carers and cannot offer personal care. The charity is not regulated by the Care Quality Commission and does not purport to offer care services in any capacity. Residents are required to be able to live independently. Staff can, however, signpost you to a wide range of local health and social services to help you receive the support you need to remain safe and independent in your home.

Section 3: Health and safety

3.1 Our health and safety policy

The Trustees are committed to ensuring a safe living and working environment for everyone who has lawful access to our buildings and land. Our Health and Safety Policy is available on our website at www.shrewsburydrapers.org.uk/policies, and a hard copy is available from the office on request.

Although the responsibility for health and safety rests with the Trustees and our staff, every resident has a part to play. Please report anything that you think is unsafe, a loose handrail, a broken light, a slippery path, a fault in your home, as soon as possible so that we can put it right.

3.2 Emergency contact details

It is essential that we have up-to-date next-of-kin and emergency contact details for every resident, so that we can make contact in the event of an emergency. Please provide the office with these details if you have not already done so, and please update us promptly whenever they change.

With your permission, we will also keep a brief note of any chronic health condition that emergency services or relatives might need to know about. Anything you tell us will be kept in confidence in accordance with our Data Protection Policy (Section 9).

3.3 Fire precautions

Your home complies with the appropriate fire regulations. Fire policies are reviewed regularly. The fire alarm system is tested on a regular basis, and fire drills are arranged periodically (where applicable to the building) to ensure residents can take appropriate action competently in the unlikely event of a fire.

The fire procedure for each site is different (some sites operate a “simultaneous evacuation” policy and others a “stay put” policy). The procedure that applies to your home is set out in the appendix for your site. Please make sure you are familiar with it. The Property and Compliance Manager (PCM) will go through it with you when you move in.

If you are hard of hearing, mobility-impaired, or have any other condition that may affect your ability to evacuate or follow fire instructions

Please tell the office. We will arrange a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) with you, in line with our duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

3.4 Avoiding the risk of fire

Please be conscious of the risk of fire. For example, regularly check at night and before going out that appliances are switched off (other than those which are designed to be left on continuously, such as fridges and freezers). Do not leave stoves, hobs or other cooking unattended.

Smoking is not permitted in any almshouse, in any communal area or in any internal common part of any building. If necessary, you may smoke outside the building but within the grounds. Please be considerate to others and avoid smoking in their presence; the risks of passive smoking are well recognised. The same applies to vaping where this could trigger smoke detectors.

Candles, incense, oil burners and similar open-flame devices should be used with great care if at all. They are a common cause of accidental fires.

3.5 Portable heating appliances

Portable gas appliances of any kind – heaters, lamps, gas rings – are not permitted. The use of paraffin and other liquid fuels is prohibited.

The Trustees strongly discourage the use of free-standing electric heaters. Each home is fitted with a heating system designed to keep it adequately warm, and you should be able to control the temperature in your home using that system. If you feel your home is not adequately warm, please contact the office before resorting to a portable heater.

3.6 Slips, trips and falls

Please take particular care when using paths and external steps in wet, snowy or icy weather. We take reasonable precautions to keep paths hazard-free, but you should use handrails wherever they are provided. Please report any path, step or handrail that you think is unsafe.

3.7 Damp, mould and condensation

Damp and mould can affect your health. Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025 (commonly known as “Awaab’s Law”) do not legally apply to almshouses such as ours (we hold properties under a Licence to Occupy, not a tenancy, as confirmed by the Almshouse Association). However, we do treat cases of damp and mould seriously.

If you notice damp or mould anywhere in your home, even small areas, please report it to the office immediately.

The presence of damp or mould is never assumed to be your fault. We will investigate and remedy the cause if necessary.

You can help to reduce the risk of condensation (which is the most common cause of mould in homes) by ventilating your home daily, especially when cooking, showering or drying clothes. Please do not turn off any mechanical ventilation system which may be fitted to your home. If you cannot afford to heat your home properly, please tell us, cold homes are also more prone to mould, and there may be help available.

3.8 Asbestos

Some of our older buildings may contain materials with asbestos in them. Asbestos that is in good condition, undisturbed and properly managed is not a risk to health.

You must not drill, cut, sand or otherwise disturb any wall, ceiling, floor, pipe, tank, panel or other structural surface in your home without first contacting the office. If you are unsure, ask. This is for your safety and that of your neighbours.

3.9 Legionella

Legionella bacteria can build up in hot and cold-water systems. Breathing in these bacteria can cause serious lung infections such as Legionnaires’ disease. The water system in your home should be safe for normal use without you needing to worry about this. There are, however, situations where the risk can be increased.

If you do not use your shower regularly, run it for at least a few minutes on its hottest setting (turning your face away to avoid breathing in the spray) before you next use it. Keep your shower head clean and free from limescale. If you have been away from home for more than a couple of weeks, run all hot and cold taps and the shower for several minutes before using them. These simple steps prevent the build-up of bacteria and remove the risk.

3.10 Gas safety (where applicable)

Where your home is supplied with mains gas, the charity carries out an annual gas safety inspection by a Gas Safe registered engineer. You will be given reasonable notice of the appointment. Please do not refuse access for this inspection, it is a legal requirement and is for your safety.

If you ever smell gas, suspect a gas leak, or your carbon monoxide alarm sounds, leave the property immediately, do not switch any electrical appliance on or off, and call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999 (free, 24 hours). Then contact the office.

3.11 Electrical safety

The charity carries out periodic electrical condition inspections of the fixed wiring in your home (typically every five years, or sooner if required). You will be given notice. Please do not refuse access; this is for your safety.

Any portable electrical appliance you bring into your home is your responsibility. Please use only good-quality, undamaged appliances; do not overload sockets; and replace any cable that is frayed or damaged.

3.12 Carbon monoxide

Where required by law, a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm is fitted in your home. Please do not remove or disable it. Test it monthly using the test button. If the alarm sounds, leave the property immediately, ventilate the area if possible, and call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.

3.13 Security

Personal security is largely a matter of common sense. Please do the following:

- Keep your front door locked at all times, even when you are at home.
- Use the spy hole and door chain (if fitted) to identify a caller before opening the door fully.
- Ask for proof of identity from anyone claiming to be from a utility company, the council, a contractor or any official body. Genuine callers will not mind. If in doubt, contact the office.
- Be aware of bogus officials, doorstep salespeople and rogue traders. Never agree to any work or hand over any money or details on the doorstep.

And please do not:

- Allow people into the building who say they are visiting someone else.
- Allow a stranger to enter without proof of identity. If in doubt, call the office or a friend.
- Leave ground floor windows wide open if your home is on the ground floor and unattended.
- Leave keys in the inside of the front door – this can prevent emergency access.
- Use the door chain as a permanent fixture – it can prevent emergency access too.

Site-specific security arrangements (entry-phones, automatic doors, fobs, lock systems) are described in the appendix for your site.

3.14 Keys and access

You will be provided with the necessary key(s) and / or fob(s) to access the building (where applicable) and your home.

The charity holds duplicate keys for use in emergencies only. We will not enter your home without your permission except (a) in a genuine emergency, (b) to carry out work you have agreed to in your absence, or (c) for routine pre-arranged checks (for example fire-alarm or gas safety checks).

You must not fit additional locks or chains without the Trustees' written consent, as these may delay access for emergency services.

Please do not have extra keys cut without the office's agreement, as this can compromise security. Please tell the office immediately if you lose any key or fob; you may be asked to pay the cost of replacements.

You are required to nominate one or two friends or relatives living locally who are prepared to help you in certain circumstances, and to give their names and contact details to the office. With your written consent, a duplicate key may be given to one of your nominees so that they can help in an emergency.

Please make sure that you and your visitors check that any external door, gate or block-entry door is securely shut behind you on entry and exit.

Section 4: Terms of occupancy

4.1 Letter of Appointment

Your Letter of Appointment, of which you have a copy, explains that you occupy your almshouse as a beneficiary of the charity. This means that you are not a tenant with the security of tenure that a tenancy offers, and in exceptional circumstances the Trustees could ask you to find alternative accommodation and leave. In practice, this happens very rarely, and only when the Trustees believe that they have no alternative.

Examples of such circumstances include:

- A resident is no longer able to look after themselves safely or to live independently, even with the help of social services or family support.
- A resident repeatedly fails to pay their Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC) in full without good reason.
- A resident's behaviour is unreasonable and anti-social, towards other residents, neighbours, contractors or staff.
- A resident's circumstances change significantly, to the extent that they no longer qualify to live in the almshouses as a beneficiary.
- A resident breaches a material term of the Letter of Appointment.

It is a condition of occupancy that residents provide the charity with accurate and complete information about their financial circumstances, and that residents inform the charity if those circumstances change. However, you should be assured that only rarely would this lead to anyone being asked to leave.

The charity would only set aside an appointment as a last resort, after every effort had been made to resolve the issues. If, having been asked to leave, you felt aggrieved, you have the right to have your case heard in the County Court. If the decision to set aside the appointment were upheld, you would be given every assistance to find alternative accommodation.

Be assured

The Trustees' approach is that, in principle, your almshouse is your home for life, unless you reach a point where you are no longer able to look after yourself, even with assistance.

4.2 Weekly Maintenance Contribution and Service Charge

The Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC) and Service Charge is your contribution towards the cost of running the charity and providing your home. It is payable monthly in advance, on the first of each month, by standing order. If you receive Housing Benefit (or the housing element of Universal Credit) and would prefer it to be paid directly into the charity's bank account, this can be arranged – please ask the office.

Items typically covered by the WMC and Service Charge include:

- Building maintenance, repair costs and reactive repairs.
- Cyclical and planned maintenance, including external decoration and major component replacement.
- Management costs, including staff salaries and office overheads.
- Provision and servicing of installed appliances (cooker, fridge/freezer, washing machine where provided).
- Provision and upkeep of communal areas (where the site has them).

- Water, light and heating to communal areas.
- Upkeep of gardens, drives and paths.
- Security equipment (door entry systems, external lighting, etc.).
- Buildings insurance and (where the charity arranges it) communal contents insurance.

The WMC and Service Charge is reviewed annually. You will be given written notice of any change at least one calendar month before it takes effect. When the WMC and Service Charge has been reviewed, please remember to update your standing order in good time.

If you are having difficulty paying your WMC and Service Charge, please tell us as soon as possible. We will treat the matter sensitively and confidentially and will help you to access advice and any benefits you may be entitled to. The Trustees have the right to start the process of setting aside an appointment in the event of persistent non-payment without good reason, but our first response will always be to try to help.

4.3 Household bills

You are responsible for paying the utility bills (electricity, gas where applicable, water, internet and telephone) and council tax relating to your home. Meters will be read prior to occupation. You may choose whichever energy supplier you prefer; however, please give the office your supplier's details so that we can contact them in an emergency (for example a leak or power failure).

4.4 Consulting and listening to residents

Listening to residents is essential to running the charity well. The Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard (April 2024) sets out the expectations on registered providers in this regard, and we welcome them. We consult and listen to residents in a number of ways:

- Drapers / staff will visit you in your new home soon after you settle in, to get to know you and to address any immediate concerns.
- Coffee mornings and informal meetings are held at some sites – see the appendix for your site for details. All residents are welcome at any site's gathering.
- Routine welfare and property visits are arranged periodically, with the aim of visiting each resident at least once a year, resources permitting.
- A resident perception (satisfaction) survey is carried out periodically. Your honest answers are valued; we use them to understand how well we are doing and where we need to improve.
- You can contact the office at any time by phone, email, in writing or in person at the office at Drapers Place. If you would prefer a home visit, this can almost always be arranged.

In addition, the Trustees will tell you in advance:

- Before any planned work is done on your home (except in an emergency).
- Before making changes to communal facilities, including the gardens.
- Before making any change to the amount of WMC payable.
- Before anyone enters your home (except in an emergency).
- In response to any difficulty you raise with us.

4.5 Absence from home

If you go away for any period, please let the office know how long you expect to be away and how we can contact you in case of an emergency. If you return earlier than planned, please tell the office immediately when you get home, as it is important in an emergency to know whether anyone is away.

You are expected to be in full-time occupation of your home. Extended periods away might lead the Trustees to conclude that you have less need for almshouse accommodation than others. As a guide, we would not normally expect a resident to be absent for more than 28 consecutive days, or more than a total of 8 weeks in any one year. If your circumstances mean you may exceed these limits, please discuss it with the office in advance; in some cases prolonged absence may also affect insurance cover.

Before going away please ensure that perishable food has been put away, taps are turned off, all non-essential appliances are switched off, and windows are closed. Refrigerators and freezers should be left running unless empty. If you are leaving your home during the winter months, please discuss with the office how much heating is required to minimise the risk of burst pipes.

4.6 Improvements and alterations to your home

You must not carry out any improvement, alteration, structural repair or significant decoration to your home without first discussing your plans with the office and receiving written approval. Routine internal redecoration in standard finishes does not require approval, but you should still let us know. Any approved work must be carried out by reputable, suitably-qualified tradespeople with the relevant insurances and certifications.

Because the Trustees are responsible for the long-term maintenance of the almshouses, the Committee will not approve an alteration that is structurally unsound, would reduce amenities for subsequent occupants, would increase future maintenance costs, or would be detrimental to the structure of the home. We recognise that you will wish to decorate to your own taste, but anything other than standard finishes must be capable of being easily restored to a neutral state for any future resident.

Residents are responsible for the cost of any improvement they undertake and for the continued upkeep of any newly-installed appliances, fittings or decoration. Where the charity has agreed to an alteration, it reserves the right to require the home to be returned to its original condition (or for the cost of doing so to be recharged to the resident or their estate) when the appointment ends.

Aids and adaptations recommended by occupational therapy (OT) services (such as grab rails, raised toilet seats, lever taps) will normally be agreed quickly. Please tell us if you have an OT assessment scheduled, so that we can liaise. We may also propose a direct transfer to a more suitable property if available.

4.7 Employment / business use

Neither your home nor its garden may be used as a place of business, either as a base from which to conduct business or as storage for items connected with running a business. Occasional small-scale activity (for example, a hobby that occasionally generates a small income) will not normally be a problem, but please discuss it with the office if in doubt.

4.8 Visitors – family and friends

Almshouse residents are appointed as individuals (or, in some cases, as a couple). Only people named in your Letter of Appointment may live at the property. The Trustees recognise, however, that residents may sometimes need or want a friend or relative to stay for a few nights. The Trustees may give permission for a short stay in exceptional circumstances; please contact the office if you wish to have a visitor stay overnight.

All visitors are the responsibility of the resident they are visiting. They must not cause any nuisance to other residents or to the neighbourhood. We expect visitors to behave with the same consideration we expect of residents themselves, including in respect of smoking, noise and parking.

4.9 Children

Almshouses are not generally a suitable environment for children to live in or to spend long periods at. Some of the facilities may pose hazards for children, and the Trustees are unable to take responsibility for safeguarding them from other adults who may be present. Children, however innocently, may also disturb other residents.

Children visiting the almshouses must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult and must not be left alone under any circumstances. Further guidance on our safeguarding policy can be obtained from the office.

4.10 Pets

Pets should not be kept without the written consent of the Trustees. Small pets which are kept in a cage may be allowed; dogs and cats are not permitted. Assistance dogs (registered with Assistance Dogs UK or equivalent, accompanying a resident with a disability) are permitted in line with the Equality Act 2010 – please notify the office in advance.

4.11 Moving out

If you wish to vacate your home, please give the Trustees written notice of at least 4 weeks. During this notice period you will remain liable for your WMC and utility bills, even if you have already moved out. Residents (or, in the event of death, their personal representatives) are responsible for the WMC until the property has been cleared of personal possessions and the keys have been returned to the office.

We will arrange a leaving inspection with you (or your representative) at a mutually convenient time. The home is expected to be left clean and in good order, with any agreed improvements either retained, removed or restored as previously agreed.

Please remove all personal possessions and clear the home when you (or your personal representatives) leave. If any possessions are left behind, the Letter of Appointment provides that we will take reasonable care of them for up to three months. After that period, we may dispose of them and recover any outstanding costs (including unpaid WMC, removal and disposal costs) from the proceeds. The detailed terms are set out in the Letter of Appointment.

4.12 Direct transfer / re-housing

If you wish to move from one almshouse to another within the charity, please contact the office to discuss it. While every effort would be made to assist a move where there was a good reason, the decision would depend on availability and is at the discretion of the Trustees. You would normally be responsible for any costs involved in moving.

The Trustees may also require you to move temporarily or permanently to another of the charity's almshouses if major repair work is being carried out at your current home, or for some other unforeseen reason. Your views would be taken into account, and you would normally be given at least three months' notice. However, in the case of urgent repairs, fire, flood or another emergency, swifter action may be required.

4.13 Gifts and legacies

It is the Trustees' policy that no person involved in the running of the charity (Trustee, volunteer or staff member) may accept any personal gift or legacy from a resident. We mention this so that you understand that if a member of staff politely declines a gift, they are not being unfriendly – they are following our policy.

If you would like to donate something to the charity itself, please contact the office. All such matters will be handled in confidence.

4.14 End of life and bereavement

We recognise that some of our residents will become unwell or pass away while living with us. We will endeavour to support you and your family at every stage, including by liaising sensitively with relatives and personal representatives, and by giving reasonable time to clear the home after a death. Please consider speaking to us in advance about any particular wishes or concerns; we will treat the conversation with respect and confidentiality.

Section 5: Services provided

5.1 The staff team and how we work with you

As described in Section 2.4, the day-to-day running of the almshouses is undertaken by the Property and Compliance Manager (PCM) and the Finance and Administration Officer, supported by Trustees and other Drapers. We support the general wellbeing of residents without interfering in your life or intruding on your privacy. Almshouses work best when residents try to help each other as much as they reasonably can.

Staff have instructions to respect your privacy. We may, however, contact you periodically for a welfare check or property visit. Should you not wish to have such regular contact, please tell the office in writing.

Please remember that staff are not on duty 24 hours a day. Where possible, please make contact during normal office hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm). Under employment law there are limits on the hours staff can work or be on call, and health and safety regulations limit some of the activities they can undertake (for example heavy lifting). Please respect this. Out-of-office-hours contact details are for genuine emergencies.

Staff will only enter your home (a) when you invite them to do so, (b) for work you have agreed to be done in your absence, (c) in a genuine emergency, or (d) for pre-arranged routine checks such as fire-alarm or gas safety inspections.

5.2 Heating and hot water

You will be shown how to operate the heating and hot water system in your home when you move in. The type of system varies between sites, see the appendix for your site for details. Some homes have a mechanical ventilation system (Silavent); do not switch this off, as it is essential to control condensation.

If your heating fails, particularly in cold weather, please contact the office immediately. A complete loss of heating in cold weather is treated as an emergency hazard.

5.3 Furniture and fittings

Almshouses are offered unfurnished. The charity is responsible for any built-in or supplied appliances such as (in some instances) the cooker, fridge/freezer and (again, in some cases) washing machine and tumble dryer. These appliances belong to the charity, and servicing and maintenance is the charity's responsibility. Please look after them and keep them clean. Please tell the office if anything goes wrong.

Curtains, carpets and soft furnishings (not supplied by the charity), together with the rest of the contents of your home, are your responsibility.

5.4 Repairs and maintenance

How to report a repair: please telephone the office on 01743 353503 during office hours, or email the office. For genuine emergencies outside office hours, please use the out-of-hours number on the contacts page.

Our full Repairs and Maintenance Policy sets out the detailed approach. A copy is available on our website at www.shrewsburydrapers.org.uk/policies and a hard copy can be requested from the office. In summary, our target response times are:

- Emergency repairs (those that pose an imminent risk to safety, health or security): made safe within 24 hours. Where the property cannot be made safe in that time, the charity will offer suitable alternative accommodation at SDHC's expense.

- Urgent repairs (significantly affecting habitability, safety or comfort, without immediate risk to life): attendance within 2 working days; completion within 5 working days.
- Routine repairs: completed within 28 calendar days.

If we cannot complete repairs within these timescales – for example because we need to source a particular part or specialist contractor – we will tell you why and keep you informed of progress. If your home becomes uninhabitable as a result of an emergency, we will help you to find suitable alternative accommodation, at SDHC's expense and for so long as is reasonably necessary, in line with our Repairs and Maintenance Policy. Although the Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025 (Awaab's Law) do not legally apply to almshouses such as ours (we hold properties under a Licence to Occupy, not a tenancy), SDHC treats such hazards seriously.

If you are dissatisfied with how a repair is being handled, you can make a complaint at any time – see Section 8.

5.5 Gardens and grounds

The gardens are provided for the enjoyment of all residents and are maintained to a high standard by the charity's gardeners in line with the overall planting scheme.

In some cases, it may be possible for residents to have a small area for personal gardening. This will depend on the specific circumstances at each site. Residents are kindly asked not to plant in the communal gardens without prior permission.

If you are interested in getting involved in communal gardening, please contact the office for further information. Any concerns, feedback, or suggestions regarding the gardens should also be directed to the office.

5.6 Insurance

The charity insures the buildings and the contents of communal areas. You are responsible for arranging your own contents insurance to cover your possessions, including furniture, carpets, curtains and personal effects. (At one of our sites, contents insurance has historically been arranged on behalf of residents, see the appendix for your site if applicable.)

If your home is rendered uninhabitable by flood or another event for which buildings insurance does not cover disruption costs, SDHC will provide reasonable practical support throughout the period of disruption. This may include helping you find suitable temporary accommodation (working with social services, your family, and any applicable insurance), keeping you informed of progress, and supporting your return as soon as the property is safe. This is consistent with the commitment SDHC makes to all its residents in the Repairs and Maintenance Policy and reflects best practice expectations published by the Housing Ombudsman in February 2026. You should still bear in mind, when arranging your own contents cover, that immediate financial outlays for items like clothing, food away from home, or pet care during disruption are likely to fall to you, and many contents policies include cover for these.

Please do not keep more cash in your home than you need for day-to-day expenses; put the rest in a bank or building society. Please do not ask staff to take care of money for you, they are not permitted to do so.

5.7 Television and radio

Each home has a TV aerial socket. For Sky, Virgin Media or other paid services you will need to take out your own subscription and arrange installation, please discuss with the office in advance, particularly if external dishes or cabling would be involved.

Please be considerate to your neighbours when using televisions, radios, music systems and musical instruments.

You need a TV licence to watch or record live broadcasts on any device, and to use BBC iPlayer (including catch-up). Free TV licences for over-75s are now only available to those receiving Pension Credit; everyone else needs to pay for their own licence (with concessions for blind / partially-sighted people, who can apply for a 50% concessionary licence). Please ask the office or visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk if you would like help with this.

Where the charity offers a concessionary group TV licence to residents, the office will explain how this works, and eligibility criteria, and how to apply.

5.8 Cleaning

You are responsible for keeping the inside of your home clean. If this becomes difficult for you, please tell the office; support from third parties (such as adult social services) might be available.

You are responsible for cleaning the inside of your windows. The charity employs a window cleaner to clean the outside of windows on a regular schedule (and the inside of any communal-area windows). Cleaning of communal areas is arranged by the charity, with the cost forming part of the WMC.

5.9 Moving in

When you take up your appointment, the Property and Compliance Manager (PCM) will go through with you:

- Action to take in the event of fire, flood or other emergency at your site.
- Operation of all equipment in your home, including heating, hot water, ventilation and the door entry system (where applicable).
- The location of your electricity main switch, fuse board, water stop-tap and meters.
- Your fire / evacuation procedure (see appendix for your site).
- Security arrangements, use of fobs and keys.
- Use of the lift or stairlift (where applicable).
- How to report a repair, raise a concern or make a complaint.

You will also be given a copy of this handbook and asked to sign an acknowledgement that you have received it. Signing the acknowledgement does not change your rights as a beneficiary; it simply records that we have given you the information you need.

5.10 Refuse collection and recycling

Refuse and recycling collection arrangements vary slightly between sites. The day(s) of collection and the location of bin stores or collection points for your site are set out in the appendix for your site. Please use the correct bin and follow Shropshire Council's recycling guidance, which is updated from time to time at www.shropshire.gov.uk.

5.11 Telephones and internet

There is a telephone socket in each home, but you are responsible for arranging your own telephone and broadband service. The UK's landline network is being modernised; if your existing landline is moved to a digital ("VoIP") service by your provider, please tell the office, particularly if you use a personal alarm pendant or other equipment that depends on the phone line.

Section 6: General information

6.1 Doctor and dentist

If you do not have a General Practitioner (GP), the office will be able to suggest practices in the local area. Please give the name of your GP's surgery to the office.

You have every right to see your doctor, nurse or other care professional in confidence and to keep your medical affairs entirely to yourself if you wish. However, if you have a chronic health problem, it would be advisable – and you might feel safer – for the office to be made aware of it, so that appropriate action can be taken in an emergency. Anything you tell us will be kept in confidence in line with our Privacy Statement (Section 9).

6.1.1 Message in a Bottle

“Message in a Bottle” is a free Lions Clubs initiative that encourages people to keep their basic personal and medical information in a small plastic container in the fridge, where emergency services know to look. Two small stickers (one on the inside of the front door, one on the fridge) tell emergency responders that you use the system. You can request a kit directly from the Lions Clubs of the British Isles by visiting www.lionsclubs.co/Public/message-in-a-bottle/, or from your local Lions Club. The office is happy to give general information but does not stock the kits.

6.1.2 The Herbert Protocol

If you or a loved one is living with dementia or another condition that could lead you to go missing, the Herbert Protocol is a national scheme run by police forces. It involves completing a form in advance with photo, descriptive details and useful information, which can be handed to the police if you ever go missing. The form is available from West Mercia Police at www.westmercia.police.uk or by contacting your local police on 101. Residents are expected to complete and hold their own form; the office can provide general information about the scheme on request.

6.2 Council tax and council tax support

You are responsible for paying your own council tax and will receive an annual bill from the local authority each March. People living alone are entitled to a single-person discount of 25%. People with certain disabilities, or living with someone who is severely mentally impaired, may also be entitled to discounts.

If your income is modest, you may be entitled to Council Tax Support which can pay your council tax in whole or in part. Please contact Citizens Advice or the office if you are unsure of your entitlement or need help completing a claim form.

6.3 Housing Benefit and the housing element of Universal Credit

If your income is modest and you have little or no capital, you may be entitled to Housing Benefit (or the housing element of Universal Credit) to help with the WMC. Even if you have additional income beyond the basic state pension, you may still be entitled to some help.

To claim, you should contact your local Benefits Office (Department for Work and Pensions). Please tell your benefits office promptly if your financial circumstances change. They can demand reimbursement of any overpayment.

Eligibility for state benefits changes from time to time. The office can provide initial guidance, but for a full benefits check we recommend Citizens Advice, Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin, or your local Pension Wise / Money Helper service.

6.4 Wills

You are strongly advised to make a Will and to keep it up to date. A solicitor can help you with this. If you need a recommendation, Citizens Advice can suggest names. Some local solicitors take part in Will Aid (during November) and Free Wills Month (during October and March), where Wills can be drawn up in exchange for a charitable donation.

As stated under “Gifts and legacies” above, Trustees, volunteers and staff cannot accept personal gifts or legacies from residents. If you would like to leave a gift to the charity itself, please contact the office – we will treat the matter in confidence.

6.5 Lasting Power of Attorney

We strongly recommend that all residents consider setting up a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA). An LPA allows you to appoint someone you trust to make decisions on your behalf if you ever lose mental capacity. There are two types: one for property and financial affairs, and one for health and welfare. You can register either, or both, while you still have capacity. You should seek legal advice from a solicitor or use the official guidance at www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney. Citizens Advice can also help.

6.6 Local organisations and services

Many residents take advantage of the rich variety of organisations and services for older people in the Shrewsbury area. Please ask the office to find out more about local services, clubs, day centres, lunch clubs and transport schemes that might interest you.

6.7 Social activities

A welcome sense of community can result from residents taking part in social activities together. Friendships grow and there is a greater readiness to support one another through difficult times. Some residents enjoy doing things together; others prefer to pursue their own interests. There is no pressure to take part in any organised activity. Details of regular social activities (such as coffee mornings) at each site are in the relevant appendix – and all residents are welcome at any of our sites' gatherings.

6.8 Social media

Residents who use social media (such as Facebook or X / Twitter) are asked to respect the fact that views about the charity, its Trustees, other residents or staff should not be expressed publicly via social media. If you have a concern, please raise it with us through the appropriate channel (see Section 8). This is to protect the dignity, privacy and reputation of everyone in our community.

Section 7: Equality, safeguarding and anti-social behaviour

7.1 Equality, diversity and inclusion

The Trustees are committed to developing a way of working that respects different ideas, cultures, abilities and needs. Subject only to the restrictions in our governing scheme, we do not discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 – namely age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We aim to make our services accessible to people from all parts of the community, and we value the contribution each individual can make – whether as a resident, a member of staff or a volunteer. We will not tolerate unfair discrimination or harassment of any kind and will work actively to eliminate it where it occurs.

We review our policies, procedures and practices regularly to make sure they reflect this commitment.

7.1.1 Reasonable adjustments

We will make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled residents (and other residents who would otherwise be disadvantaged) to access our services on equal terms. This applies to (among other things) repairs reporting, communications, fire procedures and the complaints process. Please tell the office about any adjustments you need.

7.2 Safeguarding adults at risk

The Trustees, staff and volunteers believe that all residents have the right to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. Trustees, staff and volunteers will work to prevent abuse of adults at risk and, where preventative measures fail, to deal sensitively and effectively with any incident.

7.2.1 What we mean by abuse

Abuse is a single act, or a repeated act, or a lack of appropriate action, that causes harm or distress to a person. The Care Act 2014 recognises ten categories of abuse: physical, domestic, sexual, psychological / emotional, financial / material, modern slavery, discriminatory, organisational, neglect / acts of omission, and self-neglect.

The term 'adult at risk' has replaced 'vulnerable adult'. The term 'adult at risk' focuses on the situation causing the risk, rather than the characteristics of the adult concerned. Safeguarding duties apply to any adult who meet the following criteria:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

7.2.2 What to do if you have a safeguarding concern

If you are worried that you, another resident, or a visitor to our almshouses is being abused, harmed or neglected, please:

- In an emergency or if there is an immediate risk, call 999.
- Otherwise contact Shropshire Council Adult Safeguarding on 0345 678 9028.
- Tell the office. We will take any concern seriously, listen to you, and work with statutory agencies as necessary.

You can also contact the office anonymously or ask a friend or relative to contact us on your behalf. We will support you and treat the matter sensitively, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

7.3 Anti-social behaviour

The Trustees will not tolerate anti-social behaviour that affects the quality of life of any resident or the management of the charity for the benefit of all its residents.

By “anti-social behaviour” we mean behaviour that is capable of causing nuisance, alarm, harassment, annoyance or distress to any person, and which directly or indirectly relates to or affects the housing management functions of the charity. This includes behaviour towards: any other resident; any visitor to, or person otherwise lawfully engaged in or near, our almshouses; any member of our staff (in connection with their work for us); and members of the wider community in which our properties are located. It covers, for example, persistent loud noise, threatening or abusive behaviour, harassment, hate-motivated incidents, drug use, criminal damage, and serious or repeated nuisance.

7.3.1 What to do if you experience anti-social behaviour

- If a crime is being committed or there is a risk to your safety, call 999. For non-urgent police matters, call 101.
- Report the incident to the office. Please give as much detail as you can: who, what, where, when, and any witnesses. We will keep your report confidential as far as we are able.
- Where appropriate, we may involve mediation services to resolve a dispute between neighbours.
- If anti-social behaviour by another resident continues, the Trustees may follow our internal procedures, including verbal and written warnings, and ultimately the setting aside of an appointment in line with the Letter of Appointment.
- In the case of anti-social behaviour by visitors, neighbours or others, the Trustees will work with the police, local authority and other agencies as appropriate.

We work in partnership with the police and Shropshire Council to tackle anti-social behaviour and hate incidents in the neighbourhoods where we provide accommodation, in line with the Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard.

7.4 Domestic abuse and hate crime

Domestic abuse and hate crime are taken extremely seriously. If you are experiencing either, you can:

- Call 999 in an emergency, or 101 for non-urgent police matters.
- Call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247 (free, 24 hours, confidential).
- Contact the office in confidence; we will work with you and with specialist agencies to agree what support you would like, including (where appropriate) help to find alternative accommodation.

We will not disclose the fact that you have spoken to us to anyone (including a perpetrator) without your consent, except where we have a legal duty to do so.

7.5 Concerns about the charity, its trustees, staff or other residents

If you have concerns about the charity, its Trustees, staff or other residents, we encourage you to raise them with us directly so that we can address them. The office, the Member Responsible for Complaints, and the formal complaints process (Section 8) are all available to you.

Residents are asked not to spread misleading or malicious information about the charity, its Trustees, staff or other residents through traditional or social media channels. Doing so can cause real harm to those mentioned and to the wider community, and may be considered anti-social behaviour. It can also be a ground for setting aside an appointment, as set out in your Letter of Appointment.

This does not stop you from sharing honest, factual feedback or from raising legitimate concerns about us with regulators (the Charity Commission, the Regulator of Social Housing, the Information

Commissioner or the Housing Ombudsman) or with appropriate external bodies. We support your right to do so.

Section 8: Resident voice and complaints

We want to hear from you. Tell us what we are doing well; tell us what could be better; and please tell us when something has gone wrong. We can only put things right and improve our service if we know about the problems.

8.1 Compliments, comments and suggestions

If a member of staff, a Trustee or a contractor has done something that you would like to acknowledge, or if you have a suggestion for how we could do something differently, please tell us. You can speak to anyone in the office, write to the Committee Chair at the office address, or use any of the contact channels in Section 1 of the contacts page.

8.2 Complaints

Our complaints process complies with the Housing Ombudsman's statutory Complaint Handling Code 2024. The full SDHC Complaints Policy sets out the detailed two-stage procedure, timescales, contact points and arrangements for escalation. A copy is available on our website at www.shrewsburydrapers.org.uk/policies and a hard copy can be requested from the office at any time.

8.2.5 Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)

In line with section 9 of the Complaint Handling Code 2024, the Trustees have appointed one member of the governing body as Member Responsible for Complaints. The MRC has lead responsibility for ensuring a positive complaint-handling culture, for receiving regular reports on complaints performance, themes and trends, and for assuring the board that the Code is being followed.

The current MRC is named on the contacts page (and on our website). You can contact the MRC directly via the office if you have a concern about how complaints are handled (as opposed to the substance of an individual complaint).

8.3 The Housing Ombudsman Service

If you remain dissatisfied with our final (Stage 2) response, or if at any point during our process you would like advice from an independent body, you have the right to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service. You can also approach the Ombudsman at any earlier stage for advice.

Housing Ombudsman Service

Telephone: 0300 111 3000 (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9am to 5pm; Thursday 9am to 3:30pm).

Online complaint form: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Live chat: available via the website during phone-line hours.

Post: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET.

Note: from 13 January 2026, the Housing Ombudsman accepts new complaints only via the online complaint form or by telephone. Email submissions for new complaints are no longer accepted.

This charity is a member of the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The Ombudsman will normally consider a complaint only after our internal complaints procedure has been exhausted. The Ombudsman is independent, free to use, and impartial.

8.4 Other regulators

We are also accountable to two other external regulators. They do not normally deal with individual complaints (these are matters for our complaints procedure and the Housing Ombudsman) but you may wish to know about them:

- The Charity Commission for England and Wales regulates us as a charity (number 1132671). Serious concerns about how the charity is run can be reported to the Commission. www.gov.uk/charity-commission.
- The Regulator of Social Housing regulates us as a small registered provider of social housing under the four Consumer Standards (Safety and Quality; Tenancy; Neighbourhood and Community; and Transparency, Influence and Accountability) which came into force on 1 April 2024. The Regulator does not handle individual complaints; serious concerns about regulatory compliance can be raised with it directly. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing.

Section 9: Data protection and your information

We hold personal information about you as a resident of our almshouses, and as a beneficiary of the charity. We process that information in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Full details of how we collect, use, share and store your personal information, the lawful bases on which we rely, how long we keep records, and your rights as a data subject, are set out in the Shrewsbury Drapers Privacy Statement. We encourage you to read it.

The Privacy Statement is available on our website at www.shrewsburydrapers.org.uk/policies. A hard copy is available from the office on request.

9.1 In short

We collect only the minimum personal information needed to run the charity, manage your home, comply with our legal and regulatory obligations, and protect your vital interests in an emergency. We never sell your information, and we do not share it for marketing purposes.

9.2 Who we share your information with

Where it is necessary and lawful, we may share your information with our service providers (such as repairs contractors, payroll, IT, insurers, and professional advisers), with statutory or regulatory bodies (such as the Charity Commission, the Regulator of Social Housing, HMRC, the Housing Ombudsman and the Information Commissioner's Office), with local authority safeguarding teams or emergency services where required, and with support organisations or charities where you have consented or where there is another lawful basis. Full details are in the Privacy Statement.

9.3 CCTV

We operate CCTV cameras at our properties for the security and safety of residents, staff and visitors. Footage is retained for a maximum of 31 days unless required for an active investigation. Prominent signage is displayed wherever CCTV is in operation.

9.4 How long we keep your information

We keep your information only for as long as we need it. Resident files are normally retained for six years after your licence to occupy ends. Other retention periods are set out in the Privacy Statement. Data is disposed of securely at the end of its retention period.

9.5 Your rights

You have the right to ask for a copy of the personal information we hold about you (a Subject Access Request), to ask us to correct or delete information, to restrict or object to certain uses, and to receive your information in a portable format. To exercise any of these rights, please email us at coysec@shrewsburydrapers.org.uk. We will respond within 30 calendar days. There is no charge in most circumstances.

9.6 Looking ahead – Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements

From 1 April 2027, new legislation known as Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) will give residents and their representatives additional rights to request information about the management of their homes. We will provide further detail closer to that date. In the meantime, please contact us with any queries.

9.7 Concerns about how we handle your information

If you have a concern about how we handle your personal information, please contact us in the first instance at coysec@shrewsburydrapers.org.uk. If you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.org.uk or 0303 123 1113.

Section 10: The regulatory framework we operate within

This section is for information. It explains the framework of laws, codes and standards that we follow as a small almshouse charity and as a small registered provider of social housing. Knowing about it may help you to understand why we ask certain things of you, and what you can expect from us.

10.1 Charity law

We are a registered charity (number 1132671) regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Our governing scheme is the Charity Commission scheme sealed on 12 November 2009, together with our Articles of Association.

10.2 Almshouse Association – Standards of Almshouse Management (SAM)

We are a member of the Almshouse Association and we follow the Association's Standards of Almshouse Management (SAM), most recently consolidated in February 2025. SAM is the recognised benchmark for good practice in almshouse charities and covers governance, finance, residents, property and safety.

10.3 Regulator of Social Housing – Consumer Standards (April 2024)

As a small registered provider of social housing, we have regard to the four Consumer Standards introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, which came into force on 1 April 2024:

- Safety and Quality Standard – ensuring homes are good quality, safe and well-maintained.
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard – listening to residents, being transparent about our performance, and providing clear processes for residents to raise complaints.
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard – working with partners to keep shared spaces safe and to address anti-social behaviour.
- Tenancy Standard – fair allocations, lettings and the management of occupancy.

As a provider with fewer than 1,000 social homes, the regulator takes a proportionate, risk-based approach to monitoring our compliance.

10.4 Housing Ombudsman – Complaint Handling Code 2024

Our complaints process (Section 8) follows the statutory Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024. We carry out an annual self-assessment against the Code, which is approved by the governing body, and we publish the self-assessment and an annual complaints performance and service improvement report on our website.

10.5 Awaab's Law (Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025)

Although Awaab's Law does not legally apply to almshouses such as ours (we hold properties under a Licence to Occupy, not a tenancy, as confirmed by the Almshouse Association), SDHC takes all Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards seriously.

10.6 Other key legislation

Among the other legislation we work within are: the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974; the Equality Act 2010; the Care Act 2014; the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022; the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998; the Electrical

Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016; the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012; and the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

Acknowledgement of receipt

Please complete and return the slip below to the office. A duplicate copy is provided so you can keep one for your own records.

"I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Shrewsbury Drapers Holy Cross Ltd Almshouse Resident's Handbook 2026, including the appendix relating to my site. I understand that the handbook supplements (but does not replace) my Letter of Appointment, and that the handbook may be updated from time to time. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I had."

Resident's name (please print): _____

Address (almshouse): _____

Site (please tick):

- ☐ Drapers Place
- ☐ Fairford Place
- ☐ Hospital of the Holy Cross
- ☐ Hospital of St Giles
- ☐ Newport

Signed: _____ Date: _____

APPENDICES

Site-specific information

Appendix A: Drapers Place

Appendix B: Fairford Place

Appendix C: Hospital of the Holy Cross

Appendix D: Hospital of St Giles

Appendix A: Drapers Place

This appendix sets out the features, facilities and procedures specific to Drapers Place. It should be read in conjunction with the main handbook.



A.1 Site at a glance

Address	Drapers Place, Horsefair, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6BP
Number of homes	25 apartments
Type	Self-contained apartments in a single two-storey building
On-site office	The charity's main office is at Drapers Place
Lift	Platform lift serving both floors. Stairlift serving the stairway access to the undercroft.
Communal lounges	One on each floor
Hobbies room	Adjacent to the office
Bradbury Room (meeting room)	Available for hire by the public; available to residents on request to the office
Parking	Undercroft parking (monthly charge) and free spaces in the adjacent outdoor car park
Fire procedure	Simultaneous (full) evacuation (excluding PEEP cases)
Heating	Electric radiators with mechanical ventilation (Silavent)

A.2 Fire procedure

Drapers Place operates a SIMULTANEOUS EVACUATION policy.

Any unplanned sounding of the building fire alarm requires the immediate evacuation of the building. Make sure you know the location of the nearest emergency exit from your floor.

Alarm sounding within your apartment only

Each apartment has two types of alarm sensor:

- Smoke alarms in the kitchen sound only inside your apartment. They can be triggered by burnt toast or cooking smoke. If you are sure the cause is minor, opening windows and ventilating the area will normally clear it and the alarm will reset.
- A heat detector at your front door triggers the building-wide alarm. If this sounds, evacuate immediately.

If you discover a fire in your apartment or in a communal area

- If the alarm has not already triggered, operate the nearest manual fire alarm call point (located near exit doors).
- Leave the building by the quickest and safest route, following the signs.
- Do not use the lift.
- Do not attempt to tackle the fire unless you have been trained and your safe exit is not otherwise possible.
- Assemble at the Fire Assembly Point marked on the road into Drapers Place.
- Call 999.
- Do not re-enter the building until told it is safe to do so by the Fire and Rescue Service or another responsible person.

If you hear the alarm anywhere else in the building

- Stop what you are doing immediately. Always assume the alarm is sounding because there is a fire.
- Leave the building by the quickest and safest route, following the signs.
- Do not use the lift.
- Go to the Fire Assembly Point on the road into Drapers Place.
- Remain at the Fire Assembly Point until you are told by a responsible person that it is safe to leave or to return.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

Where a resident's mobility, health or sensory needs mean that the standard evacuation procedure may not be appropriate for them, a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is prepared. PEEPs are arranged individually with the resident concerned and are reviewed if circumstances change. Each PEEP is kept in the locked Premises Information Box (PIB) at the Drapers Place entrance, where it is available to the Fire and Rescue Service in the event of an incident. If you believe you would benefit from a PEEP, or you would like to discuss an existing one, please speak to the Property and Compliance Manager (PCM).

A.3 Flood risk

Drapers Place lies in an area that was prone to flooding before flood defences were built. Planning consent for the building was achieved by raising the ground floor above a 1-in-100-year flood level and including an exit route at this level. There is a flood evacuation plan in place; please make yourself familiar with it (a copy is held in the office and is available upon request).

Insurance: buildings insurance does not cover disruption costs if the building is deemed uninhabitable after a flood, and there is no insurance cover for property, including vehicles, left in the undercroft. Please bear this in mind when choosing your contents insurance. In line with the commitment in Section 5.6 of the main handbook, SDHC will provide reasonable practical support throughout any period of disruption, working with social services, your family, and any applicable insurance to find suitable temporary accommodation.

A.4 Security and access

Access to the building:

- There is a remote call (entry-phone) system at the main entrance. Please do not admit anyone you do not know personally unless you are expecting them.
- In the morning, the outer door is unlocked to allow tradespeople (postman etc.) into the foyer. The internal passage door remains locked.
- Around mid-afternoon the outer door is locked automatically; the internal passage door also remains locked.
- The internal corridor door on the ground floor giving access to the office, the hobbies room and the Bradbury Room is kept locked, to prevent visitors using the Bradbury Room from gaining access to the apartments. The same applies to the door on the first floor at that end of the building.
- Please ensure that any external door you use is closed behind you, particularly the door from the lounge on the ground floor. The last person out of a communal room is responsible for checking.

You will be issued with a fob and / or key to gain access to the building and your apartment. Replacement fobs / keys may be charged for.

Access to the undercroft: please make sure you have a means of opening the gates or the door into the building on you when you go down. If the door from the staircase shuts behind you and the gates are closed, there is an emergency release button to the right of the gates.

A.5 Heating, hot water and ventilation

Apartments are heated by electric radiators; you can control the radiators in your apartment. Constant fresh-air ventilation enters your apartment through a mechanical ventilation unit (Silavent). Please do not turn this ventilation system off; it is essential for the comfortable, condensation-free running of your apartment. The system is designed to be run continuously and switching it off is considered a breach of your licence to occupy. Filters should also be cleaned periodically, preferably once a month. Guidance on cleaning the filters is available from the office on request. Hot water is supplied by an electric immersion tank. If your heating or hot water fails, particularly in cold weather, please call the office immediately.

A.6 Lift

The lift is a platform lift, not a passenger lift in the conventional sense. It is not designed to take very heavy loads. To operate it, you must press and hold the button continuously until you reach the required floor. Beware of carrying very long objects which may damage the roof of the shaft when the lift reaches the top floor. There is also a single-person stairlift which services the stairway access to the undercroft.

Do NOT use the passenger lift or stairlift in an emergency such as a fire, evacuation, or flooding.

A.7 Balconies

Many apartments have balconies. Please be careful when using your balcony, particularly if children are visiting; they must be supervised. Balconies must not be used for drying clothes, sheets or towels. You are welcome to have a small table and chairs and / or potted plants. Please do not place anything on the balcony rail.

A.8 Communal facilities

Communal lounges

There is a communal lounge for the use of all residents and their visitors on each floor. Please leave it tidy after use. There is a regular Thursday coffee morning at 10:30 in the ground floor lounge when residents often meet together with Trustees and staff. This is a good chance to catch up, share concerns and meet your neighbours

Hobbies room

Adjacent to the office on the ground floor. Available for use by all residents. Materials and equipment left in the room must be kept in the cupboards provided when not in use, and the room left clean and tidy. The charity accepts no responsibility for loss of or damage to a resident's property in this room.

Bradbury Room

This meeting room, with adjacent kitchen and WC facilities, is available for hire by the public, and is also available for resident use. Please apply via the office. The corridor door from the Bradbury Room area to the apartments must be kept locked when the Bradbury Room is in use by external hirers.

Corridors and other open communal areas

Corridors and other open communal areas must be kept clear of personal possessions at all times. This is for the safe evacuation of the building in an emergency, and to comply with our duties under fire safety legislation.

A.9 Parking

If you own a car, you may be able to use the designated parking spaces in the undercroft for a monthly charge – please ask the office. There are also free parking spaces along the fence in the car park next to the Telepost Club. Please do not park in unauthorised places, particularly outside the main doors, and please ask your visitors to do the same. Vehicles parked in the wrong place can block access for ambulances or fire engines attending in an emergency.

A.10 Refuse and recycling

Refuse is normally collected on Thursdays every second week, with recycling in the alternate week. Please take your rubbish and recycling material to the bin store and place them in the appropriate bin. Collection days are subject to change by Shropshire Council; current information is on the noticeboard and at www.shropshire.gov.uk.

A.11 Routine staff presence

The Property and Compliance Manager (PCM) and Finance and Administration Officer operate on an agile basis, moving between SDHC sites and offices (including the Drapers Place office and the Fairford office) and visiting residents in their own homes as required. Staff are available by phone and email during office hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm. For in-person meetings, please arrange in advance to ensure availability.

Appendix B: Fairford Place

This appendix sets out the features, facilities and procedures specific to Fairford Place. It should be read in conjunction with the main handbook.



B.1 Site at a glance

Address	Fairford Place, Salters Lane, Longden Coleham, Shrewsbury, SY3 7DL
Number of homes	24 self-contained apartments
Type	Block A: New three storey block containing 8 flats Block B: Two storey block containing 12 studio flats (currently being renovated / modernised into 1-bed apartments) Block C: Single storey block containing 4 studio style flats <i>Blocks B and C were originally built 1964 to replace the Drapers' earlier almshouses at St Mary's Place.</i>
On-site office	Available for meetings with residents
Lift	Stairlifts servicing first floor
Mulberry Room	Residents' lounge with small kitchen and WC
Communal laundry	Washing and drying facilities for residents (modest charge)
Parking	Limited on-site parking; on-road public parking on Salters Lane and Greyfriars Road
Flood risk	Coleham, where the site is located, is prone to flooding. Fairford Place is close to the flood-risk area but sits just above the area that has historically been affected.
Fire procedure	Stay-put policy (unless safely able to escape)
Heating	Varies by block (see B.6 below)

B.2 Fire procedure

Important: SDHC is currently reviewing the fire procedure at Fairford Place. The procedure described below remains in effect for now but may be subject to change. Residents will be notified of any change in advance.

Fairford Place operates a STAY-PUT policy.

The buildings have been designed to resist the spread of fire and smoke. Fitted fire doors must not be propped open.

Each apartment has a smoke detector. If it is triggered by something minor (for example overdone toast), clearing the smoke will reset it. There is also a heat sensor; if this is triggered, the alarm will sound across the site and is monitored by an off-site service. They will attempt to contact a Draper or staff member, who will attend and help to manage the situation. If they cannot make contact, or if there is a fire in progress, the fire service will be notified and will attend.

Unless you can see a fire and can leave the building safely without risk to yourself or others, you are advised to stay in your apartment and await rescue. Close all doors and windows in the apartment, place a wet towel against the bottom of the front door if smoke is entering, and call 999 to tell them you are inside.

If the source of the alarm is clear (for example a fire in a part of the building remote from your apartment) and you can safely escape from the building to the muster point (residents' lounge or the grass area away from the building), turn off any cooking appliances and leave.

If you are cooking when the alarm goes off elsewhere in the building, switch off the oven and / or the hob immediately. The Property and Compliance Manager (PCM) will go through fire instructions with you when you move in.

B.3 Flood risk

Coleham, where the site is located, is prone to flooding. Fairford Place is close to the flood-risk area but sits just above the area that has historically been affected. Nevertheless, buildings insurance does not cover disruption costs if the building is deemed uninhabitable after a flood. In line with the commitment in Section 5.6 of the main handbook, SDHC will provide reasonable practical support throughout any period of disruption, working with social services, your family, and any applicable insurance to find suitable temporary accommodation.

B.4 Security and access

You will be provided with a key to gain access to the building and your apartment. The office holds a duplicate key for use only in an emergency or with your permission. Please ensure any external door you use is closed behind you. Do not admit anyone to the building you do not know personally unless you are expecting them.

B.6 Heating, hot water and ventilation

Fairford Place comprises three blocks (A, B and C). The heating, hot water and ventilation arrangements differ between them; the aerial site plan below illustrates how the blocks are arranged on the site. The PCM will explain the system in your specific home when you move in. The information below is a summary only.



Aerial view of Fairford Place

Block A (numbers 17 to 24): new building

Block A is a recent new build of eight self-contained flats numbered 17 to 24, set out over three storeys. Each flat is heated by resident self-funded air source heat pumps, providing underfloor heating, with electric hot water heated on demand. A passenger lift serves all floors.

Block B (numbers 1 to 12): subject to phased redevelopment

Block B comprises 12 homes numbered 1 to 12, set out over two storeys. These properties are subject to phased redevelopment. Until redevelopment is complete in your particular home, the layout is a bedsit, background heating is provided by communal powered (charity-funded) storage heaters, hot water is supplied by an electric tank, and a stairlift provides access to the first floor. After redevelopment, your home will comprise a separate bedroom and a kitchen-diner, heating will be provided by resident self-funded air source heat pump radiators, hot water will be heated on demand, and the stairlift will provide access to the second floor. The PCM will explain the system in your specific home when you move in.

Block C (numbers 13 to 16): no immediate redevelopment plans

Block C comprises four bungalow-style homes numbered 13 to 16. Heating arrangements vary across the block: some homes primarily have communal powered (charity-funded) storage heaters (for background heating) and others have resident self-funded electric radiators. The storage heaters are likely to be phased out in favour of more modern electric radiators in due course. The PCM will explain the arrangements in your specific home when you move in.

Please ventilate your home regularly, especially after cooking, showering or drying clothes, to prevent condensation and mould. Please appropriately utilise any extractor fans or mechanical ventilation present.

B.7 Lift

Project A contains a passenger lift which accesses all three storeys. Do NOT use the passenger lift in an emergency such as fire, evacuation or flooding.

Project B upper apartments are accessed by a stairway with a lobby area at top and bottom. Please keep these areas free from obstruction. A stair lift is also available at each stairway for residents and visitors; instructions will be given on its use. Do NOT use it in an emergency such as a fire, evacuation, or flooding.

B.8 Communal facilities

Mulberry Room

There is a residents' Mulberry Room where people can meet, with a small kitchen and a WC. There is a regular Tuesday coffee morning at 10:30 when residents often meet together with Trustees and staff – a good chance to catch up, share concerns and meet your neighbours.

Communal laundry

There are clothes washing and drying facilities located to the rear of the Mulberry Room for the use of residents at modest cost (via an honesty box).

Communal corridors and stairs

Please keep all communal corridors, stairs and lobbies clear of personal possessions at all times – this is essential for fire safety.

B.9 Parking

There is limited on-site car parking at Fairford Place. The marked bays beside the communal lounge building are for the use of visitors, medical attendants and contractors. On-road public parking is also available along Salters Lane and Greyfriars Road; please be aware of any time limits and parking restrictions.

B.10 Refuse and recycling

Refuse is collected weekly / fortnightly in line with Shropshire Council's arrangements (currently fortnightly with recycling in the alternate week). Please take your rubbish and recycling to the collection point and place them in the appropriate bin. Collection days are subject to change; current information is on the noticeboard.

Appendix C: Hospital of the Holy Cross

This appendix sets out the features, facilities and procedures specific to the Hospital of the Holy Cross. It should be read in conjunction with the main handbook.



C.1 Site at a glance

Address	Hospital of the Holy Cross, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6BS
Number of homes	5 self-contained houses
Type	Individual houses (not flats)
On-site office	No
Lift	No - properties over two floors with stairway access
Communal facilities	None other than the gardens – residents are warmly welcome at events at other sites
Parking	No on-site parking; on-road parking nearby; public car park opposite the Abbey
Flood risk	Yes – site lies in close proximity to an area historically prone to flooding (Abbey Foregate)
Fire procedure	Single-house procedure (see C.2)
Heating	Mains gas central heating
Door locks	Both cylinder and mortise locks on the front door

C.2 Fire procedure

Each home at Holy Cross is a self-contained house.

There is no building-wide alarm system. Each house has at least one smoke detector, which sounds only within that house. The detector will be tested at regular intervals.

If the alarm sounds and you are confident the cause is minor (such as smoke from cooking), remove the source of the smoke, ventilate the room (open the door and / or window), and the smoke alarm should stop sounding. If you are unsure of the cause, or there is any sign of a fire, leave the house and call 999. Do not return to the house until the Fire and Rescue Service has confirmed it is safe.

Please do not wedge fire doors open and please do not disable any smoke detector or carbon monoxide alarm.

C.3 Flood risk

The Holy Cross site lies in an area that was prone to flooding before flood defences were built. There is a flood awareness plan with which you should make yourself familiar. Insurance: buildings insurance does not cover disruption costs if your home is rendered uninhabitable by a flood. In line with the commitment in Section 5.6 of the main handbook, SDHC will provide reasonable practical support throughout any period of disruption, working with social services, your family, and any applicable insurance to find suitable temporary accommodation. See also C.6 below for the specific contents insurance arrangements at Holy Cross.

C.4 Security and access

You will be provided with key(s) to gain access to your house. The front door is fitted with both a cylinder lock and a mortise lock; the office can advise on which to use when going out. The office holds duplicate keys, used only in a genuine emergency or with your permission.

Please always ask for proof of identity from any caller. Never let anyone claiming to be from a utility company, the council or any official body into your home without confirming who they are. If in doubt, contact the office.

C.5 Heating, hot water and ventilation

Your house is heated by a mains gas central heating system, with hot water provided by a combi boiler. The Property and Compliance Manager (PCM) will explain how to use the timer and thermostat. The annual gas safety inspection is a legal requirement; please do not refuse access for it.

Please ventilate your house regularly, especially when cooking or showering, to reduce the risk of condensation and mould.

C.6 Insurance

Because of the unique nature of the Holy Cross site and its associated flood risk, contents insurance is provided by the charity for residents at this site as part of the WMC and Service Charge. Please ask the office for details of the current arrangement and the cover provided. Residents at other SDHC sites are responsible for arranging their own contents insurance (see Section 5.6 of the main handbook).

C.7 Communal facilities

There are no communal indoor facilities at Holy Cross. Residents are warmly invited to attend the regular coffee mornings and other social activities held at Drapers Place (Thursdays at 10:30) and

Fairford Place (Tuesdays at 10:30). Please ask the office for further information. Some of the surrounding ground is steep, so please take care, particularly in icy or wet weather.

C.8 Parking

There is no on-site parking at Holy Cross. If you own a vehicle, or have visitors who need to park, there are several on-road parking areas nearby, please be aware of the restrictions on each. There is also a public car park opposite the Abbey.

C.9 Refuse and recycling

Refuse and recycling collection is organised by Shropshire Council on a fortnightly cycle. Please take your rubbish and recycling material to the collection point and place them in the appropriate bin. Current collection days are available at www.shropshire.gov.uk.

Appendix D: Hospital of St Giles

This appendix sets out the features, facilities and procedures specific to the Hospital of St Giles. It should be read in conjunction with the main handbook.



D.1 Site at a glance

Address	Hospital of St Giles, Wenlock Road, Shrewsbury, SY2 6JP
Number of homes	4 self-contained bungalows
Type	Single-storey bungalows
On-site office	No
Lift	Not applicable
Communal facilities	None other than the gardens – residents are warmly welcome at events at other sites
Parking	Limited on-site parking; on-road parking nearby
Flood risk	No – the site is not in an area prone to flooding
Fire procedure	Single-bungalow procedure (see D.2)
Heating	Mains gas central heating

D.2 Fire procedure – Hospital of St Giles

Each home at St Giles is a self-contained bungalow.

There is no building-wide alarm system. Each bungalow has at least one smoke detector and a heat detector, which sound only within that bungalow. They will be tested at regular intervals. Please do not disable them.

If the alarm sounds and you are confident the cause is minor (such as cooking smoke), remove the source, ventilate the room, and the alarm should stop. If you are unsure of the cause or there is any sign of fire, leave the bungalow and call 999. Do not return until the Fire and Rescue Service has confirmed it is safe.

If you are cooking when the alarm goes off in your bungalow or an adjacent bungalow, switch off the oven and / or the hob.

D.3 Flood risk

The Hospital of St Giles site is not in an area prone to flooding.

D.4 Security and access

You will be provided with a key to gain access to your bungalow. The office holds a duplicate key, used only in a genuine emergency or with your permission. Please always ask for proof of identity from any caller before opening the door and refer any utility company representative or official caller to the office if in doubt.

D.5 Heating, hot water and ventilation

Your bungalow is heated by a mains gas central heating system, with hot water provided by a combi boiler. The Property and Compliance Manager (PCM) will explain how to use the timer and thermostat. The annual gas safety inspection is a legal requirement; please do not refuse access.

Ventilation is key to preventing condensation and mould; please ventilate your bungalow daily, especially when cooking or showering. If you notice damp or mould, however small, please report it to the office immediately.

D.6 Communal facilities

There are no communal facilities on site at St Giles. Residents are very welcome to join other residents at coffee mornings and social events held at Fairford Place (Tuesdays 10:30) and Drapers Place (Thursdays 10:30). Please ask the office for details.

D.7 Parking

There is some on-site parking at St Giles, but it is limited. Please be considerate to other residents when parking. If you own a vehicle, or your visitors need to park, there is also on-road parking nearby, please be aware of any restrictions in place.

D.8 Refuse and recycling

Refuse and recycling collection is organised by Shropshire Council on a fortnightly cycle. Please take your rubbish and recycling material to the collection point and place them in the appropriate bin. Current collection days are available at www.shropshire.gov.uk.

END