

# **Abbeyfield South Molton**

## **Complaints Policy**

Registered charity number: 292552

Company number: 1955490

Date: July 2025

Review Date: July 2026

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This policy applies to Abbeyfield South Molton and seeks to ensure that Abbeyfield South Molton's complaints process is flexible and responsive to the needs of individual residents to enable them to be heard and understood.

Abbeyfield South Molton's complies with the Complaint Handling Code (the **Code**) issued by the Housing Ombudsman Service. All complaints dealt with under this policy will be dealt with in a manner consistent with the Code and the Charity will maintain all records as required by the Code.

- 1.2 A **complaint** is defined as: "an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by Abbeyfield South Molton's, its trustees, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.
- 1.3 The word "complaint" does not need to be used expressly for the matter to be considered a complaint. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction Abbeyfield South Molton will give them the option to make a complaint. Complaints made by residents may be made by the resident's carer, family members or a representative of a resident and these must be handled in line with Abbeyfield South Molton's complaints policy.
- 1.4 Complaints can be made to any staff member of Abbeyfield South Molton. This can be done in a number of ways which include:
- Telephone
  - Face to face
  - Email
  - Letter
- 1.5 A service request is a request from a resident requiring action to be taken to put something right. (e.g., to carry out routine maintenance etc.)

- 2.3 Unless excluded on other grounds, Abbeyfield South Molton will accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue. Where there are good reasons to do so, Abbeyfield South Molton will also consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside the time limit.
- 2.4 If a complaint is not accepted a detailed explanation will be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and their right to take that decision to the Ombudsman (see details below). The Ombudsman may direct the Abbeyfield South Molton to take on the complaint.

### **3 Unreasonable behaviour**

We understand that residents can get upset and frustrated when things have gone wrong.

- 3.1 If Abbeyfield South Molton feels a complaint is pursued unreasonably, including any actions or behaviours of the resident/representative, these complaints will be reviewed in line with Abbeyfield South Molton unreasonable behaviour policy.
- 3.2 All complaints will be reviewed on an individual basis
- 3.3 If any restrictions are put in place, these will proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.4 Abbeyfield South Molton will ensure any restrictions will be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly and the complainant updated following the review.
- 3.5 Any restrictions in place will not prevent Abbeyfield South Molton from ensuring the complaint can be taken be through the full complaints process.

### **4 Accessibility and awareness**

- 4.1 Complaints will be dealt with in a manner that is consistent with Abbeyfield South Molton Equality & Diversity Policy and the Charity's duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.2 If any individual making a complaint wishes Abbeyfield South Molton to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate an individual's particular needs, they, or their representative, can contact Abbeyfield South Molton by phone, email or in person to discuss what adjustments may be possible.
- 4.3 Abbeyfield South Molton acknowledges that a high volume of complaints must not be seen as negative, as this can be indicative of a well-

- 7.1 Abbeyfield South Molton will acknowledge the complaint and make a record, within 5 working days. The acknowledgement will:
- (a) summarise Abbeyfield South Molton understanding of the complaint (The complaint definition);
  - (b) make clear which aspects of the complaint Abbeyfield South Molton is, and is not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear;
  - (c) summarise Abbeyfield South Molton understanding of what the Complainant is seeking as an outcome;
  - (d) raise any questions that require clarification from the Complainant; and
  - (e) set out the next course of action and anticipated timescale.
- 7.2 Abbeyfield South Molton will issue a full response within 10 working days from the complaint being acknowledged. In exceptional cases, if we anticipate that the complaint will take longer to resolve, this will be explained to the resident with a clear timeframe set out for the resolution of the complaint which will not exceed a further 10 working days, without good reason. If any further extensions are required, this will be in agreement with resident who will be updated at regular intervals. Such explanation should also include the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman.
- 7.3 A complaint response will 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 will be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.
- 7.4 We will investigate the complaint in an impartial manner permitting all relevant parties to provide information. The resident and any third parties involved in the complaint should be given the opportunity to set out their position before any final decision is made. We may delegate the management and investigation of the complaint to another individual.
- 7.5 If the staff member dealing with the complaint is conflicted, or the complaint relates to that staff member, the complaint should be directed to the manager details are in the Residents' Handbook.
- 7.6 If the complaint involves questions relating to the Abbeyfield South Molton or the resident's legal obligations, Abbeyfield South Molton will set out clearly our understanding of the respective legal obligations and may seek legal advice before doing so.
- 7.7 If new issues are raised by the resident during the stage one process, these should be dealt with as part of the process if they are relevant. However, if the issues relate to a different issue and/or are raised after

timeframe set out for the resolution of the complaint which will not exceed a further 20 working days. If any further extensions are required, this will be in agreement with resident who will be updated at regular intervals. Such explanation should also include the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman.

- 8.6 A complaint response will 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 will be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.
- 8.7 In responding to the stage 2 complaint, we will confirm in writing:
- (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 the Housing Ombudsman will be provided if the resident is not satisfied with the response.

## **9 Putting things right where something has gone wrong**

- 9.1 Where something has gone wrong Abbeyfield South Molton will acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:
- 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.
- 9.2 Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.

Telephone number: 01769 572119

Address: Duffield Court,  
West Street,  
South Molton,  
EX364DG

Email address: southmolton@abbeyfield.com

### 13 Housing Ombudsman Service

The contact details for the Housing Ombudsman Service are:

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Address: Housing Ombudsman Service,  
PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

**This policy has been approved for issue by:**

Signature: pp. N. Kingdon

Name: Neil Kingdon

Position: Chairman

Date: 21/7/25

**Abbeyfield South Molton**

**Registered charity number: 292552**