



The Abbeyfield (Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead) Society Ltd.

Summary of findings from The Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead Society's self-assessment of our complaint handling procedures in 2025/26 Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead Society adheres to The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code (the Code).

As part of compliance with the Code, an annual self- assessment of our complaint handling procedures is completed. Accessibility and awareness There are multiple routes available to make a complaint, including by email, telephone, by post, or by speaking to any member of staff. The self-assessment for the year ending 31 March 2026 was completed by the Business Operations Manager and approved by The Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead Society Board, on 28th May 2026. No complaints were received in this period of reporting.

The self-assessment showed Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead Society was compliant in lines with the Housing Ombudsman but will remain committed to ensure that all standards are continually met, and best practices are reviewed. You can download the full self-assessment, which includes planned actions to achieve compliance and associated dates, from the Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead's website.

The latest version of our Complaints, Concerns and Compliments policy was approved by the Board of Trustees on 28th May 2026. See our Making a Complaint guide for residents and their representatives for full details of our policy. Definition of a complaint Abbeyfield has adopted the standard definition of a complaint as: "an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents." Exclusions from the policy are clearly set out and deemed to be reasonable and fair. Where an issue cannot be addressed via the complaint's procedure, details of an alternative means of resolving the issue would be given to the complainant and they would be advised of their right to access the Ombudsman, as appropriate.

While we recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint, work is underway to ensure repair and maintenance requests are escalated into the complaints process at standard junctures, if the request is not completed in a timely or satisfactory way. Representatives may submit complaints on a resident's behalf provided they have authority to do so. Information on how to make a complaint is included on the dacorum.abbeyfield.com website.

Abbeyfield has a commitment to make any reasonable adjustments necessary, where an individual has any difficulty in raising a complaint, in line with our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, and Accessible Information policies. We regularly advise residents about our complaints process. Our Making a Complaint guide is given to all prospective residents, and on display in our houses and homes, alongside posters advertising the complaints process. Complaint handling personnel We have a named Complaints Officer, who administers and coordinates any complaints received.

We are a member of the Abbeyfield Society.

A company limited by guarantee having no share capital. Registered charity 262424. Registered in London 955757
Registered Office: Annett House, Common Gardens, Potten End, Hertfordshire, HP4 2RH

T: 01442 871239 E: bom@abbeyfieldbhh.co.uk Web: www.abbeyfelddacorum.co.uk



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As the House Manager, the Complaints Officer has sufficient seniority to ensure complaints are resolved quickly and fairly. The relevant Business Operations Manager for the houses would investigate any complaints – although we reallocate investigations to a Trustee if a conflict of interest is identified. All Managers and Directors have received training on the complaints process from the Business Operations Manager.

We will always try to resolve a complaint at the earliest opportunity, in agreement with the complainant. We have developed a clear procedure for frontline staff on how to address service-level complaints to ensure issues raised to the staff team at a house are resolved within the same day or escalated to the complaints process. When a complaint is made, we aim to log and acknowledge the complaint within two working days. Our complaint acknowledgement letters set out our understanding of the complaint and the desired outcomes for the complainant to confirm.

In line with the Code, we have developed a procedure for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives when pursuing a complaint. Our complaints procedure now has two stages in line with best practice outlined in the Code. The Stage 1 response is provided within ten working days from acknowledgement of the complaint – unless an extension has been arranged. Extensions of more than ten working days are subject to agreement with the complainant. The Stage 1 response letter will always include details of the findings, actions or proposals to resolve the complaint, details of how to escalate and the contact details for the Ombudsman, if relevant to the complainant. Complainants are not required to put a request to escalate to Stage 2 in writing. A letter acknowledging the escalation request will be sent to the complainant setting out our understanding of the outstanding issues and the desired outcomes. At Stage 2, the Business Operations Manager will review the complaint and the Stage 1 investigation. Following Stage 2, complainants may take their complaint directly to the Housing Ombudsman. Details of the relevant Ombudsman are provided at every stage.

Putting things right Where something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge this and take appropriate steps to put things right. The template response letters include a section on what actions have been taken as a result of the complaint. Where appropriate,

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