



Registering an interest to live at Devizes Almshouses – Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for your enquiry about the Almshouses. We hope that the answers to the following frequently asked questions may prove helpful and will enable you to decide if you would like to register your interest.

We have 56 accommodation units, all located on one site at Sedgfield Gardens / St James Gardens. They are a few minutes' walk from Devizes town centre and other facilities such as doctors, dentists, etc.

Can I register an interest in a Devizes Almshouse property?

Devizes Almshouses provide affordable housing in Devizes. To register an interest in living in a Devizes Almshouse, you must fulfill the following criteria:

- Be aged 60 years or over
- Have a housing need and be experiencing some other form of hardship.
- Have lived in or around Devizes for at least 5 years
- Not own your own home.
- Be of modest income and have only moderate savings / capital, such that you can support yourself financially (especially those who do not receive housing and council tax benefits)
- Be capable of living independently
- Have the right to reside in the UK (we are legally obliged to verify this)

What happens when I send my form back?

When we get your form back we will check that you meet the criteria and if you do, we will add you to our Register of Interest. We will notify you when we have done this.

In the future, when we have a suitable vacancy we will contact you and ask you for further information. We will take up references and visit you in your home to discuss your accommodation needs.

We advise you to continue looking for alternative housing provision in addition to being on our Register of Interest.

What accommodation is provided?

The 56 units comprise a mix of one and two bedroom accommodation – single applicants are only considered for a one bedroom unit, whilst couple applicants are considered for a two bedroom unit.

All properties are ground floor accommodation, mostly bungalow style. All the properties have a kitchen, bathroom (all with walk in shower, no bath), sitting room and bedroom(s). The properties are unfurnished, although cookers, a fridge-freezer and floor coverings are provided. All the properties have gas central heating, maintained by the Charity. Properties may have a small area of garden which the resident(s) can tend, if they would like to. The communal gardens are maintained by a garden contractor in accordance with the instruction of Trustees.

What support is provided?

Applicants must be able **to live independently**, although this can be with the assistance of family or carers as required. Applicants must have sufficient mobility to be able to carry out simple tasks for themselves when a carer is not present, for example, make a cup of tea. We employ a Warden who acts in the role of a 'good neighbour'. The Warden is not able to provide personal care or the administration of medication. Each property is equipped with an Emergency Call System.

How much would I pay?

Our residents are not tenants but they are beneficiaries of the charity - you would be given a licence to occupy rather than a tenancy agreement. Your rent payments are called a 'Weekly Maintenance Contribution' (WMC). The WMC is based on an equivalent fair rent advised periodically by the Valuation Office Agency (a government agency). The amount of WMC varies according to the type and size of the accommodation offered.

The Charity pays all gas bills centrally. In return, you will pay a weekly Heating and Hot Water Contribution (HWC), towards the costs of your heating and hot water. Only the WMC is eligible for housing benefit, which may be limited by the Local Housing Allowance (LHA).

Current Weekly Maintenance Contributions range from between £107.02 to £146.33 for a one bedroom property and between £134.32 to £172.00 for a two bedroom property (as of May 2024). The Weekly Heating & Hot Water Contribution is currently £26.00 per week. Both contributions are made as one payment every 4 weeks with 13 payments every year. Contributions are reviewed on an annual basis although the Charity reserves the right to review this more frequently if it is in the Charity's best interests.

The Charity pay the water charges, television licence fees and Lifeline provision as a charitable benefit. You will pay for other bills yourself – electricity, telephone, council tax.

Can I bring a pet?

Pets are not allowed due to the nature of the site and its communal gardens, which make it impractical and inappropriate to accommodate animals.

Is there parking?

Yes, there is limited provision for parking in Sedgefield Gardens and at Slade House, however there is no allocated parking and if a space is not available residents must park off site.

Do I have to join in social events?

Residents lead completely independent lives and you are free to make choices about which, if any, social events you choose to attend. Residents are automatically members of Slade House Social Club, which is very active. Activities include regular coffee mornings and bingo afternoons and usually one or two other events per month.

Is there a no smoking policy?

Yes. Smoking is prohibited in all residential bungalows and flats and all common areas, including Slade Hall, the entrance hall, corridors, offices and dryer rooms. Residents must comply with the Charity's policy on smoking.

Can I have friends and relatives to stay?

No, your home is designated as sheltered housing for you and is not intended to accommodate extra people. However, there is a guest room, which will accommodate two people and which can be booked, for a small nightly service charge, for visitors. Priority is given to relatives visiting sick residents.