

Hammersmith United Charities



Residents' Handbook

Sycamore House



John Betts House

Welcome to Hammersmith United Charities

Welcome to your new home. We hope that you will have a long and happy time living in your Hammersmith United Charities flat.

We hope that this handbook will help you to settle in and get the best from living here. It contains useful information about our services, how to contact us, what you can expect from us and also what we expect from you.

We have regular meetings with residents and there is a monthly newsletter delivered to your door. They will tell you about events and meetings coming up.

This handbook has been produced with our residents and we welcome any feedback or suggestions that you may have to improve future editions.



Registered Charity No: 205856
TSA & HCA No: 1789

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Other useful addresses & telephone numbers

Council

London Borough of Hammersmith
& Fulham, Town Hall, King Street, W6 9JU

General:	020 8748 3020
Housing Benefits Office:	020 8753 6681
Council Tax:	020 8753 6681

Citizens Advice Bureau

H & F CAB, 1 Mund Street, W14 9LY	020 7385 1322
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Age UK

105 Greyhound Road	020 7386 9085
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Police

Police station, 226 Shepherds Bush Road	0300 123 1212
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Hospitals

Charing X Hospital, Fulham Palace Road	020 8846 1234
Hammersmith Hospital, Du Cane Road	020 3313 1000

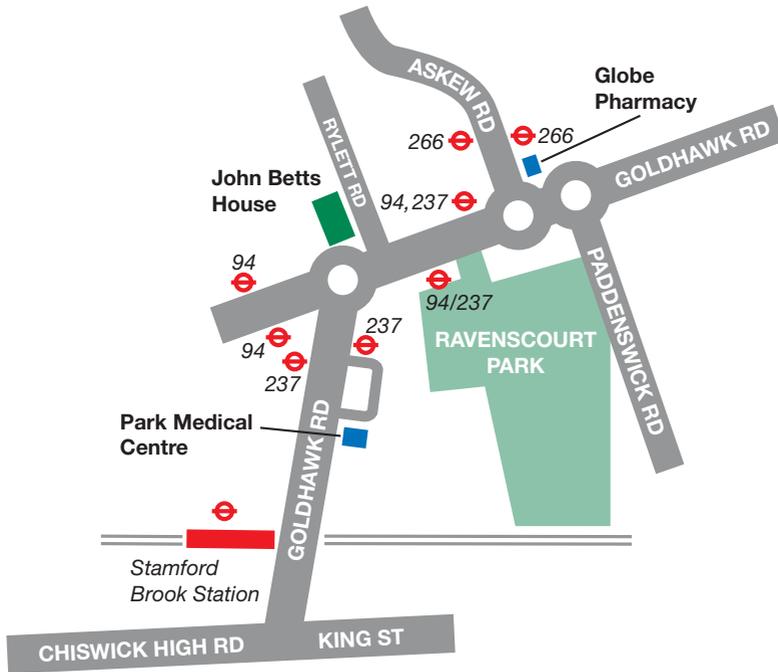
GP surgeries

Park Medical Centre, Invermead Close, W6 0QG	020 8741 7471
Richford Gate Primary Care Centre, Richford Street, W6 7HY	020 8846 6655

Please refer to the section on location and local amenities for further information.

John Betts House

Local amenities and transport



Buses

Three bus routes pass nearby

94 Acton Green – Piccadilly Circus

237 Hounslow – White City

266 Hammersmith – Brent Cross Shopping Centre

Tube

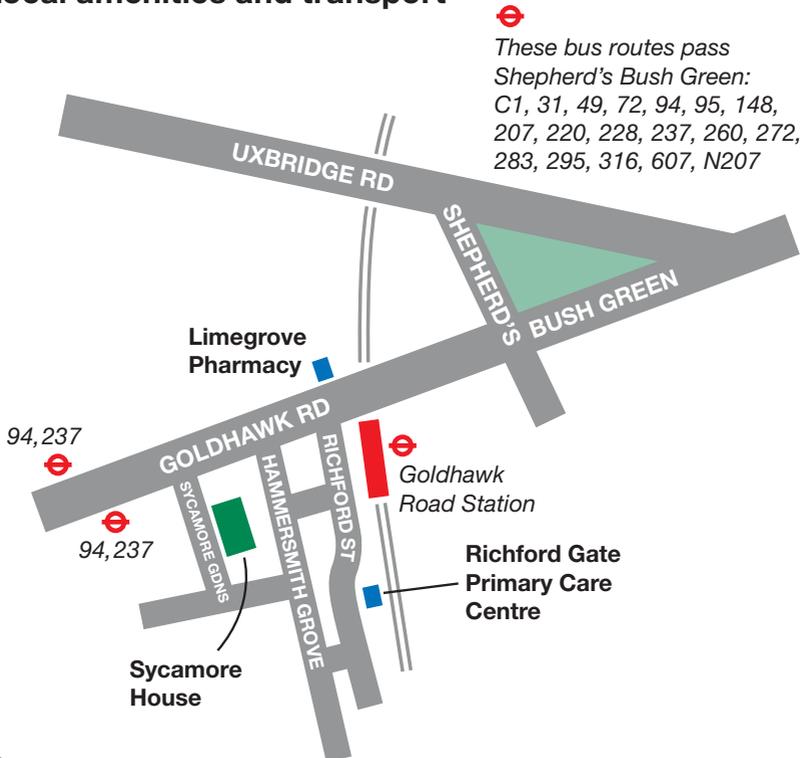
Stamford Brook – District Line

Parking

Visitor parking is available in the side roads

Sycamore House

Local amenities and transport



Buses

Two bus routes run along Goldhawk Road

94 Acton Green – Piccadilly Circus

237 Hounslow – White City

Shepherd's Bush Green has many more bus routes

Tube

Goldhawk Road – Circle Line/Hammersmith & City Line

Parking

Visitor parking is available in the side roads

Making the most of **living** in a **Hammersmith United** **Charities** scheme

This section was developed in February 2012 by residents from Sycamore House and John Betts House

For many residents, one of the great advantages of living in an HUC flat is the opportunity to be involved in a community. We recognise that everyone has the right to choose how far they want to be involved and that everyone has a right to privacy. The following guidelines are intended not as “rules” but as an indication of how existing residents feel people can make the most of living in a community.

- Our community is valuable to us all, even though some may be more directly involved in it than others. We encourage everyone who lives here to make the most of it – enjoy yourself and have fun!
- We aim to behave respectfully to each other and to staff, using a polite tone of voice even if we disagree.
- We expect staff to behave respectfully and politely to residents – with discretion, by keeping confidential information private.
- As far as we are able, we appreciate each other; each resident and member of staff is part of our community.



- We make new people welcome while also respecting the wishes of those who do not wish to join in, or may need time to do so.
- If someone is new, see if they need any help to settle in. If they are shy encourage them and make them welcome.
- We try to be polite to everyone and greet people when we see them.
- We try to look out for each other – if someone needs help, offer it if you can.
- Gossip about others can sometimes be harmful – please avoid it!
- To get the most from others – listen and be open-minded to new ideas.
- Be willing to make contact with people who are not in your usual group of friends.
- Noise is the number one cause of disputes between neighbours in London. Please consider whether others can hear you. If you are being disturbed, don't let bad feeling brew – talk about it, ideally to the person concerned, or to the Scheme Manager.

Introduction to Hammersmith United Charities

HUC is steeped in history and is the successor to some very ancient charities, all established by residents of Hammersmith for those in need. The first almshouse was built in 1634 by Dr Thomas Iles. The Charity is also the guardian of funds left to it from 1618 onwards for the relief of poverty. Of the 18 legacies that the charity administers, 13 were left to HUC for the relief of poverty and 5 were for the almshouses.

Today's charity is a non-profit making organisation and is run in accordance with its Governing Instrument, a Scheme from the Charity Commissioners dated 14 July 1992.

HUC has two main charitable activities:

- **Almshouses** – sheltered accommodation for people aged 60 and over who are residents of the former Metropolitan Borough of Hammersmith.
- **Relief in Need** – the charity gives grants to organisations, in the area of benefit, who work to address 'hardship for those in need'.



John Betts House

There are 39 flats at John Betts House some of which are suitable for couples.



Sycamore House

There are 52 flats at Sycamore House, of which 2 are 2 bed flats and 6 wheelchair accessible flats; the rest of the flats are 1 bed and, like John Betts House, some are suitable for couples.

Further information about HUC can be found in the report *'Building a Legacy for the People of Hammersmith'* by contacting the Housing Manager.



Our aims

We aim to provide high quality accommodation which is secure, convenient and comfortable in a setting that allows residents to come and go as they please.

We aim to encourage residents to remain independent for as long as possible.

We also aim to foster a strong, supportive sense of community amongst our residents, staff and trustees.

Your **agreement** with Hammersmith United Charities

Your agreement with HUC is set out in the Letter of Appointment that you signed when you moved in. Almshouses do not issue a tenancy agreement. In an almshouse charity, the equivalent is a letter of appointment, which is a licence. It also sets out the rights and obligations of a resident. In law, a resident of an almshouse charity is known as a 'beneficiary'. This is because the property is held in a trust and residents benefit from that trust because they live in the trust's buildings.

HUC cannot ask you to leave unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as when you cease to be an eligible beneficiary of the charity or you do not comply with the terms of the Letter of Appointment. Please ask if you would like us to explain the many safeguards that you enjoy both within the charity and in law.

This section gives more information about some of the items in the Letter of Appointment.

Payments: Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC) and Heating Charge

You are required to make two regular monthly payments to HUC: a Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC) and a Heating Charge. These charges are payable in advance normally by standing order. The amount of the WMC and the Heating Charge may be increased annually upon one month's notice.

The **Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC)**, which is eligible for housing Benefit, includes a service charge which contributes to:

- the upkeep of the gardens
- cleaning of communal areas
- heating & lighting of communal areas
- external window cleaning
- building insurance of the scheme
- maintenance of lift, entry phone system, TV Aerial system, fire system and appliances
- laundry facilities
- Scheme Manager's time in administering these items

The **Heating Charge** is not eligible for housing benefit and you will need to make a separate payment to cover this.

You will have other regular outgoings which are detailed under Money Matters.

Looking after your flat

HUC is responsible for internal and external repairs to your flat and the decoration. You have a vital role in looking after your flat by keeping it safe, clean and hygienic, and reporting any repairs to the Scheme Manager.

Decoration

We will try to redecorate your flat every 7 years. We will do this in consultation with you.

Repairs

All repairs should be reported to the Scheme Manager. The Scheme Manager and the Maintenance and Health & Safety Officer will assess the urgency of the repair. Our target is to complete the repairs within the following timescales:

- Emergency – within 24 hours
- Urgent – within 7 days
- Routine – within 28 days

We will let you know when an appointment with a contractor has been made and ask you to be present while the work is carried out.

Improvements and adaptations

You are not allowed to make any structural alteration to the flat, or to alter the plumbing or electrical installation without the prior consent of HUC.

Please put your request in writing to the Housing Manager, who will arrange for the Maintenance and Health and Safety Officer or a Surveyor to discuss your proposal. Your request may not be approved if the alteration is structurally unsound, the alteration would not benefit subsequent occupants, or maintenance costs would be increased.

If you need to make adaptations to your flat for mobility reasons, you can ask for advice from an occupational therapist or medical adviser.

Cleaning, rubbish and recycling

HUC is responsible for the cleaning of the communal areas and external window cleaning.

You are responsible for cleaning your flat and the inside of your windows. If you need support with any aspect of cleaning, the Scheme Manager may be able to help you to arrange this.

Refuse and recycling bins are found at the back or side of the schemes.

The Community Gardener makes compost and can advise you about what waste can be added to the compost heap; generally organic raw food waste such as vegetable peelings are appropriate.

Keeping safe and secure

There are fire call points throughout the schemes which are all connected to a fire alarm system. In addition we have installed heat detectors and smoke alarms in all the flats and in the communal areas.

At the front of this handbook you will find the Emergency Procedure; please familiarise yourself with this.

The Scheme Manager will run through the fire procedure with you and the Maintenance and Health & Safety Officer will arrange fire and evacuation drills at regular intervals.

Safety and fire prevention

Here are some safety rules and guidelines, **PLEASE:**

- take care when cooking, especially when using deep fat frying pans, as they are a fire risk
- dispose of cigarettes safely
- do not wedge fire doors open as they prevent fire and smoke from spreading
- do not attempt to put out a fire
- note that you are not allowed to have free standing electric fires, paraffin or calor gas heaters in your flat
- note that the Scheme Manager must be aware of who is resident in the scheme at any time. If you have visitors staying, or if you plan to stay away from the scheme, you must inform the Scheme Manager.

Scheme security

For the security of all residents in the scheme please make sure that entrance and exit doors and gates are closed behind you whenever you enter or leave the building.

DO NOT allow strangers to enter your home or the building, without proof of identity. **If you are in doubt please call the Scheme Manager.**

Security in your flat

For your own safety you are also advised to keep your front door closed securely. Some flats have **spy holes** or **key chains** which you can use to identify callers before opening the door. Do not keep the door chain on all the time, as this can be a problem in an emergency; use it when you need to, when someone knocks at the door.

If you have a mortice lock, please do not lock it when you are in your flat; this can delay entry in an emergency.

The master key to your flat

Scheme Managers have access to a master key to your flat, which will only be used in an emergency or with your permission.

An emergency can be: a serious water leak in your flat whilst you are out; you are 'missing' and the Scheme Manager is concerned for your wellbeing; or you have given permission to access your flat to carry out a repair or a maintenance inspection.

The Scheme Manager will not enter your flat alone; s/he would be accompanied by either a colleague or another resident and will leave a record of the visit signed by both visitors so that you know what has happened.

You can get a copy of the Flat Entry Procedure from the Scheme Manager.

This is why we ask you not to change the lock or add additional locks.

Visitors, absence, pets, TV and music

Visitors

We encourage friends and relatives to feel welcome to visit you in your home. However, your flat has been specially designed as sheltered housing for older people and is not really suitable to accommodate an extra person overnight; that is why we provide a guest flat.

Please remember that you are responsible for the behaviour of your visitors as long as they are within the scheme.

Absence from home

If you go away, even for one night, please inform the Scheme Manager. **This is important for safety reasons, for example in case of a fire.**

The trustees are obliged by the legal trust to ask that if you plan to be away from the scheme for more than 28 days in total in any one year, you must obtain permission from the Trustees via the Housing Manager. Trustees will not withhold permission unreasonably. Your flat at the scheme must be your one and only home.

Pets

The only pets allowed in the scheme are fish and small caged birds. However, your pet must not become a nuisance to other residents. If you have a pet, you need to look after it and make arrangements for its care if you are away or unable to care for it for any reason.

Television, radio, music

The sheltered schemes are eligible for a concessionary television licence where residents pay a nominal annual fee.

All flats are equipped with a TV aerial link and you are not permitted to erect your own aerial or satellite dish.

Please be considerate to your neighbours when watching TV, or listening to the radio or your music.

Personal information

The Scheme Manager keeps confidential records of your personal details, those of your next of kin and the name of your doctor. We keep and may use this information in the event of an emergency.

Any information that you give to the Scheme Manager or any member of staff is held in confidence and your privacy will be respected at all times.

HUC has a Confidentiality Policy for all staff; if you would like a copy, please ask the Housing Manager.

Moving out/end of appointment

If you wish to move out of your flat you must give written notice of at least four weeks. During this notice period, you will continue to be responsible for your WMC and heating payments even if you have already moved out.

In the event of death, the next of kin or personal representatives are responsible for WMC and heating payments until such time as the flat has been cleared of personal possessions and the keys have been returned to the Scheme Manager.

In certain circumstances, you may be asked to find alternative accommodation outside HUC. This would only happen:

- If you do not comply with the rules set out in your Letter of Appointment or elsewhere.
- If you are no longer qualified to live in an Almshouse. It is possible that your circumstances could change to make you no longer eligible. For example, if your financial position has improved significantly.
- If you are no longer able to look after yourself, even with the help of your family, carers and Social Services. In such circumstances, we may ask Social Services to assess your needs and the appropriateness of your living in an Almshouse.

We will only take this action as a last resort and after a fair process of assessment and investigation. If you are asked to leave, you will be given as much time as possible to find alternative accommodation, especially if you need to move to residential care.

If you wish to transfer to another flat within HUC, the Scheme Manager can give you a Transfer Request Form to complete. The Scheme Manager will forward it to the Housing Manager. Transfers within or between schemes can only be considered on medical or mobility grounds.

The Charity may ask you to transfer to another flat if:

- There is a need to refurbish your flat – you will be asked to transfer to a newly refurbished flat.
- Major building works necessitate that you transfer to another flat.

We will give you three months' notice of such a transfer and we will pay the removal costs.

Resident consultation

HUC is committed to resident consultation. It is a vital part of how we work. We hold regular meetings with residents; circulate monthly newsletters; and more informally the Scheme Manager keeps in daily contact with residents. We encourage and support residents to engage with us and we always aim to respond positively to views that you express.

We will keep you informed and consult you about changes in the management of the scheme which significantly affect you, for example:

- proposed works in your flat (except in an emergency) or any building works to the scheme if you are likely to be affected
- any proposed changes to the communal facilities including the garden
- before making changes to the Weekly Maintenance Contribution.

Services provided

Scheme Manager

The Scheme Manager's role is to support residents and ensure their health and welfare without interfering in their lives or intruding on their privacy; to be responsible for the running of the building; and to co-ordinate social and health services for residents in an emergency.

There is a full time Scheme Manager at both of the schemes and a Relief Scheme Manager who works across the two schemes over the weekend and during bank holidays.

Care Line

The schemes are connected to London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Care Line when the Scheme Manager or Relief Scheme Manager is not present, for example out of working hours or when the Scheme Manager is off site for meetings.

Out of hours, Care Line staff will deal with emergencies and contact the appropriate services such as ambulance, police or fire service. Care Line staff have access to the master key and may access resident's personal contact information such as doctor and next of kin.

Daily rounds: the Scheme Manager will carry out daily rounds to all the flats by a combination of means: tag system, calling the resident using the intercom of the alarm system or by visiting the flat in person. If you wish, you may opt out of 'daily rounds' by confirming this in writing.

The tag system: if you are well but do not wish to be disturbed and you do not need to be seen in person, please put your tag through the letterbox in the morning; this will let the Scheme Manager know you do not need a call.

Emergencies: in an emergency, the Scheme Manager will call for medical assistance and contact next of kin if this is warranted.

Help with arranging care: the Scheme Manager can help you if you need to make arrangements for care, meals on wheels or other support.

Scheme Managers do NOT:

- Provide personal care, do shopping or collect prescriptions, except in an emergency such as an unexpected hospital discharge or following a home visit from a doctor.
- Give injections or administer ear or eye drops; these are jobs for community nurses who are trained to carry them out.
- Look after residents' money or valuables.

Communal facilities

Communal lounge

There is a communal lounge at Sycamore House and John Betts House for the use of all residents. The lounge is available for both organised events and informal socialising by residents.

Regular coffee mornings and quizzes/games evenings are held at the schemes organised by the residents or the Scheme Manager.

Information about social events, internal and external, is publicised in the monthly Newsletter.



Communal garden

Each scheme has a communal garden which is a prized resource and is for the use of all residents. Please see over the page, the 'Gardens Code', which has been drawn up by residents and the Community Gardener.

Access to the internet

HUC provides access to the internet for residents living in the sheltered schemes who may not have their own computers or cannot easily access it due to mobility issues.

The Scheme Managers will make all residents aware of the Internet Policy. Inappropriate or illegal use of the Internet can lead to legal action, both civil and criminal, against both you and HUC.

Furthermore, the transmission or storage of obscene material is a criminal offence and may involve police action. Trustees may also take the view that residents who use the internet for such purposes are in violation of the terms of their letter of appointment and are therefore no longer entitled to live in HUC accommodation.

Please note that the computer terminals are the property of HUC and the charity reserves the right to withdraw this service if there are any concerns about misuse.

The communal gardens – garden code

- The gardens are for the community; people can sit and walk where they want, but always with respect for neighbours.
- If you smoke please, take your ash tray with you and do not leave cigarette ends.
- Children should be supervised.
- Volunteers are always welcome for watering pots, dead heading flowers and sweeping paths; there are always jobs to be done, please speak to the gardener.
- We encourage wildlife in our garden: birds, butterflies, bees.
- We encourage composting, using items such as vegetable peelings and tea bags. Please speak to the Community Gardener for what and what not to compost.

- We encourage residents to garden, whether it is in pots in front of their flats, or a piece of garden. If you have a little piece of garden, it is your responsibility for the duration. When it is returned to the community it should be as it was (and hopefully better) so it can continue to be used by someone else.
- The Community Gardener is responsible for the communal garden and will help residents within reason; you should ask for help from relatives, friends and neighbours. The Community Gardener will give advice; always consult her for planting advice as some plants are not suitable. Please chat to the Community Gardener when you want to give up or take up a plot or pots.
- We are proud of our gardens – they are a real asset to our community.

Please enjoy!

Laundry

Each scheme has a laundry which is primarily for the use of residents who do not have washing machines/dryer in their flats. For opening hours and terms of use please see your Scheme Manager.

Guest flat

Each scheme has a guest flat for the use of visiting relatives and friends.

Bookings for the guest flat at either scheme are made through the Scheme Manager, who will be able to tell you about the current charges. Priority will be given to relatives of any residents who are sick.

Bookings for longer than 14 days have to be approved by the Housing Manager. The cleaning of the flat, the washing of the bed linen and towels is the responsibility of the resident or their guests.

Parking

Residents' vehicles may not be parked at either scheme, except by special arrangement with the Scheme Manager. Vehicles may be brought onto the scheme to load or unload shopping or other items.

Further information about the facilities available at your scheme can be provided by the Scheme Manager.

Money matters

Expenses

In addition to the WMC and Heating Charge, which you pay to HUC each month, you will need to pay the following bills directly to the relevant charging authority or provider:

- Council Tax
- Telephone
- Electricity (use in your flat)
- Water Bill
- Television licence, if you are not eligible for a concessionary licence
- Contents Insurance for personal furniture and possessions.

Council Tax

You are responsible for paying your own Council Tax. You need to inform the Council Tax office at the Town Hall extension in King Street of your change of address or any other change of circumstance. If you are applying for housing benefit then the same form or on-line application will also cover a council tax claim.

Electricity meters

You will be told where your meter is when you have your induction session. Please write down details in the space at the front of this booklet.

Housing benefit

If your income consists of the basic retirement pension and you have little or no savings you may be entitled to housing benefit to help with your housing costs. You still may be entitled to housing benefit if you have an occupational pension in addition to the state pension.

Please have your housing benefit payment made directly to you and pay your WMC to HUC with a standing order.

We recommend that you make your initial claim for housing benefit on-line; the Scheme Manager can help you. The housing benefit team will then let you know when you need to present the supporting documents. You will need to take your Letter of Appointment, details of savings and income for verification.

Businesses

Please note that you are not allowed to use your flat or the communal area as a business address, to run a business or to store property connected with a business.

Wills & power of attorney

We strongly advise you to make a will. A will is essential if you wish to leave personal property to a relative or friend. You can let the Scheme Manager know where your will is kept and this will be recorded in your file. If you do, locating your Will is a simple matter in the event of your death.

A solicitor is the best person to help you make a will.

A **power of attorney** is very useful in case you should ever become unable to deal with your own affairs, both financial and health and welfare. There are two parts to a power of attorney – one to deal with finance and the other to cover health and moving into residential care.

You can consult the Citizens Advice Bureau or Age UK for information and help with wills and powers of attorney.

Gifts and legacies

The Charity has been able to build and maintain the almshouses as a result of personal bequests and donations over the centuries. If you, or a family member, or a friend wish to make a donation, you can arrange a confidential meeting with the Clerk directly without approaching the Scheme Manager or Housing Manager.

Please note that a trustee or staff member cannot accept a legacy or a gift from a resident.

When something goes wrong

Reporting an incident, accident or a near miss

If you would like to report an incident, accident or a near miss (health and safety) this needs to be recorded in the Incident or Accident Book via your Scheme Manager.

Complaints procedure

If you have a complaint or if a problem has arisen which cannot be readily solved by discussion with the other party then the following procedure should be adopted.

Many people are reluctant to complain. However, problems can only be resolved and services improved if you speak up when things go wrong. Set out below is the procedure to follow if you have a complaint in connection with the occupation of your flat or the services provided by HUC.

- Raise the matter with the Scheme Manager in the first instance.
- The Scheme Manager will aim to respond within two working days.
- If the Scheme Manager is unable to resolve the matter, please refer it to the Housing Manager, who will aim to reply to you within 7 working days.

- If you are still unhappy because the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, please contact the Clerk or a nominated Trustee. They will investigate and seek to solve the problem within 10 working days.

If neither the Clerk nor a nominated Trustee is able to deal with your complaint satisfactorily or if you have a complaint about staff employed by the charity or a serious breach of health and safety regulations, then you have the right to make a formal request to the Trustees that your complaint be considered at their next meeting.

This request has to be made in writing and addressed to the Chair. You have the right to attend this meeting and be accompanied by a friend or a professional advisor.

The Trustees will respond in writing to advise you of the action taken to resolve your complaint and notify you of any decisions that they have made.

If you still remain dissatisfied the complaint can be referred to the Independent Housing Ombudsman:

Housing Ombudsman Service

81 Aldwych

London

WC2B 4HN

When writing to the Ombudsman, please state your full name and address, telephone number and the details of your complaint. The Ombudsman will only be able to consider a complaint if he is satisfied that the Charity's own Complaints Procedure, as detailed above, has been fully exhausted and that your complaint falls within his jurisdiction.

Finally

We hope that you find this handbook useful. If you have any suggestions to improve it further we would like to hear from you. You can do this by contacting the Housing Manager.

It is up to you how you choose to enjoy your time here. If you would like to get involved in the community then we suggest you come to residents' meetings and the regular coffee mornings.

Keep an eye out for social events in the newsletter and see if there is anything that interests you.

If there is something you would enjoy but it is not currently on offer, please suggest it to the Scheme Manager or other residents to see if they are also interested.

If something is bothering you, do not withdraw or let it build up. Speak to someone about it and get someone else's views. You can speak to your Scheme Manager in confidence about any matter or if you would prefer, you can speak directly to the Housing Manager.

We hope that you will have a long and happy time living in your HUC flat.

Emergency procedures

In an emergency always dial 999. If possible inform the Scheme Manager or, during out of office hours, pull your Care Line cord.

In case of a fire

If the fire alarm sounds:

- If the fire or smoke is in your flat, then you should leave your flat immediately.
- You do not have to leave your flat if the fire alarm sounds unless the fire is in your flat, but you may open your flat door and stand in the doorway and be ready to receive further instructions.

Please DO NOT:

- Wedge fire doors open; the doors are designed to minimise the spread of fire.
- Attempt to fight a fire.
- Spend time gathering valuable and personal possessions.

Essential information about your flat

(To be completed on resident induction.)

WATER

Your valve/stopcock is located:

ELECTRICITY

Your meter is located:

The electricity supply to your flat can be turned off:

GAS

Your meter is located:

The gas supply to your flat can be turned off: