

LANCASTER CHARITY

Registered Charity No. 213461

PLATTEN AND BENSON ALMSHOUSE TRUST

Registered Charity Number: 500574

Useful information

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Who can apply for an almshouse?

Our standard eligibility criteria are as follows:-

Applicants should normally be aged 55 or over on the date of application. If you are applying as a couple, at least one partner should be aged 55 or over.

Applicants should have been ordinarily resident within the Lancaster City Council district for at least three consecutive years prior to the date of application.

As our residents are beneficiaries of the Charity, you should be of modest financial means, with no significant savings, investments, property or assets.

Anyone who does not meet these standard conditions may apply to the Trustees for special individual consideration. You can do so by submitting an application form with a covering letter, explaining the reasons why you would like to be considered outside of the standard eligibility rules.

The Trustees have absolute discretion in any eligibility decision.

How much rent do you charge?

Our residents do not pay 'rent' as they are not tenants. As beneficiaries of Lancaster Charity, they are Contractual Licensees, with all the statutory protection which that status provides.

Instead of rent, our residents pay a very modest weekly maintenance charge, which includes their water rates, gas and electricity costs, and TV licence if one is required.

Residents pay their own Council Tax, and telephone bills if a phone is installed.

The maintenance charge is reviewed annually by the Trustees, and any increase is notified in writing to each resident. For the current year, the charge is £70 per week, to be reviewed in April 2018. Whilst increases are kept to a minimum, the Charity must also ensure that our charges enable us to maintain our properties in the required condition, and to meet the ever increasing costs of repairs and energy bills.

Each resident is also required to contribute 50% of their Winter Fuel Allowance to the Charity.

Depending on your personal financial circumstances, you may qualify for assistance from the Council towards your maintenance charge and Council Tax, but you would need to enquire directly about this yourself.

What if I need any repairs or maintenance on my home?

The Charity is responsible for the upkeep of all our properties, so you don't need to worry about anything going wrong. We have a team of skilled and experienced tradespersons who have worked with the Charity for many years, who can attend very quickly to sort out things like problems with central heating, hot water, leaks, electrical problems etc. This is all at no charge, unless the problem has been caused by the resident, in which case you will be asked to contribute to the cost.

Residents are responsible for decorating and carpeting their own properties at their own expense. Furnishings, white goods and electrical appliances, and soft furnishings are not provided by the Charity.

If you wish to make improvements to your home at your own expense, e.g. new kitchens, new bathrooms etc., then you are free to do so, providing that you have permission from the Almoner. We can put you in touch with our own tradespersons, or you can arrange your own, as long as they are a reputable business.

What happens if I become ill?

All our residents must be well enough and sufficiently mobile to get about and care for themselves, although we appreciate that from time to time, people may be unwell.

We cannot offer any type of first aid or nursing care, and our wardens are there only to ensure that the appropriate medical assistance is summoned, should this be required e.g. Doctor, ambulance etc.

If your illness or health problem is just short term and you can continue to care for yourself in your own home, the Warden will provide as much practical and emotional help and assistance as possible. However, our Wardens are not able to provide any hands-on care, nursing or personal contact, and they are not allowed to help administer medication. If it looks like you will require more care and assistance with your health issues, or if they look like being longer term, then you will need to make the necessary arrangements through your family and friends, GP or Social Services etc.

If the Charity feels that for health reasons it is no longer appropriate for you to live in our property, we will discuss this with you, and it may be necessary for you to consider other types of accommodation where a higher level of care and support can be provided. We may also seek the professional advice of any healthcare professional involved in your care, such as a social worker, GP, district nurse etc.

What happens if I need emergency help?

All our sites have a resident warden who will make at least one daily check call either in person or by telephone to every resident. We also have emergency alarm call systems installed at our properties which allow you to summon assistance in an emergency. Some residents also have Lifeline alarms installed, but this is at the resident's own expense.

Can I keep a pet?

We only allow small caged birds. Cats and dogs are not permitted.

Can I have visitors?

Our residents live entirely independently, so visitors are free to come and go at any time, as long as consideration is given to other residents at all times. Some sites have a visitors log, which should be completed by all visitors for fire regulation reasons. Visitors can stay overnight at the resident's discretion, but anyone staying longer than a week must have authorisation from the Almoner. No visitor may stay in one of our properties unless the resident is also actually present.

Do you have any social events or activities?

We are not a care home or sheltered housing complex, so there are no 'organised' activities as such. However, the Charity does run a couple of social events during the year, including a summer coach trip and a Christmas Lunch. All residents are invited to come along, and these may be either free or have a very small charge.

We also hold Church services in our Penny's Hospital Chapel on King Street, usually at Easter, Harvest Festival and Christmas. A bingo evening is held at William Penny's usually once per month, which is run voluntarily by the Wardens, and we also have occasional hand and footcare events, where residents can have their toenails trimmed by professionally trained staff, and have their hands and feet pampered for a nominal charge.

From time to time, our Wardens may also arrange other 'one-off' outings or trips for a small cost if enough residents wish to participate e.g. to Blackpool illuminations.