



WOKINGHAM  
UNITED CHARITIES

**WESTENDE  
RESIDENTS' HANDBOOK**

**Feb 2024**





**Westende Almshouses, London  
Road, Wokingham, Berkshire,  
RG40 1YA**

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# 1 COMMUNICATIONS

## 1.1 Foreword

This handbook provides you with information about occupying your Almshouse flat at Westende and about Wokingham United Charities which has responsibility for its management.

This handbook together with the Letter of Appointment sets out the terms of occupation when you are allocated a flat.

The Trustees hope you will find the information helpful and that you will be happy in your flat and within the community of Westende.

## 1.2 Staff

To contact the staff (Westende Manager or Charity Manager) telephone **0118 403 2980 option 2 for Westende**; please leave a message if there is no answer and someone will call you back. Core office hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm. In an emergency, please use your ForestCare call button or call 01344 786500.

The Westende Manager does not provide personal care and will not administer medication.

The Westende Manager also looks after the building. Residents should report promptly any maintenance issues to the Westende Manager. Jobs will be prioritised and allocated to the appropriate contractor. Residents will be kept advised of progress.

You must in all respects observe and perform the reasonable requests and instructions of the staff.

In addition to the Westende Manager and Charity Manager, you may see other members of Wokingham United Charities staff from time to time. They may not be available to assist but they will kindly pass on any message to the Westende Manager.

Please be respectful to staff, trustees, fellow residents and contractors. Any abuse will not be tolerated.

Wokingham United Charities are committed to promoting equality and diversity within our policies, practises, and procedures. We recognise our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

No gratuity, gift or payment of any description may be offered to the staff and the staff cannot advise on, or become involved in, your financial affairs in any way; however, they are happy to provide support with signposting to support services and IT support to assist with applying for benefit help.

**Please respect the Westende Manager's off-duty time and privacy when she is in her own home.**

### **1.3 Emergency Call System and Out of Hours Support**

There is an emergency call system in every flat and in communal areas so that in the event of a sudden illness or a fall a Resident can get help quickly. Pendants that can be worn are also available, please ask the Westende Manager. In an emergency the Westende Manager or monitoring service will call for help and notify your nominated person.

When the Westende Manager is unavailable and during out of hours; overnight 5pm – 9am and bank holidays, the emergency call system

is switched to a central monitoring service – ForestCare. The central monitoring service will be able to provide appropriate support for medical and maintenance emergencies. This ensures the site is covered at all times.

#### **1.4 Suggestions**

If Residents have any suggestions to improve Westende, please let the staff know and they will be happy to discuss at meetings with the Trustees.

## **2 TERMS OF OCCUPANCY**

### **2.1 Concern for other residents**

You are asked to occupy the flat and use the communal areas reasonably quietly and with consideration for the other residents.

### **2.2 Pets and wildlife**

There is a no pet policy with the exception (subject to the Trustees' prior written approval – which may be withdrawn at their discretion) of support animals for medical health reasons. Requests should be made in writing with supporting medical documentation to the Trustees for their consideration.

To avoid vermin residents must not feed the birds or any other wildlife.

### **2.3 Absence from your flat**

If you go away for any period of time, even if it is just overnight, please inform the staff or the Monitoring Service in their absence.



You must not be absent from the flat for more than 28 days in any consecutive period of 12 calendar months without the prior consent of the Trustees.

## **2.4 Smoking and vaping**

Smoking and vaping is not permitted in the lounge, hallways, landings or other communal areas. Smoking and vaping in the flats is discouraged.

## **2.5 Social media**

If you use social media such as Facebook or Twitter, please respect the fact that no views should be expressed about the charity, trustees, other residents or staff. No pictures should be posted without the permission of the person in the photo. Wokingham United Charities have a Photo Release Form that allows photos taken at Westende events to be used in promotion. The Photo Release Form is given to all residents and reviewed annually. Residents can withdraw their photo consent at any time.

## **2.6 Trustee Inspection**

All flats received an annual inspection conducted by two trustees and/or one trustee and staff at a mutually convenient time. It is an opportunity to discuss any issues with the flat or any personal issues you may have. All discussions are treated in the strictest confidence, and you do not need to wait until this inspection to raise any issues.

# **3 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

## **3.1 Security**

You will be issued with three flat keys, and a fob per resident which will give you access to all communal areas. If you require additional

fobs and/or keys, they need to be ordered from the supplier direct. Please speak to the Westende Manager to arrange.

The use of chains and bolts on doors is not permitted and you may not change the locks.

Staff hold a master key to the flats for emergency access during working hours. You may wish to consider installing a key safe for emergency access outside these hours. Please contact Westende Manager to arranging installation.

The main door entry system can be controlled from your flat. The Westende Manager will show you how to use this.

Each flat has an Emergency Monitoring System. The Westende Manager will show you how this works. There are laminated instructions in each flat.

### **3.2 Doctors**

The name of your doctor must be given to the Westende Manager so that help may be obtained in an emergency. The local surgery for our area is Wokingham Medical Centre, 23 Rose Street, Wokingham RG40 1XS, 0118 978 4566.

If you have health problems, it may be advisable to inform the Westende Manager, so that in an emergency all relevant medical information can be given.

### **3.3 Emergencies and sickness**

In every flat and in communal areas there is a call monitoring system. In the event of an emergency, such as illness or a fall, a resident can get help quickly. Press the red button in the middle of the unit or, use pull cord or pendant to summon help. To cancel a call, press the green button on the right. The orange button is not used.

Please make sure the Westende Manager is notified if you are ill. This is particularly important if you are going into hospital or returning home from admission. If you require a pendant or wrist alarm the Westende Manager will supply one for you.

The Westende Manager needs to be given details of your nominated person, so they can be contacted in an Emergency. If any of their details change, please let the Westende Manager know.

ForestCare have access to a secure lock box which provides emergency services with access to the building/flats and necessary information.

### **3.4 Fire Alarm**

A fire alarm system has been installed at Westende to comply with current regulations. Instructions on what to do if the fire alarm sounds are in the appendix 1 at the back of the handbook. The Fire assembly point is located by the Westende Managers garage

Do not wedge open Fire Doors. Keep landings and hallways clear of all items.

The fire alarm is tested on a Wednesday morning.

### **3.5 Hazards**

These are small flats and the amount and size of any furniture in the flat must be appropriate. The Trustees may request the removal of any furniture or other items which, in their absolute discretion, is considered to be a fire risk or other hazard. In particular, do not leave items on the landings or behind the lifts, these areas pose a higher-than-normal fire risk. Please report any hazards to the Westende staff as soon as possible.

Paraffin or portable gas heaters are not allowed as they can be dangerous.

You may not make any alterations to the flat, including plumbing or electrical adjustments, without prior written consent from the Trustees.

Furthermore, please avoid interfering with or modifying electrical supply to your flat.

It is imperative that all electrical appliances within your flat are maintained in a safe and functional condition.

## **4 SERVICES**

### **4.1 Residents Lounge**

The residents lounge and kitchen are for the use of all residents and their visitors. If you wish to book the lounge for an event, please check the diary in the office for availability.

## 4.2 Laundry

The laundry is available for all residents. You may request an allocated time, but can also use the machines at other times when they are free. **Please check the rota to ensure you are not using another resident's time.** The washing line is available for all residents to use.

## 4.3 Guestroom and visitors

The Guestroom is available at a charge for a relative or friend visiting. All bedding and towels are provided, together with a small fridge and tea/coffee making facilities. For cost information and how to book, please contact the Westende Manager providing as much notice as possible.

If you wish visitors to stay overnight in your flat, please let the staff know. This is to comply with fire regulations should there be an emergency.

## 4.4 Electricity

The electric meter for the flat is located in the cupboard outside the flat's front door. Please make sure you read the meter the day you move in and inform your supplier.

## 4.5 Television

There is no need for you to obtain a television licence as the Trustees hold a Communal Licence.

Satellite channels and broadband are available but any subscription charge incurred is the responsibility of the resident.

## 4.6 Central heating

Each flat has its own thermostat which will turn the heating on and off. Thermostats have been fitted to the radiators so you can adjust the temperature in each room.

## 4.7 General maintenance

The Trustees are responsible for the cleaning of all communal areas, external windows, car park and pathways. Residents are responsible for keeping their own flat clean.

The garden is for the use of all residents. The major work of grass cutting is the Trustees responsibility. You are more than welcome to help with the rest of the gardening and have your own pots. To maintain the neat and tidy appearance of Westende, we kindly ask that if you assume responsibility for any plant pots, they are kept well-maintained. If there are any issues, please let the Westende Manager know.

It is your responsibility to ensure regular cleaning and clearing of all sinks, drains and showerheads. We recommend the showerhead cleaning is done quarterly and if you are not using your shower regularly, you must let it run for 5 minutes once a month.

## 4.8 Repairs, alterations and decoration

The Trustees are responsible for internal and external repairs and redecoration of the flats and communal areas. However, if you would like to re-paint your flat yourself (**wallpaper is not to be used**) please first speak to the Westende Manager who will share with the Westende Committee to provide written permission if approved. Any personal redecoration is at your own cost and you may be asked prior to leaving to return to the original décor, again, at your own cost.

You must permit reasonable access for inspection of the flat and for repairs, improvements and redecoration to be carried out.

Workmen will not be allowed to enter your flat whilst you are out, without prior consent from you. An exception would be in the case of an emergency if access was required for repair.

You will be liable for the cost of making good any damage caused to the flat by you (fair wear and tear and damage by insured risks excepted).

Please let the staff know of any defect or potential danger in the flat or in the communal areas as soon as possible.

Any work to your flat that the Trustees consent to must be undertaken by a contractor approved by the Trustees. No compensation for the work will be paid when you leave. If you wish to use your own contractor, friend or family members, you must obtain prior written permission from the Trustees.

#### **4.9 Lifts**

The first-floor flats can be accessed by lift. The lifts are for both residents and visitors to use. Instructions on how to operate the lift are printed inside each lift. Press the button on the outside to unlock the door. Do not use the lifts in the event of a fire. If the alarm sounds while you are in the lift, please go to the ground floor and exit. The phone line in the lift is not connected, but in the event of an emergency push the alarm button, this will alert other residents. See appendix 2 at the back of the handbook for more details.

#### 4.10 Parking

There are a restricted number of car parking spaces at Westende. Car parking is limited to permit holders, staff, contractors and people working for care organisations. Public parking is available at the adjacent Easthampstead Road East Car Park.

Residents may park in the Westende car park if the Trustees have given you a permit. The Trustees issue a limited number of parking permits. The Trustees reserve the right to withdraw the permit at any time. A charge may be made for the parking permit and there is no guarantee that a permit or space will be available.

Please keep the **No Parking** areas clear at all times to allow access for emergency vehicles. Please Park in marked bays only. No parking spaces are allocated individually.

#### 4.11 Mobility scooters and Portability Mobility Devices (PMD)

You should first obtain permission from the Trustees before having a mobility scooter and/or PMD.

Mobility scooters and/or PMD should only be parked and charged in the designated area. The Trustees advise you to take out insurance, covering loss, damage and third-party liability.

The Trustees accept no responsibility for the loss of, or damage to mobility scooters and/or PMD.

#### 4.12 Rubbish and recycling

Our policy for recycling follows the local authority's so may be subject to change. Residents will be advised if any of the



arrangements change. Communal bins are provided. Please ensure that any rubbish, food waste or recycling is placed in the appropriate container.

- Large Grundon bins are for household waste
- Blue wheelie bins are for recycling only
- Red wheelie bin is for food waste only

Nothing should be left for collection that is not placed in the container provided.

**Please do not dispose of electrical appliances in the containers.**

Please ensure cardboard boxes are broken up and folded.

The bins are cleaned at regular intervals.

## **5 GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **5.1 Complaints procedure**

Many people are reluctant to complain, but the Trustees can only resolve problems, and improve the service they offer, if you speak up when things go wrong.

If you have a complaint or a problem has arisen which cannot be solved by a discussion with the other party or the Westende Manager, the following procedure should be adopted:

- If the Westende Manager is unable to resolve minor matters, or if there is a persistent problem or matter affecting health and safety, the resident should refer this to the Charity Manager.

You should be prepared to put your complaint in writing at this stage. All communications about complaints will be treated as confidential.

- If the Charity Manager is unable to deal with your complaint satisfactorily or if you have a complaint about staff employed by the charity you should write to the Chair of Westende Committee, with a request for it to be considered at the next Westende meeting.
- You will, if you wish, be entitled to attend the meeting when your complaint is being discussed, accompanied by a friend or professional advisor.
- We will write to advise of the action taken to resolve the complaint and to notify you of the decision.

## **5.2 Insurance**

Westende has buildings and public liability insurance, but you are strongly advised to take out your own contents insurance with public liability cover. The Trustees cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or damage to your personal belongings or effects (or those of any visitor) at Westende.

## **5.3 Wills & LPAs**

You are strongly advised to make a Will and Lasting Powers of Attorney for Health & Welfare and Property & Financial affairs. Please let the staff know where your documents may be found and who is your executor should we need to make contact.

# **6 REVISIONS TO THE RESIDENTS' HANDBOOK**

In the interest of recognising and effecting desirable or operational changes the Trustees reserve the right to make reasonable changes or additions to the provisions of either the Letter of Appointment

and/or Residents' Handbook. If they do so, then a revised copy of the Handbook will be given to each Resident – who should then comply with such provisions that will supersede those of any earlier Letter of Appointment and/or Residents' Handbook.

## **7 USEFUL INFORMATION**

### **7.1 Benefits**

If your income consists of the basic retirement pension and you have little or no capital you may be entitled to claim benefit, and a reduction/discount or exemption in your Council Tax.

[www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/entitlement](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/entitlement).

The following organisations may be able to help you claim:

- Age UK Berkshire 0800 6781602
- Citizens Advice Wokingham 0808 278 7958
- Wokingham Borough Council 0118 9746000

### **7.2 Grants for essential items**

Wokingham United Charities accept applications on behalf of individuals/families who are experiencing financial difficulty. Grants can be used for furniture, white goods, etc. Maximum amount is £500. Please contact staff for further details.

### **7.3 Safety & Security**

For any safeguarding concerns, you can either discuss with staff or contact Wokingham Borough Council on 0118 9746371 or via email [adultsafeguardinghub@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:adultsafeguardinghub@wokingham.gov.uk). You can also contact Thames Valley Police via their non-emergency number 101.

- The Code for the gate at the front of the building leading onto London Road – **01259#**
- The phone line in the lift is not connected, but in the event of an emergency push the alarm button, this will alert other residents.
- If you have a non-emergency matter you wish to discuss with the Police please call – **101**

#### 7.4 Medical assistance

If you require a doctor out of normal hours phone -**111**

#### 7.5 Electrical issues

- In the event of a power failure, having checked your trip switches are all up and other flats have no power, please call **105** to find out the phone number of your electricity supply.
- In the event of a power failure the main doors will not open automatically, to exit please turn the knob above the handle to the right and pull the door towards you.
- If contacted by your energy supplier to replace your electric meter which maybe out of date, please arrange a time with them to get it changed.
- Please contact your energy supplier if you would like to have a smart meter installed.

## Appendix 1 - FIRE ALARM PROCEDURE

- If a fire breaks out in your flat, do not attempt to deal with it yourself. Take a warm coat and leave immediately. Close your front door securely and activate the nearest Fire Alarm and go to the assembly point located at the entrance to the car park
- If you hear the fire alarm, stay in your flat until you are told to leave by the Westende staff or a member of the Fire Service. Have warm clothes ready. **DO NOT** open your front door – it is fire resistant for up to 30 minutes. If you feel unsafe or threatened, please feel free to leave your flat. Close your front door and proceed to the assembly point located at the entrance to the car park.

If you hear the fire alarm and are in a communal area leave the building immediately and go to the fire assembly point located at the entrance to the car park.

**Do not use the lift in case of a fire emergency**

## Appendix 2 LIFT INSTRUCTIONS

- Ensure the lift door is closed properly
- Press and hold the G/↓ or 1/↑ button



- When you arrive at the floor release the button
- Please make sure the lift door clicks shut when you exit the lift.
- In the event of a power failure the lift has a backup battery. Operate the lift as above to return to the ground floor. press G/↓.

The lift will only go down



The alarm button is not connected to the call system. In the extremely unlikely event that during a power cut the back-up battery fails:

1. Press the alarm button, this is loud enough to alert someone
2. Alternatively, please call the office on 0118 403 2980 or Forestcare on 01344 786500 using your mobile.
3. Otherwise please bang on the glass or call out to alert another resident who can call for help on your behalf.

But as stated earlier do not use the lift in case of a fire emergency





# WOKINGHAM UNITED CHARITIES

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