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Foreword

Welcome to The Finchley Charities
We hope you will settle into your new surroundings quickly. This handbook provides you with information about occupying your Almshouse, about The Finchley Charities, its general administration and management. It supplements and explains the rules and regulations set out in the Letter of Appointment/Licence to Occupy, a copy of which you signed when you accepted the appointment. The Trustees hope this handbook will prove useful as you settle and live within The Finchley Charities.

Management of The Finchley Charities
The Board of Trustees have overall responsibility for the management and governance of The Finchley Charities and are accountable to the Charity Commission. Trustees are unpaid and usually live within the borough of Barnet. A chief executive has been appointed by the trustees and is responsible for day-to-day management of The Finchley Charities, supported by housing, property and administrative staff.

The Finchley Charities manages its estates in line with the guidelines laid down in the Almshouse Association’s Standards of Almshouse Management and Support and Care for Residents.
Chapter 1

History & Governance
1.1 History

The Finchley Charities was inaugurated in 1488 following donations of land and buildings by Waren and Sanny in the 1480s and 1500s. Other generous donors have contributed over the centuries. So, for over 500 years, The Finchley Charities has been committed to good works and to serving people of limited means in Finchley and more recently the London Borough of Barnet.

The almshouses at Wilmot Close were built on donated land and buildings known as Pointalls Fields. A new block was built in 1895. Additional almshouses were built in 1958 and a further block in 1966 when the site was named Wilmot Close in memory of local Alderman Herbert Wilmot, a former trustee.

Further properties were completed in 1973 and another block was opened in 1985. This was named Thackrah Close after the father and son trustees Edgar and Ronald Thackrah whose service spanned 55 years.

Homefield Gardens was opened in 1980 by Mrs Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister and MP for Finchley, with 39 flats in total, and a further 48 were added in 1989.

In 1991 The Finchley Charities took over Pewterers Court from the Worshipful Company of Pewterers.

In July 2018, 16 additional units were opened on the Thackrah Close site.
1.2 Constitution
The Finchley Charities is run in accordance with its Governing Instrument. This is a Scheme dated 3rd March 2011 approved by the Charity Commission. A copy can be viewed at the main office at 41A Wilmot Close by appointment during office hours.

1.3 Trustee Body
The Finchley Charities is governed by voluntary Trustees. Day-to-day management is carried out by the professional staff employed.

1.4 Almshouses
Almshouses are unfurnished dwellings, usually designed specifically with the needs of older people in mind. The aim of The Finchley Charities is to provide safe, secure and good quality accommodation in a supportive community environment. All properties are situated in well maintained grounds.

Residents are encouraged to be part of the community in which they live and take part in the health and well-being activities provided.

The Finchley Charities’ aims are to provide safe, secure and well maintained homes for those of limited means.

An important service is the presence of sheltered housing officers (SHOs) and the provision of an emergency community alarm call system in every property, by which residents can receive assistance quickly in an emergency. The Finchley Charities operates an ‘Out-of-Hours Service’ to ensure there is a 24-hour emergency service for all residents.
2.1 Emergency Community Alarm Call System

(See also Section 3.10). An emergency response service to keep you safe, so you can live confidently and independently in your home. If you fall, feel unwell, unsafe or worried by callers or strangers, you can call for help simply by pulling an orange cord in one of your rooms in your home or by pressing the button on your speech module in your hallway.

You will be shown how to use this by the SHOs when you move in. Outside of the SHOs’ duty hours the calls will be monitored by The Finchley Charities’ out-of-hours service.

Please DO

Use your neck pendant or pull-cords by day or night to get help for a sudden illness, accident, fire or if you notice anything suspicious or anyone acting suspiciously. A response will be made by SHOs between 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday and by the out-of-hours service between 6pm – 8am Monday to Friday, weekends and bank holidays.

Please DO NOT

Use the call system to make casual contact with the SHOs (unless you have a genuine problem), tie up the pull-cords or fail to wear your neck pendant at all times when at home.

2.2 Fire Precautions

Each property is fitted with a smoke detector and fire extinguishers are located around the sites. SHOs receive training in fire procedures and are qualified Fire Marshals. Fire safety information should be found on
the inside of each front door. Fire alarm testing is carried out on a weekly basis, so please ensure you are aware of the day and time.

You are asked to:

(a) Be aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire. Copies of such procedures are displayed in the buildings and you will be provided with a laminated copy to place on the inside of your flat door.

(b) In the event of a fire, sound the alarm, inform the SHOs immediately and stay in your flat unless that is where the fire is.

(c) Be aware of the assembly points in case there is a necessity to evacuate any of the buildings.

When you hear the fire alarm or notice obvious signs of an outbreak of fire, if you are in the location of the fire please evacuate the building by the nearest route to the fire assembly point. Otherwise we have a ‘stay put’ policy. **This means you are advised to stay in your flat unless you feel unsafe or are instructed to move by the emergency services.**

Do not attempt to put the fire out or to collect personal belongings. Stay calm and, if you are able, help other residents to leave the building.

Where relevant, do not use lifts to leave the building.

Please DO ask the Sheltered Housing Officer

- What to do if the fire alarm sounds, or if you discover a fire.
- How to use the fire blankets provided (in communal kitchens).
Please DO
• Obey the smoking regulations and dispose of smoking materials safely.

Please DO NOT
• Wedge fire doors open – they will only prevent fire and smoke spreading when shut.

• Leave saucepans (especially chip pans) unattended.

• Leave unnecessary clutter on the floor or kitchen surfaces which might pose a fire risk or cause an accident.

• Attempt to fight any fire – just leave the premises immediately, shutting the door behind you.

• Remove any of the door closers.

Please remember that the use of paraffin or other such oil or gas heaters or appliances in your flat is strictly forbidden.

Please make sure you know the location of the Fire Alarm Points. The Fire Assembly Points are as follows:

**Wilmot Close & Thackrah Close**
Car Park area in front of 17-24 Wilmot Close.

**Homefield Gardens**
Homefield Gardens at the junction with Stanley Road.
Pewterers Court
St. Mary-at-Finchley’s church hall car park at the junction of Rectory Close and Hendon Lane.

Smoke Detectors
Your home is fitted with a hard-wired smoke detector which is connected to the emergency community alarm system.

If activated, there will be 24/7 assistance through the community alarm system.

If a smoke detector is activated from 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday it will go through to an SHO.

When activated out of these hours, it will go through to The Finchley Charities’ out-of-hours service from 6pm – 8am Monday to Friday and on weekends and bank holidays.

2.3 Security
Residents are encouraged to ensure that their homes are as secure as possible by following guidelines issued by the police.

Please DO
Keep your front door closed and locked at all times. Always identify callers before opening the door to them using the door entry system and spy hole.

Please DO NOT
Allow strangers to enter your home without proof of identity. If you are in doubt, please contact an SHO before allowing access. (All new social workers, nurses, doctors, contractors etc., are
required to contact SHOs before calling on residents). Out-of-hours you should contact Careline or call the police on 999.

Please DO NOT

Leave ground floor windows open so that intruders can gain access.

Keep large quantities of cash or valuables in your home.

BE AWARE OF

Bogus officials. Always ask for proof of identity. Check the identity of the caller by phoning the company they claim to be from.

2.4 Master Key

SHOs hold master keys that can open your front door but they will only be used in an emergency or with your permission. A mortice lock is fitted to your front door as well as a Yale lock and this should be used for security. No chains or additional locks should be fitted to front or internal doors.

2.5 Key Safe

Keys must not be copied and handed to relatives or carers as this may weaken overall security. In certain circumstances, residents may have a key safe fitted outside their flat at a small cost. Please enquire at the main office for details.
2.6 Mobility Scooter Policy
Electric mobility scooters may only be stored and used on the estate after consultation with the property services manager, who will discuss the Mobility Scooter Policy with you. This will include issues around insurance, health and safety and regard for other residents.

2.7 Communal Balconies and Walkways
For health and safety reasons, all communal balconies and walkways must be kept clear of plant pots, chairs, tables, and other ornaments etc.

2.8 Barbeques
Under no circumstances are residents or guests allowed to use barbeques on the premises.
Chapter 3

Services Provided
3.1 Sheltered Housing Officers (SHOs)

SHOs’ main duties are to support the general well-being of all residents and act as good neighbours by watching over your health and welfare and helping you to live as independently as possible in your own home. Here is a list of some of the services they provide:

When you first move in an SHO will provide you with an induction to your new home. They will:

• Welcome you and show you around the communal areas.

• Explain the emergency community alarm call system, fire procedures and other facilities.

• Show you how to use the central heating and hot water system controls.

• Complete a Resident’s Information sheet with you which includes details of family or friends who may need to be contacted in an emergency; your doctor and information such as medication. This information is kept confidentially but will be helpful if, for example, an ambulance needs to be called.

When you are a resident

• Make daily contact with you Monday to Friday either through your community alarm system or by a visit to your home. If you work or go out early the SHOs will make alternative arrangements with you. They will usually walk around the estate each weekday to see if there are any problems.
If you have an emergency
• In the event of emergencies during SHOs’ duty hours, it is their responsibility to notify relatives, and/or to call a doctor or other professional help as may be necessary.

• In the event of an emergency during SHOs’ out of office hours, please contact The Finchley Charities’ out-of-hours service by pulling an orange cord in your home or by pressing the button on the speech module in your hallway or in a communal area. If you require temporary nursing care or the services of a care worker, the SHO can help to make the arrangements.

If you are ill they will
• Contact your doctor and family and help to make the best arrangements for your well-being, always respecting your wishes.

If your home needs a repair
• If you have a problem with your home, they will report the repair to the Property Services Team for you.

Help you with forms
If you have to fill in forms about housing or other benefits they can:

• Help you to complete them.

• SHOs will also be able to provide further assistance or to contact organisations on your behalf, helping you to get whatever help you need and are entitled to.
Whatever service we offer, we will always respect your privacy, dignity, choice and confidentiality.

SHOs DO NOT undertake day-to-day care of residents. They are not qualified nurses, so are not allowed to change dressings or give medication of any kind. However, they will make arrangements with your doctor or health services to ensure you get such medical assistance.

They DO NOT do shopping or collect prescriptions unless in an extreme emergency.

SHOs ARE NOT allowed to handle your money, whether it is for safekeeping or for any other reason or deal with residents’ financial affairs and should not be requested to do so.

SHOs are responsible for looking after the premises and any defects to the premises should be reported to the SHOs as soon as possible.

3.2 Communal Facilities

THESE ARE ALL NON-SMOKING AREAS.

Community halls are provided for the use of all residents and their visitors for social and recreational activities, or simply as somewhere to meet and talk. A variety of activities are available in which it is hoped you will feel free and wish to participate. There is a television provided in each community hall along with IT facilities and residents are reminded that they should not access inappropriate or offensive material or websites.
A laundry room is available for all residents. SHOs will show you how the machines are operated and will confirm times for their use if a rota is in place. While there is flexibility in the times of use, residents are asked not to use the laundry room to excess or to the inconvenience of others. Please use one machine at a time. The machines are intended for residents’ laundry only. No clothes or other articles of washing are to be hung on the outside of the premises, except in the drying areas provided. Residents are requested not to leave washing in the drying areas overnight.

### 3.3 Guest Suite

A guest suite is available for the use of relatives or friends of residents for short stays. There is a daily charge for this service. Rates are displayed on the noticeboards and available on request from SHOs. It is not intended for use as a holiday flat. The maximum length of stay is one week (depending on availability) unless otherwise approved by the housing services manager and such requests should be made through SHOs. Payment for the appropriate number of nights booked must be made prior to occupation. If you wish to make use of the guest suite, please let SHOs know as far in advance as you can. Guests are asked to leave the facilities as they would hope to find them and to abide by the Health and Safety policy of The Finchley Charities. All payments for the guest room are payable through your bank by BACS (Bankers’ Automated Clearing Service) and SHOs will advise you of the process.

All guest suites are **STRICTLY NON-SMOKING** facilities.
3.4 Repairs and Decorations

The Finchley Charities is responsible for internal and external repairs and decoration. You are responsible for unblocking plug holes and for regularly clearing waste traps to basins, baths, showers, sinks and external gullies; for the descaling of shower heads, and taking all necessary measures to prevent toilets becoming blocked.

If it is found that any blockage is due to the carelessness of residents – or visiting carers – then The Finchley Charities has the right to impose a charge for unblocking/repairs depending upon the type and severity of the blockage.

You should provide your own light bulbs although The Finchley Charities will supply and fit fluorescent tubes and starters. You have overall responsibility for keeping your flat in good order as set out in your Letter of Appointment/Licence to Occupy. Should you require assistance, please contact an SHO.

The property services manager will arrange for internal decoration when necessary and you will be consulted in advance about the arrangements and what works will be carried out (see Section 5.2).

Repairs are categorised as follows:

(a) Emergency

Repairs which, if not attended to promptly, could result in harm to residents or significant damage within your home, e.g. burst pipes, total electric failure, blocked waste pipes and toilets. Every effort will be made to attend to these within 24 hours.
(b) **Urgent**
Repairs which, if not attended to, could cause serious discomfort and inconvenience to residents e.g. failure of central heating, broken glass and front door locks, lift repairs, leaking roofs, cooker and fridge repairs. Every effort will be made to deal with these within 3 – 5 days.

(c) **Routine**
All other repairs excluding decorations will be attended to within 28 days.

Residents are not permitted to make structural alterations to the premises. Residents are not permitted to alter the plumbing or electrical installations, or to overload the latter. Relatives may re-decorate apartments on behalf of residents but the agreement of the main office must first be obtained. Where re-decoration takes place, walls may only be painted in pastel shades. No wallpapering is allowed. The Finchley Charities provides a cooker and fridge freezer for all flats. If residents wish to purchase their own appliances, permission must be obtained from the main office prior to ordering.

Contractors will not enter your premises while you are out unless prior and satisfactory arrangements have been made or there is an emergency that requires immediate attention. In an emergency, an SHO would accompany the contractor.

You should not allow any contractors to enter your flat without the permission of an SHO.
Please ensure you ventilate your property, especially in the winter months. This will help to ensure minimum condensation build-up and prevent dampness.

You can help reduce condensation in your home by:

Not leaving kettles or saucepans boiling unnecessarily.

Opening a window when cooking, washing up or after bathing or showering.

Trying to keep your home warm and well ventilated at all times.

Avoiding drying clothes inside your home.

If you get mould growth, please contact your SHO.

3.5 Insurance
The Finchley Charities insures the buildings comprehensively and our policy also covers accidents. Residents should make their own arrangements for contents insurance covering personal belongings, furniture, carpets, etc. You are strongly advised not to keep large quantities of money at home but to place these in a bank or building society account.

3.6 Television Licence
The Finchley Charities holds ARC (Accommodation for Residential Care) concessionary TV Licences for its sites at Wilmot Close, Thackrah Close and Homefield Gardens (numbers 40 – 88). New residents will be added to the licence if they are between the age of 60 and 74, meet the criteria, and will be recharged.
The Finchley Charities holds a New Preserved Rights Concessionary Licence for its site at Pewterers Court, which covers existing tenants prior to January 2012. This licence also covers Homefield Gardens (numbers 1 – 39) and existing residents prior to November 2012. New residents up to the age of 75 will have to purchase their own full TV Licence.

**Residents over 75 are eligible for a free Over 75 TV Licence.** Residents aged 75 or over who qualify for our full ARC Concessionary Licence will be added to this licence.

All residents who have to purchase their own TV Licence must provide a copy for the main office at Wilmot Close.

Satellite dishes must not be installed without consulting the property services manager at the main office.

Please be considerate to your neighbours regarding noise nuisance when using televisions, DVD players, videos, stereos, radios, musical instruments and computers.

### 3.7 Cleaning
You are responsible for keeping your own flat clean and tidy. If you are having difficulty, please speak to an SHO who will assist you in making contact with Social Services to see if further assistance can be arranged, or they will arrange for another organisation to help with this – please note, there may be a charge. The Finchley Charities arranges the cleaning of the communal areas, staircases and the exterior of your windows.
3.8 Gardens
The gardens have been laid out for the use and benefit of all residents. The major work of grass cutting and maintenance of the grounds is The Finchley Charities’ responsibility and the gardening contractors they employ. However, some properties have adjacent areas which residents like to maintain themselves. If you wish to manage a piece of garden, please speak to SHOs who will inform the gardeners.

It is important that you maintain your garden regularly if you have informed us that you wish to manage your garden by yourself. If you are no longer able to manage, please advise an SHO. We will then ensure that this is managed by the gardening contractors.

3.9 Induction/Guidance
When you move into your home, an SHO will arrange an induction to cover action to be taken in the event of fire and other emergencies; operation of all domestic equipment; health and safety issues and security.

3.10 Emergency Community Alarm Call System
(See also Section 2.1) The Finchley Charities is supported by a telecare monitoring system – a helpline that connects the resident to a call centre when SHOs are off duty. It will handle emergency calls for health, police, fire and ambulance. They can also provide a ‘weekend reassurance’ call service which may be beneficial to some residents on a short-term basis, especially if they have returned from hospital or have been unwell. There is a cost per call so please contact your SHO if you require or feel you would benefit from this service.
4.1 Letter of Appointment/Licence to Occupy

Before moving in, you will be required to sign a copy of the Letter of Appointment/Licence to Occupy and to have read and understood the conditions under which you are appointed as a resident under the Trust. As a beneficiary of an Almshouse Charity you are not a tenant, but the trustees cannot ask you to leave unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as when you cease to be an eligible beneficiary of The Finchley Charities; you do not comply with the terms of your Letter of Appointment or you commit a serious misdemeanour or become unable to live independently (See Section 4.17). You have agreed to pay a Weekly Maintenance Contribution, collected calendar monthly via direct debit (See Section 4.9), that includes an amount for the services provided. Failure to meet these contributions is a breach of The Finchley Charities’ regulations and you could be at risk of losing your home if you do not keep up with your payments (See Section 4.16).

4.2

No resident is permitted to share, let or part with the accommodation allotted to them. Residents are not allowed to have overnight visitors in their homes (See Section 4.6).

4.3 Conduct

Residents must occupy their dwellings quietly and with consideration for others and in accordance with the Scheme under which The Finchley Charities operates. In cases of misconduct resulting in nuisance, damage, annoyance, offensive and anti-social behaviour, residents will be deemed to have automatically disqualified themselves for accommodation with The Finchley Charities and their appointment shall be set aside and their residency legally terminated (See Section 4.16).
4.4
Residents are asked to ensure that their visitors conduct themselves in a manner that respects the privacy and well-being of other residents.

4.5
Children should not be allowed to use the grounds for games or recreation, or to disturb residents in any manner whatsoever.

4.6  Relatives and Visitors
With the help and cooperation of your friends, family, SHOs and support from social services if necessary, we hope that you will be independent for as long as possible.

Your home is specially designed as sheltered housing for older people and is not suitable for accommodating extra persons. This is the purpose of the guest suite (See Section 3.3). We need to know who is in the Almshouses for the safety and security of the whole community. However, do remember that you are responsible for your visitors at all times.

Safety regulations do not permit the overnight stay of relatives or friends in your dwellings.

4.7  Absence from Home
If you intend going away for any period then please inform an SHO. Residents must not be absent from their homes for more than 28 days consecutively in any one year without prior consent from the main office.
4.8 Consulting Residents

Occasionally, it is necessary for The Finchley Charities to make major changes in the administration of the Almshouses for the benefit and welfare of residents. When this is so, those who will be affected will be notified of what is proposed and have two weeks to comment. The Finchley Charities will consider all submissions and notify residents of the decision. This will include confirmation of the date on which changes – if any – will take effect, or any amendments to be made in light of the comments received.

The Finchley Charities will consult you:

• Before any work is done on your Almshouse (except in an emergency).

• Before making changes to the communal facilities, including the gardens.

• Before making changes to the amount of Weekly Maintenance Contribution that you pay.

• Before anyone enters your home (except in an emergency).

• If you raise a difficulty with them.

The Finchley Charities welcomes feedback from residents about all aspects of its work and annual formal meetings with trustees are scheduled for this purpose. Residents can also give feedback via the comments boxes located outside the SHOs’ office. In addition, any resident may request a meeting with the housing services manager and a mutually convenient time will be arranged. Please also refer to Section 6, Complaints Procedure.
4.9 **Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC)**

Your WMC is collected calendar monthly by direct debit on or just after the 17th day of each month. You will be given a minimum of one month’s notice of any increase.

If you are in receipt of housing benefit, this can be paid directly to The Finchley Charities from the London Borough of Barnet every 4 weeks in arrears. Please be aware that even if you are entitled to full housing benefit it does not cover the cost of the water rates, payment of which will be your responsibility. Therefore, you will have a top-up to pay by direct debit on a calendar monthly basis. If you should experience financial problems, do not delay in telling an SHO who may be able to assist.

The amount of WMC you pay covers part of the cost of running the properties and the services you receive. Your charges include:

- WMC
- Water and sewage charges
- Service charges – includes gardening and window cleaning.

Failure to meet these contributions is a breach of The Finchley Charities’ regulations and would place your status as a resident in jeopardy.

4.10 **Housing Benefit**

If your income consists of the basic retirement pension and you have little or no capital, you will almost certainly be entitled to housing benefit/council tax benefit to help with accommodation costs. To claim, you
should ask for a form at your local benefits office (DWP) or housing department or speak to the housing services manager. If you do have some additional income to your basic pension you may still be entitled to some help with housing costs.

4.11 Charges
Please be advised that The Finchley Charities reserves the right to charge residents where the office incurs extra costs in order to collect amounts due. This will apply to residents who persistently fail to keep adequate funds in their bank or building society accounts necessary to meet amounts due in respect of such items as WMCs, water rates, including any shortfalls from housing benefit.

4.12 Central Heating and Hot Water
Most flats have gas central heating with their own thermostat which you can set to a temperature to suit you (your SHO can assist you with this). It is advisable NOT to turn off gas boilers as this can cause maintenance problems.

Free standing electric heaters, paraffin or calor gas heaters are not allowed for health and safety reasons.

4.13 Electricity Meters
Neither meters nor their locks and fittings may be altered. If the supply is disconnected for any reason, please speak to an SHO at once.
4.14 Utility Information
Please advise SHOs or the main office of your utilities provider. This is because whilst a property is vacant The Finchley Charities is responsible for the payment of bills and the utility supplier needs to be aware that a new resident has moved in and that an account is set up in their name. The resident may use the same provider or a provider of their choice.

4.15 Water Safety
The Finchley Charities carries out recommended water testing on all sites but due to new water safety regulations in the home, we must advise that if you have been on holiday, or spent some time in hospital, then please run all your taps for 1 – 2 minutes and flush the toilet a couple of times prior to using. This is to ensure that any bacteria that may have started to build up are flushed through. The risks are minimal.

4.16 Moving Out
If you wish to vacate The Finchley Charities' accommodation you must give the main office written notice of at least four weeks. During this period, you will be liable for your weekly maintenance contribution (WMC), even if you have already moved out. Residents or, in the event of death, their personal representatives, are responsible for WMC until the premises are cleared of all personal possessions and keys are returned.

Where applicable, please remember that either you or a relative must notify the utility provider of the date you intend to vacate the property. When advising them of your final meter readings, please request that they transfer the name of the account holder to The Finchley Charities, 41A Wilmot Close, East Finchley, London N2 8HP. Please advise SHOs of your new address.
In certain circumstances, trustees may have no alternative other than to set aside your appointment. These are:

- That you do not comply with the rules set out in your Letter of Appointment/ Licence to Occupy or elsewhere. These rules are for the benefit of all residents.

- That you no longer qualify to live in the Almshouse due to a change in circumstances. For example, you could inherit a significant sum of money.

- That you may no longer be able to look after yourself, even with the help of your family and/or care provision. There may come a time when this is putting yourself or other residents at risk.

Trustees will only set aside the appointment as a last resort, after a fair process of investigation and warning. Not less than one calendar month’s notice will be given to set aside the appointment and we will support you in finding alternative accommodation.

4.17 Moving On

Residents may expect to continue in occupation for as long as they need the accommodation and can look after themselves. If their health deteriorates, they must be willing to accept advice and guidance from their doctor. Residents must be capable of independent living, sometimes with the support of other health and social care providers.

Staff and trustees will deal with every situation sensitively and professionally. However, The Finchley Charities is not a licensed
residential care home or nursing home; it does not employ care or nursing staff, and has to work within its Scheme as laid down by the Charity Commission. This may mean seeking more suitable accommodation in consultation with relatives and social services. The best interest of the resident is paramount. Moving-on will be an option only after every effort has been made to assist you to remain in your Almshouse.

4.18 Mediation
Some residents may not recognise their inability to live independently. However, in the majority of cases a consensual approach is best and this can often be achieved through mediation with family, friends, health and social care providers.

4.19 Re-Housing
A resident is not permitted to transfer to another of The Finchley Charities’ premises unless they become unable to manage in their present property and/or would benefit from moving to a more suitable property for health reasons. Residents should provide a letter of support from their doctor and discuss their situation with the housing services manager.

Trustees may require you to move to another of The Finchley Charities’ Almshouses when major repair work has to be carried out. You will be given as much notice as possible.

4.20 Anti-Social Behaviour
The Finchley Charities is determined that residents and employees should not have to tolerate any behaviour that causes or is likely to
cause harassment, alarm or distress. The Finchley Charities will take all practical steps to investigate all allegations and deal appropriately with the perpetrators.

In extreme circumstances, The Finchley Charities is prepared to regard proven anti-social behaviour as a breach of the regulations by which people are accommodated and to take action to terminate occupation.

4.21 Gifts and Legacies
The Finchley Charities does not receive any external funding so any gifts or legacies would be gratefully appreciated. If you wish to discuss this further, please contact the main office. All such matters will be dealt with confidentially
5.1 Council Tax
Each resident is responsible for paying their council tax. You will be advised by the housing services manager how to pay and about any benefits to which you are entitled. Non-payment of council tax reflects badly on The Finchley Charities.

Trustees may have to review your suitability to occupy if you are a persistent non-payer of council tax.

5.2 Improvements to your Accommodation
You must not carry out any improvements, alterations or decoration to your home without first consulting the property services manager. In some cases, The Finchley Charities will agree and pay for the work. Permission may be refused at The Finchley Charities’ discretion. As trustees have responsibility for the long-term maintenance of the Almshouses, they have to consider individual resident requests alongside their own planned maintenance programme.

5.3 Pets
Regrettably, whilst appreciating that pets may contribute to wellbeing, pets are not allowed.

5.4 Parking of Vehicles
Only limited parking is available and parking is on a first-come, first-served basis. No resident can have a specific space allocated and only one car per property is permitted. Please do not park, or allow your visitors to park, in any position that might prevent the access of emergency vehicles. At Wilmot and Thackrah Close there is usually plenty of free parking space on Tarling Road.
If a resident has a car on site it is their responsibility to tax and insure the vehicle to avoid any detriment to The Finchley Charities. You are advised to ensure that your vehicle is adequately protected from theft. Where an alarm is fitted, please ensure it does not cause disturbance to other residents.

5.5 Your GP

If you already have your own doctor in the locality there is no need to make any change. If you do not have a doctor, or are moving from another district, please ask an SHO for a list of local surgeries. You have the right to see your doctor, nurse or carer alone and to keep your medical affairs to yourself, although we need to keep updated medical information to support you and in case of an emergency. This ensures that SHOs can give the relevant information to the emergency services. The name of your doctor must be given to SHOs so that help can be obtained if necessary.

5.6 Emergencies and Sickness

Please make sure SHOs are notified if you are ill. This is particularly important if you are going into hospital or returning home after an admission. This will enable them to keep a close eye on you while you recover. If you are experiencing difficulties, an SHO will make every effort to get in touch with relatives, friends, your doctor, etc. on your behalf. In order to do so, SHOs will need to be notified of any changes to the names and addresses of next-of-kin, friends and doctor/s held on record. SHOs will advise the main office of any changes.

If you have a disability or become disabled while living in the Almshouse, it may be possible to obtain equipment or to make alterations to your
home to help you live an independent life. Please ask an SHO for further information.

You should not make any structural alterations to your home without seeking permission from the property services manager. For example, do not fit ramps or stairlifts or remove The Finchley Charities’ fixtures and fittings.

5.7 Personal Problems
If you have any personal problems over money or any other matters, and you have no relative or friend who may be able to help you, please contact your SHO who will try to assist you.

5.8 Wills
You are strongly advised to make a will. If you wish to leave personal property to a relative, friend or favourite charity then a will is essential. Neither staff nor trustees of The Finchley Charities are permitted to receive bequests from residents.

5.9 Slips, Trips and Falls
Please exercise care when using the footpaths in wet, snowy or icy weather. When snowy and icy we suggest you remain in your home until it is safe to go out. Whilst we try to keep the areas hazard free, we cannot guarantee this, so please take care when leaving your home. Any accident within the grounds should be reported to SHOs for health and safety purposes.
5.10 Lifting
The Finchley Charities has a “no lifting policy”. This is to ensure that if a resident has a fall they are not further injured by being helped to their feet in the wrong way and that any helpers are also not injured. If a fall occurs, an ambulance will be called as paramedics are trained in safe lifting techniques and their vehicles also carry specialist equipment.

5.11 Rubbish and Recycling
Waste and recycling bins are provided; please sort your waste according to the way in which it will be taken away/recycled. Please make sure that all waste food is wrapped and all rubbish bags tied up before putting them in the bin. SHOs will explain to residents when they take up occupancy the arrangements for the disposal of rubbish and recycling and the location of bins.

5.12 Location of Water and Gas Stopcocks
Please ask SHOs. These should only be used in an emergency.

5.13 Location of Electricity Mains Switch and Fuse Box
SHOs will be pleased to show you the location of these within your home.
6.1
Although every effort is made to provide quality services there may be times when you feel something is wrong.

6.2
Under the Housing Act 1996, all Almshouse charities which are, or were, registered social landlords with the housing corporation have a regulatory obligation to maintain a complaints procedure. It is recommended good practice for all Almshouse charities to have a complaints procedure available for residents.

A copy of The Finchley Charities’ Complaints Policy and Procedure is available on request from an SHO, at the main office, and on our website at: www.thefinchleycharities.org

6.3
People are sometimes reluctant to complain. However, staff and trustees can only resolve problems and improve services if residents speak up when things go wrong.

A summary of the complaints procedure is outlined in the chart opposite and should be followed if any resident has a complaint in connection with the occupation of their Almshouse or about services provided by The Finchley Charities relating to the Almshouses.

• It is important that you raise a difficulty or a complaint as an individual. You should not act as a spokesperson on behalf of a number of residents.
If you remain dissatisfied with the decision of the trustees, eight weeks after the date of the decision you have the right to take your complaint to the:

Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ.
Tel: 0300 111 3000
Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
or visit: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

6.4
When writing to the ombudsman, please state your full name, address, telephone number and email address along with the nature of the complaint. The ombudsman will only be able to consider a complaint if they are satisfied it falls within their jurisdiction and the complaints procedure has been exhausted.

6.5 – Complaints Procedure Chart

Informal Complaint → Formal Complaint Stage 1 → Formal Complaint Stage 2 → The Housing Ombudsman → Formal Complaint Stage 3
Informal Complaint
Raised with the person the complaint relates to and aimed at resolving at first point of contact. No forms or investigation are completed.

Formal Complaint Stage 1
Raised with the relevant manager as a first step. An official log is kept and there is an investigation.

Formal Complaint Stage 2
Raised with the chief executive if the complaint is against a manager or if unsatisfied with result from Stage 1. An official log is kept and there may be a further investigation.

Formal Complaint Stage 3
Raised with the trustees if the complaint is against the chief executive or if unsatisfied with result from Stage 2. An official log is kept and there may be a further investigation.

The Housing Ombudsman
After eight weeks, a formal appeal can be made to the Housing Ombudsman.
Chapter 7
Policies
Health and Safety Policy
Residents’ Responsibilities and Precautions in Matters Concerning Safety

Health and Safety legislation requires that trustees of The Finchley Charities provide every resident with guidelines to health and safety precautions in the home. The number of accidents in the home is increasing annually, especially among older people, and these guidelines are designed to draw attention to possible dangers which might be avoided.

These guidelines for residents form part of the overall Health and Safety Policy of The Finchley Charities but are designed to stand alone as necessary for the benefit of residents.

1. **Electricity**

Always make sure:

(a) Electric flexes, plugs and sockets are in good repair.

(b) Power points are not overloaded with several appliances working from the same point.

(c) Flexes do not trail across the floor or on hot or wet surfaces.

(d) Mains electric appliances are not used in bathrooms.

(e) Electrical appliances and sockets are switched off after use and especially that sockets are “off” before removing plugs from them.

(f) Not to handle electric plugs or appliances with wet hands.
(g) Electric kettles, steam irons, etc., are unplugged before filling or pouring from them.

(h) Not to carry out electrical repairs yourself.

(i) If there is any doubt about a piece of electrical equipment, do not use it until it has been checked.

(j) To switch off electric blankets before getting into bed and have them checked regularly to ensure they remain safe.

If you have an electrical fault that you think might be dangerous, switch off the electricity at the mains. The switch is either next to the fuse box or next to the meter. **INFORM A SHELTERED HOUSING OFFICER IMMEDIATELY. IF THEY ARE OFF DUTY PLEASE CALL THE FINCHLEY CHARITIES’ OUT-OF-HOURS-SERVICE.**

2. **Heating & Water**

Warmth is essential but not at the expense of safety. No oil or gas heaters are permitted; the central heating installed in the apartments should be adequate.

(a) Heated rooms should be ventilated but free from draughts.

(b) If the flex or plug of an electric appliance becomes warm, switch off the appliance and inform an SHO who may arrange for a qualified electrician to check the appliance before further use.

(c) An annual check of your gas boiler and water tank is arranged by The Finchley Charities.
3. **Gas**

SHOULD YOU SMELL GAS AND SUSPECT A LEAK, INFORM A SHELTERED HOUSING OFFICER IMMEDIATELY. IF THEY ARE OFF DUTY, PLEASE CALL THE GAS EMERGENCY NUMBER ON: 0800 111 999 IMMEDIATELY AND THEN CALL THE FINCHLEY CHARITIES’ OUT-OF-HOURS SERVICE.

(a) Put out cigarettes – do not smoke.

(b) Do not use matches or a naked flame.

(c) Avoid using electrical switches, appliances, lights, sockets.

(d) Open doors and windows to get rid of the gas smell.

(e) Keep people away from the affected area.

(f) Leave the room and wait for help.

THE FINCHLEY CHARITIES OBTAINS A GAS SAFETY CERTIFICATE AND AN ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE FOR EACH FLAT.

4. **In the Kitchen**

Many fires start in the kitchen and it is also easy to be scalded.

(a) Make sure all ovens, grills, hotplates and rings are turned off after use.

(b) Do not leave a saucepan handle over a switched-on hotplate or ring.
(c) Do not leave a saucepan handle in a position on a stove where it is possible to knock over the saucepan.

(d) Do not allow kettles or saucepans to boil dry; and check that there is water in the kettle/saucepan before switching on.

(e) Ensure your free hand is well away from containers into which hot liquids are poured.

(f) Ensure that all water taps are turned off before leaving the kitchen or bathroom.

(g) Ensure that surfaces used in the preparation of food are clean at all times. Do not eat food that has been stored too long, is stale or contaminated. Make sure that containers in which food is stored are clean.

**If a chip pan catches fire:**

(a) Turn off the heat.

(b) Cover the pan with a lid or damp cloth to smother the flames.

(c) Never use water or try to move the pan.

5. **General**

The local fire service will undertake periodic checks to each property to minimise the risk of fire.

(a) Do not hang decorations around light fittings.
(b) Do ensure that cigarettes are put out before emptying ashtrays.

(c) Do close doors to prevent the spread of fire.

Other hints for your safety and comfort:

(a) Make sure that beds and chairs are not too high or low for comfort.

(b) Arrange furniture so that you are able to move about freely.

(c) Make sure that window catches work properly.

(d) If you smoke, ensure that cigarettes and matches are properly extinguished when finished.

(e) Be aware of the dangers of smoking in bed.

(f) Hot-water bottles should not be placed directly in contact with any part of the body.

(g) Ensure that doorways, passages and stairs are not obstructed.

(h) Make sure doors open and shut easily.

(i) Make sure that floors, stairs etc. are not damaged.

(j) Carpets, rugs, mats and linoleum should not be worn, torn or gathered up. Mats and rugs should not be able to slide or move when walked upon.
(k) Where stairs have handrails, make sure these are securely fitted.

(l) Make sure where you walk is free of cables and flexes.

(m) Ensure that handrails and rubber mats are used in bathrooms.

(n) Anything spilled on the floor should be cleaned up immediately.

(o) If you have spectacles, wear them. If they become steamed-up, take them off and wipe them. Do not try to walk around with steamed-up spectacles.

(p) During severe weather conditions keep your heating on low overnight to avoid frozen pipes.

(q) Residents should avoid over-cluttering their flats and lofts, for example, avoid storing up unwanted furniture, newspapers, clothing or rubbish.
To deter burglars:

(a) Ensure windows are kept shut during the night (especially ground floor properties and those that are near pipes or a flat roof).

(b) Ensure doors are locked and secure.

(c) Do not leave keys under a door mat or on a string.

(d) Do not leave notes outside for callers when you are out.

IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS RELATING TO YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY YOU MAY ASK THE SHELTERED HOUSING OFFICERS TO CONTACT THE HOUSING SERVICES MANAGER OR MAKE CONTACT YOURSELF.

IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO BE SAFE NOW THAN SORRY LATER.
Locations of our sites:

Wilmot Close/Thackrah Close
East Finchley
London
N2 8HP

Homefield Gardens
East Finchley
London
N2 0XL

Pewterers Court
Rectory Close
Finchley
London
N3 1TP

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