

### Almshouses Elevator Pitch

What’s an elevator pitch?? - Ever found yourself struggling to explain almshouses to someone when you only have the time it would take to travel up a few floors in an elevator?

**We have put together some helpful pointers and text below that you may find useful:**

#### Key messaging

- The aim of almshouse charities is to provide warm, safe, secure homes at an affordable cost for local people in housing need.
- Almshouses are over 1000 years old, approx. 36,000 people rely on almshouse charities for their homes and there are over 1,600 almshouse charities.
- Most are small with no more than 20 cottages.
- Almshouses are established by gift or legacy and run by volunteers.
- Almshouse charities are recognised for nurturing community living where residents can call upon neighbours and trustees when needed, whilst also retaining their independence
- Research has shown that almshouses have a huge effect on combating loneliness and isolation and improve well-being.
- In some rural areas almshouses are the only form of social housing.

#### Pitches

**General:** Almshouses are the oldest form of charity and the oldest form of low-cost, community housing for local people in housing need. The architectural design and implied spirit of almshouses promotes neighbourliness and well-being by reducing isolation and loneliness yet still allows independent living. They are micro-communities that offer companionship and remain a permanent part of the community in perpetuity so generation after generation of people in housing need will have a warm, safe place to call home in their local community.

**Fundraising:** Almshouses were developed through independent philanthropic giving and still rely on volunteers to run them today. Residents pay a weekly maintenance contribution set below market rent in the area. This helps towards the cost of ongoing maintenance, however, to ensure the almshouses are fit for 21<sup>st</sup>-century living additional funds are often needed.

Almshouses represent some of the most significant historic buildings in our villages, towns and cities. The charities take great care to maintain and protect our national heritage, but work needed is sometime beyond the funds of the charity, particularly if the building is listed.

Charities often need support in developing long term plans, including building new almshouses, installing new technology and alarm systems for their residents and training volunteers and staff.

**About The Almshouse Association:** The Almshouse Association acts as an umbrella organisation established by members to represent, train, support, and guide almshouse charities. The Almshouse association often lends or offers grants to protect and improve member charities almshouses.