



Frequently asked questions

In this document we have tried to cover as many of the most frequently asked questions we think you might have about the closure of Willesden Court and Swallow Wood.

If you have a question which is not answered here, please email chiefoperatingofficer@mha.org.uk and we will respond to you direct.

Why are you closing these care homes?

As a charity, we need to make sure we are financially resilient. At times, that means we need to make difficult decisions if we want to be able to provide support and care in the future.

The two care homes that are closing have enabled hundreds of people to live later life well over the years. But they have come at a cost to the charity. While the homes have good occupancy rates, they are running at a financial loss. This is because where they have local authority funded places, the councils meeting those costs pay far below what it costs MHA to deliver care for residents. This is not something that we can sustain.

There continues to be chronic underfunding in the social care sector, including inadequate funding from central government. The pandemic, energy bills, and the workforce crisis have also had an impact on MHA, like care providers everywhere. Alongside this, in many areas, resident occupancy has not recovered at the pace we had hoped. We have looked at the option of selling the homes as going concerns but, due to their funding arrangements not covering the homes' costs, sadly this is not a viable option.

We would like to thank the teams at the homes for their hard work and dedication in creating vibrant homes for our residents and wish everyone well for the future. The closure of the homes is not a reflection on their hard work and dedication, but more on the overall situation facing MHA and the sector.

Why are you not selling these two homes as you did with the others announced in 2023?

The homes we have sold were identified as part of a strategic review of our services, started in 2019 and paused while we responded to the pandemic.

We have looked at the option of selling the two homes but, due to their funding arrangements not covering the homes' costs, sadly this is not a viable option.

Can we move to another MHA home?

MHA will support every existing resident to find their next home. If there are rooms available in our care homes, and they can meet your level of needs, then you will be able to move there.

How do we find out about other homes nearby?

We have produced a list of nearby care homes which provide suitable care to meet the needs of residents living in the home. In addition, we are speaking with the local council along with the others which fund residents, and they will also be providing support to you and your family to help you find a suitable new home.

We're funded by the local council or local health body. Will this continue?

This funding should continue and move over with you to your new home. In addition, we will be working closely with them and their appointed social worker, as well as health bodies, to identify a new home.

When will the home close?

Typically, it takes around six to eight weeks to close a home, depending on how quickly residents are able to find a new home.

You haven't given us much time to find a new place?

Please be assured that MHA will give you all possible help and support to find a new home by the anticipated closure date.

We want to avoid a long period of uncertainty, which can increase your anxiety. In addition, we know the importance of the home's community and want to avoid people living in a home which is almost empty.

What happens if we cannot find another place in time?

We are confident that everyone will be able to find a new home within the anticipated timescale. If anyone is unable to find a new home within the timescale, we will offer you the nearest MHA home that has a suitable vacancy.

Is there an appeal process against the decision?

The decision to close the homes was taken by our Board of Trustees. It was not an easy decision to make but, as a charity, we have to make sure that we use our resources wisely to support the most amount of people we can. Now the Board has made its decision, there is no appeal process.

What will happen to people who work at the home?

We will consult with members of the team to avoid redundancies where possible and explore all other alternatives, such as redeployment in MHA homes. However, the roles of all colleagues at the care home will be at risk of redundancy and we ask for your sensitivity at this challenging time.