

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2024-25

A REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS IN 2024-2025

During 2024 to 2025 we received 1 (one) complaint from the son of a gentleman (the deceased) who had signed a tenancy agreement in 2022 but had never taken up residence at Abbeyfield House in Ripon due to his sadly passing away before he could move in.

The complaint (received in June 2025) related to payments made by the deceased to secure his room in advance of moving in and to cover the notice period of one month required by our tenancy agreement as set out below:

“In the event of [a resident’s] death, the tenancy may be ended by your authorised representatives **giving us no less than 4 weeks’ written notice.**”

The relevant period was July-October 2022 (ie the date the agreement was signed through to the expiration of notice). The deceased’s son felt he should be reimbursed the rent due for the 4 weeks’ notice required by the tenancy agreement.

Our Complaints Officer pointed out that:

- (a) The events complained of had taken place more than two years previously and so fell outside the general 12-month limitation period for making complaints.
- (b) Even if this had not been the case, no money was repayable as the payment in question was legally due under the tenancy agreement (as set out above).
- (c) We had already reduced all the amounts payable so as to allow for the fact that no meals were taken and felt that we had tried to be as fair as possible.

Having informed the complainant that we could not entertain the complaint, we notified him of his right to contact the Housing Ombudsman and provided him with all the necessary details.

Nine months have now passed and, having heard no more, we assume the complainant accepted there was no case to answer and did not pursue the matter further with the Housing Ombudsman.

Learning from complaints to improve services

Issue	Learning point
The complaint related to the section of our tenancy agreement that asks for 4 weeks' notice by a tenant's representatives following their death. The resident's representative thought this was unfair.	Although 4 weeks' notice following death is clearly stated in our tenancy agreement and is both accepted practice and essential to our financial viability, it might be that we need to draw attention to this when residents are given the agreement for signature.

Conclusions:

Having received only one complaint – and this being from the son of someone who never became a resident, more than two years after the event and for a reason that ultimately proved invalid – we feel that, as things stand, we are complying with our responsibilities. That said, we recognise that it is important to remain vigilant so as to continue to successfully comply with such responsibilities.

BOARD'S RESPONSE TO THE ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

On 18th MARCH 2026, the Board received:

- The 2024/25 annual complaints performance and service improvement report for residents living in a home owned by Abbeyfield (Ripon & District) Society Ltd and managed by Sharon Mitchell.
- An update to the complaints policy for residents living in a home owned by Abbeyfield (Ripon & District) Society Ltd and managed by Sharon Mitchell to meet the requirements of the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024.
- A self-assessment against the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024.

The Board has a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) who provides additional assurance to the Board on the effectiveness of Abbeyfield (Ripon & District) Society Ltd's complaints system. The MRC and the Board have considered and approved the self-assessment that the Charity complies with all aspects of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024.

Abbeyfield (Ripon & District) Society Ltd adopts the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction. This gives the Board assurance that Abbeyfield (Ripon & District) Society Ltd is recording an accurate volume of complaints, as the Board does not believe that a low volume of complaints would be a positive sign. A complaints management system has been in place throughout 2024/25. This has provided the Board with additional assurance on the accuracy of data on complaint handling.

One of Abbeyfield (Ripon & District) Society Ltd's values is 'we learn'. As a small provider with no more than 10 residents at any time, the Board considers a summary of each complaint and the lessons learned from individual complaints. Given our size, Abbeyfield (Ripon & District) Society Ltd does not have enough complaints to learn from trends. But our learning from individual complaints shows that communication is a key factor across complaints. The Board will monitor the feedback on communication through the single complaint reported to the Board during 2024/25.

The Board of Abbeyfield (Ripon and District) Society Ltd are committed to providing the best service possible for our residents. We feel that compliments, complaints and feedback about our services allow us to continually improve what we do and how we do it.

Our residents are fully aware of our complaints procedure, a copy of which is available for them to read in their dining room. We are aware that our residents are not always comfortable with, or able to use, the Internet which is why we feel it is important for them to have access to our complaints procedure in a physical format.

We also provide each resident, on arrival, with a handbook in which we make them aware of our complaints procedure.

Our residents know to whom they can bring any complaints and, as a small housing charity, we would always hope to deal with, and resolve, any complaints in a speedy and efficient manner.

We comply with the Code and are confident that the self-assessment is a true reflection of our complaint handling.