

Complaints and compliments

Independent Living with Care schemes where
we are members of the ARCO Consumer Code



How to complain or give feedback

We aim to provide high quality services across all of our work, however, sometimes things can go wrong and we don't do as well as we should. If this happens, please tell us so that we can try to put things right. We're committed to dealing with complaints quickly, fairly and effectively. We will not treat you any differently if you make a complaint.

We also welcome positive feedback such as compliments as well as suggestions you have for making our services better.

We aim to:

- encourage customers to give us feedback to help us to learn and improve
- keep you up-to-date with how we are dealing with your complaint
- make sure that our staff know how to resolve complaints quickly
- treat complaints confidentially
- record, monitor and report on the complaints we receive

Is making a formal complaint the only way to resolve a problem?

No, the staff on site can help with any concerns you have. They are there to help you, so feel free to talk to them. They may be able to deal with your concerns without you needing to make a formal complaint.

What you can complain about:

Please use our complaints process if you think we have failed to deliver what we promise. Examples might include situations where:

- we haven't delivered the service as well as we said we would
- we have failed to comply with one of our policies or procedures
- you are dissatisfied with how our staff or contractors have behaved
- we have acted unfairly.

How to complain, make a compliment or give feedback:

You can give feedback in lots of ways – by filling in a complaints form, by letter, fax, telephone, in person or by email. You do not have to put it in writing if you don't want to and our staff will help you if necessary. We will accept a complaint written by someone else for you, as long as you confirm they are acting on your behalf, and we will work with them to resolve your concerns.

This leaflet applies only to customers in our Independent Living with Care services that have been registered with the Associated Retirement Community Operators (ARCO) and therefore come within the scope of the ARCO Consumer Code (see www.arcouk.org/consumercode).



Our complaints process

Stage One

When we receive your complaint we will assign it to the most appropriate member of staff to respond. We will send you an acknowledgement letter within two working days and a full written response within 10 working days. One of our staff will always try to contact you personally at this stage to discuss how we can resolve things. This ensures you can tell us how you think we can put things right. If we think we won't be able to respond to your complaint within our target time-scale we will contact you to explain why and agree a new response time.

Stage Two

If you are unhappy with our response at stage one you can ask for your complaint to be escalated to Stage Two. You do not need to write in with further information to support a Stage Two review (unless you want to do so). We will send you an acknowledgement letter within two working days and a full written response within 10 working days.

Stage Three

If you are still unhappy with our response at Stage Two you can ask for your complaint to be escalated to stage three when it will be considered by a member of our Board and a Senior Manager. Again, you do not need to write in again or give any reasons for seeking a Stage Three review (unless you want to do so). We will send you an acknowledgement letter within two working days and a full written response, our final decision, within 15 working days.

We will always provide a final decision in writing within 56 calendar days of receiving a complaint, unless we have previously agreed a later deadline with you.

If you are still not happy

Complaints about housing services

If you are still unhappy with our Stage Three decision you may refer your complaint to a 'designated person' such as a councillor or MP.

The designated person's role is to help to resolve local complaints. If they think they can't help you with your complaint and you give them permission, they can refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service. The Localism Act 2011 also gives you the right to refer your complaint directly to the Housing Ombudsman Service eight weeks after the end of our own complaints process.

The Housing Ombudsman will investigate your complaint in line with their own procedure and will contact both you and Abbeyfield to tell us the outcome. We will co-operate with the Ombudsman Service during any investigation and comply fully with the final decision, which will be binding on us.

Complaints about care services

For all care services provided by Abbeyfield, customers also have the right to refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) who deals with complaints about adult social care providers. You can take your complaint to the LGO 12 weeks after raising your concerns with us. To do so you can complain online, by phone or by post.

Care services provided by Abbeyfield will also be registered with and regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The CQC do not directly deal with complaints from customers but they nevertheless encourage customers to raise concerns with them as this can inform the way they inspect services.

We respect the rights of our residents to complain to these statutory bodies and we will work openly with partner agencies to resolve any legitimate concerns that our customers raise. We will co-operate fully with the Ombudsman Service during any investigation and comply fully with the final decision, which will be binding on us.

Contact details

The Abbeyfield Society

You can send your complaint or suggestion by email to:
complaints@abbeyfield.com

The information you provide will be sent directly through to the Complaints Officer.

Complaints Officer
The Abbeyfield Society
St Peter's House
2 Bricket Road
St Albans
Herts
AL1 3JW

Telephone: 01727 857536
Fax: 01727 734060

Housing Ombudsman Service (Complaints about Housing Services)

Complaints about housing services provided by Abbeyfield can go to the Housing Ombudsman once you have completed Abbeyfield's internal complaints procedure and have our 'final decision':

The Housing Ombudsman
Exchange Tower
Harbour Exchange Square
London E14 9GE

Telephone: 020 7421 3800
Lo-call: 0845 712 5973
Minicom: 020 7404 7092
Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Local Government Ombudsman (Complaints about care services)

Complaints about care services provided by Abbeyfield can go to the Local Government Ombudsman once you have completed Abbeyfield's internal complaints procedure and have our 'final decision':

PO Box 4771
Coventry
CU4 0EH

Phone: 0300 061 / 0845 602 1983
Fax: 024 7682 0001
Website: www.lgo.uk

Care Quality Commission

Care Service Users may also contact the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to explain their concerns. CQC is the independent body that registers, inspects and reports on care services. Although they do not formally investigate all complaints, they may consider them as part of their inspection activity.

CQC National Customer Service Centre
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA

Telephone: 03000 616161
Fax: 03000 616171

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