

Appendix A: Self-assessment form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 1.2 | <p>A complaint must be defined as:</p> <p><i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i></p> | Yes | Point 2 in the complaints policy | Definition of a complaint in the complaints policy |
| 1.3 | <p>A resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy.</p> | Yes | Clarified under point 2 in the complaints policy | Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead recognises that the word complaint does not have to be used in order for it to be treated as such. While the policy is aimed at residents or their representatives, the above definition is extended to cover an expression of dissatisfaction from any stakeholder |

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| | | | | affected by the standard of service, actions or lack of action from The Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead Society or those working for us. |
| 1.4 | Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly. | Yes | Clarified under point 2 in the complaints policy | A service request may precede a formal complaint if appropriate action is not taken to resolve the issue for residents as early as possible. A complaint will be raised when the resident raises dissatisfaction with the response to their service request. “ |
| 1.5 | A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains. | Yes | Point 3 in complaints policy | Different channels are offered to the residents to support them in the ease of making a complaint if required. Residents will always be given a complaint form even if they have not requested one, this will then be noted in their resident record. |

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| 1.6 | An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain. | Yes | <p>Details of the complaint policy is available throughout the houses and details are provided on a The Making a Complaint Guide is available on the Abbeyfield website and in hard copy at each service, alongside printed Complaints posters on noticeboards.</p> <p>a downloadable copy is available via the complaints section of the Abbeyfield website (https://www.dacorum.abbeyfield.com/complaints-process/).</p> <p>feedback publication.</p> | <p>Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel and Hempstead distributes the annual Housing Residents' Satisfaction Survey to the residents.</p> |

Section 2: Exclusions

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 2.1 | Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint, they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits | Yes | Investigation will be completed for each complaint Exclusions identified in section 1 | Routes are via the Abbeyfield website, the Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead website, by email, post, telephone (which is managed by Senior Response), through a representative using any of the above channels, or in person to any member of staff who will pass onto the Complaints team. |
| 2.2 | A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been | Yes | Section 1 of complaints policy | Exclusions detailed in the policy |

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| | <p>filed at court.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. | | | |
| 2.3 | Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so. | Yes | Section 1 in policy | Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead Society will always review prior to decision being made. |
| 2.4 | If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint. | Yes | Section 5 in policy | Our society will cooperate with the Ombudsman during any investigation and comply fully with the resulting final decision, which will be binding. If there is doubt about how a matter should be addressed, external professional advice would be obtained. |
| 2.5 | Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. | Yes | Pg 6 of complaints policy allows resident to outline their individual complaint | An individual investigation will be completed for each complaint received. The Business Operations Managers can act sensitively and fairly, have access to staff at all levels, and have the authority and |

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| | | | | <p>autonomy to resolve disputes. Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead undertakes values-based interview processes to ensure those investigating complaints are suitable to do so.</p> <p>In addition, all staff will receive Customer Service training in the future via our new training portal.</p> |
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Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 3.1 | Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process. | Yes | <p>(https://www.dacorum.abbeyfield.com/complaints-process/).</p> <p>Contact details outline in the complaints policy. Routes are via the Abbeyfield website the Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead website, by email, post, telephone (which is managed by Senior Response), through a representative using any of the above channels, or in person to any member of staff who will pass onto the Complaints team.</p> | <p>If the individual has difficulty in making a complaint using one of the options listed above, Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead will make all reasonable adjustments necessary to enable them to raise their complaint. All complainants will be treated in line with our Equality and Diversity policy.</p> <p>All staff are required to undertake mandatory Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training.</p> |
| 3.2 | Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any | Yes | Policy distributed via atlas employee portal and requires acknowledge from all staff to say it has | All staff have read and signed the complaints |

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| | way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord. | | been read and understood. | policy |
| 3.3 | High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain. | Yes | Under repairs policy all residents are given feedback slip to complete to support them in informing the house | Regular resident meetings are held in the house to give additional opportunity for residents to discuss any issues or concerns |
| 3.4 | Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website. | Yes | https://www.dacorum.abbeyfield.com/complaints-process/). | Compliant policy is advertised on the resident notice boards and on our website. |
| 3.5 | The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code. | Yes | Section 3,4 and 5 of policy Making a Complaint Guide | The Making a Complaint Guide leaflet outlines the number of stages, what is involved at each stage and the |

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| | | | | <p>timeframes for responding. The leaflet is available on our website with hard copies at each service and was last updated in August 2023 by Abbeyfield.</p> <p>The Complaints Leaflet will be made available in large print, Braille, audio and in translated versions where the need is identified</p> |
| 3.6 | Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord. | Yes | Page 6 of complaints policy | <p>States” if you would like us to send a copy of this form to someone else who may be able to help sort out your complaint, please enter their contact details overleaf”.</p> <p>If a face-to-face meeting is held all residents are given the opportunity to be accompany</p> |
| 3.7 | Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the | Yes | Making a Complaint Guide And in complaints policy section 5 | Advertised on communal noticeboards |

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| | Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint. | | | Stage 1 response template letter notifies the complainant of their right to contact the Housing Ombudsman at any time for advice. |
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Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 4.1 | Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties. | Yes | The Business Operations Managers normally handle complaints– however, we will reallocate complaints to alternative Investigating Officers where a conflict is identified, or this is requested by the complainant. | This is identified in the complaints policy |
| 4.2 | The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly. | Yes | Outlined section 3 of policy | Senior role in the organisation |
| 4.3 | Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively | Yes | | The Business Operations Managers can act sensitively and fairly, have access to staff at all levels, and have the authority and autonomy to resolve disputes. Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel |

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| | | | | <p>Hempstead undertakes values-based interview processes to ensure those investigating complaints are suitable to do so.</p> <p>In addition, all staff will receive Customer Service training in the future via our new training portal.</p> |
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Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 5.1 | Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain. | Yes | Complaints policy | The complaint handler would be fully aware of the process required to be followed. |
| 5.2 | The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion. | Yes | Complaint policy | No extra stage policy states we will try and resolve the issue informally on the day. Stage one is investigation. |
| 5.3 | A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process | Yes | 2 stages outlined ins section 3 of policy | <p>Stage 1 investigation stage</p> <p>2 review</p> <p>As per the Complaints</p> |

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| | unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman. | | | policy: <i>"In line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, there are two stages to our internal complaints process."</i> |
| 5.4 | Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes. | Yes | | Policy procedure is followed in all cases. |
| 5.5 | Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code. | Yes | | Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead is fully aware |
| 5.6 | When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as "the complaint definition". If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification. | Yes | Section 1 &3 of complaints policy | "We will log details of the complaint and acknowledge it in writing to the complainant within 5 working days of receipt" |
| 5.7 | When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify | Yes | | "If the complainant express a desired outcome that we believe is unreasonable, we will explain our position at |

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| | any areas where this is not clear. | | | the outset, while continuing to investigate. |
| 5.8 | At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully. | Yes | | The complaint handler would be fully aware of the process required to be followed. |
| 5.9 | Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint. | Yes | Timescales set in section 3 | An investigation will be carried out and a full written response.....provided within 10 days which maybe be extended by a further 10 working dayssubject to agreement. |
| 5.10 | Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review. | Yes | Recorded on resident record and monitored through their life plans. | , Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead will make all reasonable adjustments necessary. All complainants will be treated in line with our Equality and Diversity policy. |
| 5.11 | Landlords must not refuse to escalate a | Yes | | Exclusions included in |

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| | complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code. | | | policy. All complaints actioned upon in line with policy. |
| 5.12 | A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys. | Yes | Complaints folder, paper based in house and on box. | All house holds a complaints folder paper and digital. |
| 5.13 | Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation. | Yes | | Face to face meeting will be held so discussion and agreement can be made. |
| 5.14 | Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review. | Yes | Anti social behaviour policy | Meetings would be held and documented. Reviewed in their life plan meetings Monitored by house managers. |
| 5.15 | Any restrictions placed on contact due | Yes | | Equality Act will be followed. |

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| | <p>to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.</p> | | | <p>Any characteristics will be taken into consideration prior to any action. If a complaint is accompanied by inappropriate behaviour (e.g. aggressive or abusive) from the complainant, Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead will seek to manage this behaviour separately...Actions to manage a complainant's behaviour may include warning the individual about their behaviour and requesting modifications, appointing a specific point of contact, or communicating only in writing. Any restrictions due to unacceptable behaviour will be agreed with the HR Partners, be proportionate and in line with the Equality Act 2010."</p> |
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Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 6.1 | Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident. | Yes | | We encourage all residents "Please provide as much information as possible to help us consider all of the facts and respond quickly." |
| 6.2 | Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received</u> . | Yes | Outlined in section 3 of policy | |
| 6.3 | Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged. | Yes | Outlined in section 3 of policy | |
| 6.4 | Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. | Yes | Outlined in section 3 of policy | |

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| | Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident. | | | |
| 6.5 | When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman. | Yes | Making a Complaint Guide | Details provided at the prior to submission of complaint |
| 6.6 | A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident. | Yes | Section 3 complaint policy | A full written response , including any actions planned. <i>“Once the Stage 1 investigation has concluded, the findings will be communicated to the complainant, alongside any action taken and our proposals to resolve the complaint.”</i> |
| 6.7 | Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. | Yes | | A full written response , including any actions planned. <i>Once collated, the evidence should be reviewed against:</i> <i>Abbeyfield</i> <i>Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead’s policies and procedures</i> <i>Relevant legislation</i> |

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| | | | | <p><i>and regulations, where applicable Resident information and literature”</i></p> <p>Final response of the procedure states: <i>“The final response letter should include: details of the findings...”</i></p> <p>The Stage 1 template response letter has a section for the findings to be detailed.</p> <p>The Complaints Officer monitors complaint responses whenever possible to ensure these cover all relevant points before issue.</p> |
| 6.8 | Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being | Yes | | <p>1.1 Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation either to the Complaints team or directly to the Investigating Officer (or other staff member), these will be</p> |

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| | <p>investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.</p> | | | <p>incorporated into the Stage 1 response if they are relevant, and the Stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the Stage 1 response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues will be logged as a new complaint and the complainant informed.”</p> <p>This happens in practice which can result in more than one open complaint from the same complainant, when necessary.</p> |
| 6.9 | <p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is | Yes | | <p>All information will be provided. The society has never encountered this.</p> |

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| | not satisfied with the response. | | | |
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Stage 2

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 6.10 | If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response. | Yes | Outlined in complaints policy | As per the Complaints policy: <i>"In line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, there are two stages to our internal complaints process."</i> |
| 6.11 | Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received. | Yes | As per policy | Stage 2: Review of the complaint and subsequent investigation by a Director of the procedure: <i>"The Complaints Officer will send the standard written acknowledgement of escalation letter to the complainant(s) within five working days of receipt of the request" and "If it is unclear, the Reviewing person will ask the complainant to clarify which aspects of the complaint</i> |

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| | | | | <p><i>have not yet been resolved and what outcome they are seeking from the review.”</i></p> <p>The standard acknowledgement of escalation letter states: “<i>We understand that your outstanding dissatisfaction relates to < details to be added, e.g. the Stage 1 response failing to provide adequate compensation for the delay xxx> We understand that you would like < e.g. further compensation and an apology in recognition of the manner in which the situation has been handled >. If the above is not an accurate summary of the reason for the request to escalate your complaint, please let us know or by using the contact details provided below.</i>” “</p> |
| 6.12 | Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response. | Yes | | <p>if the complaint remains dissatisfied, they may escalate the complaint to stage 2 by notifying the BOM in person or using the contact details above”</p> |

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| 6.13 | The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1. | Yes | Complaint handler tiers in process for escalations | House Manager- BOM- Board of Trustees |
| 6.14 | Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged. | Yes | | Timescales of the policy, Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead's Stage 2 response timescale is 20 working days: " <i>Stage 2 decision – a full written response will be provided within 20 working days from the request to escalate.</i> |
| 6.15 | Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident. | Yes | | <i>If this is not possible, Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead will contact the complainant, explain why, and agree a new response time, which will only exceed a further 10 days by exception."</i> |
| 6.16 | When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman. | Yes | Making a Complaint Guide | Outlined in letter |
| 6.17 | A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding | Yes | | As per stage 1 |

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| | actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident. | | | |
| 6.18 | Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. | Yes | | Outlined in response letter |
| 6.19 | <p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the complaint stage; the complaint definition; the decision on the complaint; the reasons for any decisions made; the details of any remedy offered to put things right; details of any outstanding actions; and details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied. | Yes | | <p>Stage 2: Review of the complaint and subsequent investigation by a director of the procedure: <i>“The response letter must include: the outcome of the review; any further action that has or will be taken, if appropriate (see ‘Putting things right’);</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>confirmation that the internal complaints procedure has now concluded;</i> <i>details of how to escalate the complaint if the complainant</i> |

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| | | | | <p><i>remains dissatisfied – by contacting the relevant Ombudsman and requesting a review, if appropriate.”</i></p> <p>The Stage 2 template response letter is structured to ensure all of these areas are covered. The Complaints Officer monitors complaint responses whenever possible to ensure these cover all relevant points before issue.</p> |
| 6.20 | Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response. | Yes | | All relevant parties will be involved. Legal input response will be requested if necessary. |

Section 7: Putting things right

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 7.1 | Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include: | Yes | | <p><i>The specific actions that may be taken include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Providing an apology to the complainant,</i> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures or practices. | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Providing information or an explanation to the complainant.</i> • <i>Reviewing resident literature (leaflets, posters etc.)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reviewing an operational process.</i> • <i>Reviewing a contractual agreement with a third-party supplier.</i> • <i>Requesting a review of a policy.</i> • <i>Arranging training or guidance for staff members involved."</i> |
| 7.2 | Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified. | Yes | | <p>This will be followed and completed under our outlined process: "Where the investigation (Stage 1) or the subsequent review (Stage 2) identifies that a complaint should be upheld, the Investigating Officer or Reviewing Director will clearly outline the actions that Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead has</p> |

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| | | | | or intends to take to put things right to the complainant; Ensure the required actions are taken through to completion. |
| 7.3 | The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion. | Yes | | This will be followed and completed under our outlined process: "Where the investigation (Stage 1) or the subsequent review (Stage 2) identifies that a complaint should be upheld, the Investigating Officer or Reviewing Director will clearly outline the actions that Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead has or intends to take to put things right to the complainant; Ensure the required actions are taken through to completion. |
| 7.4 | Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies. | Yes | | Guidance will always be reviewed |

Section 8: Putting things right

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 8.1 | Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord. | Yes | Repairs policy, outlines the actions under putting thing right | Additional tools, TSM which also reflects the level of complaints received and an improvement plan |
| 8.2 | The annual complaints performance and | Yes | Completed assessment and | Re submitting on correct |

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| | service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this. | | report on website Complaints policy on website | form All complaints are reported and discussed at Board meeting. |
| 8.3 | Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures. | Yes | | Not applicable at present |
| 8.4 | Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation. | Yes | | |
| 8.5 | If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code. | Yes | | |

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 9.1 | Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint. | Yes | Board meeting notes | Reviewed and action plan agreed at Board meeting. Lessons learnt process (led by the Business Operations Manager) will support a review beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint where the procedure is followed. |
| 9.2 | A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery. | Yes | | Reviewed and action plan agreed at Board meeting. |
| 9.3 | Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees. | Yes | Resident meetings Board meetings Managers meetings | Where a complaint investigation uncovers significant findings, Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead will undertake a review in line with our Lessons learnt policy. The findings of lessons learnt exercises from complaints will be |

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| | | | | <p>shared with the Board, via the Business Operations Manager.</p> <p>Regular reports on the volume, category and outcome of complaints, as well as complainant satisfaction and compliance with set timeframes, will be provided to the Board, via the Business Operations Manager. The Business Operations Manager, who has lead responsibility for complaints, will decide what data is required by the Board to provide insight on Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead's complaint handling performance.</p> <p><i>On an annual basis, the Business Operations Manager will review the organisation's complaints handling procedures and publish the results of the self-assessment to the</i></p> |
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| | | | | <i>Board, circulate to houses for display on noticeboards and place on Abbeyfield's website. Data related to complaints will also be published in the organisation's Annual Report."</i> |
| 9.4 | Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision. | Yes | | Business Operations Manager. House managers review monthly the feedback slips from all repairs |
| 9.5 | In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC'). | Yes | | Executive Chair |
| 9.6 | The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings. | Yes | | The Business Operations Manager, who has lead responsibility for complaints, will decide what data is required by the Board to provide insight on Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead's complaint |

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| | | | | <p>handling performance. All complaint details are discussed with Chair and details provided. Chair reports to board via chair report.</p> |
| 9.7 | <p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report. | Yes | | <p>Regular reports on the volume, category and outcome of complaints, as well as complainant satisfaction and compliance with set timeframes, will be provided to the Board, via the Business Operations Manager. The Chair of the Board, who has lead responsibility for complaints, will decide what data is required by the Business Operations Manager to provide insight on Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead's complaint handling performance.</p> <p>On an annual basis, the Business Operations Manager will review the organisation's complaints handling procedures and</p> |

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| | | | | <p>publish the results of the self-assessment to the Board, circulate to houses for display on noticeboards and place on Abbeyfield's website. Data related to complaints will also be published in the organisation's Annual Report.</p> <p>The details of any cases involving the Ombudsman are shared with the Board on a quarterly basis.</p> |
| 9.8 | <p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body. | Yes | | <p>Our policy sets out the standard objective for all staff members.</p> <p>The Abbeyfield Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead Behaviours, which all staff are expected to model. Individual role profiles, particularly for Managers within the organisation, have reference to specific competencies in relation to customer service and</p> |

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| | | | | complaints where relevant. |
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