

### Issues

Almshouse property unsuitable or unfeasible due to:

- size
- location
- accessibility
- general environment
- poor state of repair
- insufficient funds to meet operational costs
- increased property expenditure
- insufficient beneficiaries

### What do the trustees need to think about?

- Remodelling existing property to increase size.
- Refurbishment or extension to increase accessibility, eg stairlifts.
- Sale and acquisition of alternative property.
- Funding available for remodelling/refurbishment.
- Increasing Weekly Maintenance Charge (WMC).
- Suitable budgeting.
- Appropriate methods of advertising vacancies (see below).
- Amending area of benefit or beneficial class.
- Merger or working collaboratively.

### Information available from National Almshouse Association: [www.almshouses.org](http://www.almshouses.org)

- Standards of Almshouse Management.
- General advice on property issues through correspondence and visits.
- Advice on obtaining a surveyor to ascertain physical state of building assets.
- Funding advice to improve or upgrade property.
- Various publications and articles.
- Appropriate methods of advertising vacancies.

### Information available from Charity Commission website: [www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk)

Publications and Guidance – Publications – Quick Links.

- *Disposing of charity land* (CC28).
- *Collaborative working and mergers* (CC34).
- *Changing your charity's governing document* (CC36).

Publications and Guidance – Guidance – Operational Guidance – Numerical Link of Operational Guidance.

- Permanent endowment (Operational Guidance OG44).
- Disposals of charity interests in property (Operational Guidance OG54).
- Almshouse charities (Operational Guidance OG65).

## Information available from other sources

The Housing Corporation provides a range of publications, funding advice and good practice guidelines ([www.housingcorp.gov.uk](http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk)).

## When is the Commission's authority needed?

To amend the beneficial class or area of benefit.

To dispose of designated land (unless the land is being replaced or a power exists to dispose of specie property).

To borrow from the charity's permanent endowment with replacement.

If a charity does not have power to merge or its governing document requires Charity Commission consent to dissolve or merge.

## What information does the Commission require?

- reasons for vacant properties;
- numbers of vacant properties;
- length of time properties have been empty;
- methods used to advertise for beneficiaries and over what period of time;
- other sources used for potential referrals to the charity eg church, other faith groups, social services, other charities or voluntary organisations, local authorities;
- number of failed applications received due to applicants not meeting the existing beneficiary criteria (if possible);
- the outcome of having contacted the NAA and/or the Housing Corporation (if registered with them) for advice and support;
- new beneficial class or area of benefit;
- proposal for merger.

## How do the trustees obtain authority?

The trustees will need to complete an application for a Scheme using one of our forms CHY-ST1(A) or CHY-ST1(B). We will forward the form to the trustees once we have agreed to make a Scheme.

## How is the Commission's authority given?

A Scheme will be required to alter the charity's purposes or when trustees are disposing of designated land, sometimes referred to as specie land, no longer required for the purposes of the charity, and they have no intention of replacing it (unless the trusts of the charity include a suitable constitutional power of amendment which the trustees can use to adopt a power of disposal). The Scheme will also provide an outlet for the proceeds of the disposal if the governing document does not contain any suitable trusts.