

## Complaints Procedure

The aim of the policy is to ensure that the complaints process is flexible and responsive to the needs of individual complaints. The policy seeks to ensure that:

- residents who complain are listened to and treated with courtesy and empathy
- residents will never be disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint
- complaints are investigated promptly, thoroughly, honestly and openly
- apologies are given as appropriate
- complaints handling will comply with confidentiality and data protection policies

Complaints may be made by residents, their carers and families or a representative of a resident. The Municipal Charities of Stratford upon Avon, incorporating St Joseph's Homestead (hereinafter referred to as MCSonA) will not be able to deal with an issue through the complaints process if:

- a complaint relates to a legal matter that is already being dealt with by a solicitor
- the complainant is anonymous, unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to substantiate the complaint.

Residents are encouraged to raise minor complaints informally in the first instance, preferably verbally, as this can lead to better understanding and very often to a quick resolution of the issue.

If the complaint cannot be solved quickly or if the complaint is more serious, it should be made in writing. A written complaint should include sufficient detail to enable the charity to investigate.

Complaints should be made to the Clerk in the first instance, who will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within (7) working days. This acknowledgement will indicate the next course of action and the anticipated timescale. The charity will seek to resolve the complaint as a matter of urgency.

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome they have (14) working days to submit a written appeal, and the appeal will be dealt with by the Chairman of the Trustees who will convene a special meeting within (7) working days of the appeal being submitted.

The Chairman of the Trustees will respond in writing to the complainant within (7) working days advising of the action taken to resolve the complaint.

For residents of St Joseph's Homestead, which is not a registered provider in the context of the Regulator of Social Housing, the charity is not obliged to progress the complaint further beyond the trustee body, and the decision of the trustee body is final.

For residents of almshouses owned by the Municipal Charities of Stratford upon Avon, which is a registered provider of social housing, if the resident remains dissatisfied following consideration by, and the decision of the trustees, the resident has the right to take the complaint to The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). The resident can also ask for their complaint to be considered by a 'designated person' when the charity's internal complaints procedure is finished.

The Housing Ombudsman Service is an independent service and the contact details are:

Exchange Tower,  
Harbour Exchange Square  
Isle of Dogs, London  
E14 9GE  
Telephone: 0300 111 3000  
[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

- If a complaint is pursued unreasonably or where a resident's actions or behaviours are deemed to be unreasonable, the MCSonA reserves the right to close the complaint. A complainant who displays threatening or abusive behaviour or language (whether verbal or written), that causes staff or trustees to feel threatened, abused and/or continues to contact the charity with unreasonable demands during/following a complaint investigation, may have their appointment set aside.
- In cases where Trustees consider a complaint is being unreasonable and overly persistent and decide to bring the complaint to an end, they will inform the complainant of their reasons.

**This policy has been approved for issue by the board of trustees of Municipal Charities of Stratford upon Avon, incorporating St Joseph's Homestead**

Signature:.....

Name:.....

Date:.....