

# ANNUAL COMPLAINTS, PERFORMANCE, AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT 23-24



## Overview

Between April 2023 and March 2024, we received five complaints from tenants living within the 115 homes owned by Abbeyfield South Downs. Our homes were within six sheltered housing schemes for older people during this period.

Scheme	Homes	Complaints	% / Homes
ALF	9		0%
AYM	18		0%
BCH	9	1	11%
BEA	9		0%
HOL	48	4	8%
CAD	14		0%
LAD	8		0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4%</b>

[1] Complaint related to our repairs and maintenance service. [1%]

[1] Complaint related to staff conduct. [1%]

[2] Complaints related to meal service provision. [2%]

[1] Complaint related to how we dealt with a tenant-to-tenant issue. [1%]

**100%** of complaints were concluded with Abbeyfield South Downs 'Stage 1' reply

No complaints were escalated to 'Stage 2'

No complaints were referred to or investigated by the Housing Ombudsman Service in 2023/24.

## Lessons Learnt

Tenant-to-Tenant—We must provide clearer information on the landlord's role in tenant-to-tenant disputes. This could have prevented the need to raise a complaint, which resulted in a review of our anti-social behaviour policy.

Meal Service – The meal service provision offers at least four choices daily. Staff tried to accommodate every individual's preference, which proved unsustainable. The tenant's service expectation must be commensurate with the catering service charge. Tenants are encouraged to notify staff immediately if a meal is unsatisfactory, so that it can be rectified. They are also invited to attend the regular food forum meetings to contribute menu suggestions and provide feedback.

Service changes must be thoroughly planned, explained, and communicated to tenants to avoid dissatisfaction.

## Service Improvements

Review of our complaints procedure in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

Completion of the complaint handling self-assessment

Review of our anti-social behaviour policy.

Identifying the difference between a service request and a complaint.

Staff training in the complaint handling code will continue as part of our 24/25 review process. To ensure we identify all complaints from service requests and record them appropriately.

Review of low complaint numbers against the annual tenant satisfaction measure surveys [TSM]. To satisfy ourselves that tenants know how to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied.

A meal opt-out scheme was implemented within the scheme for self-contained flats following discussions with tenants. This promotes independence and choice, while tenants continue to benefit from the communal living environment and the option to opt back in if their circumstances or wishes change.

### **Conclusion**

The complaints received covered a range of issues. The lower number of complaints did not indicate particular themes or trends. However, any single complaint provides us with the opportunity to consider whether the problem is isolated to a specific scheme or a potentially broader issue that requires further review of the scheme or a quality review across the organisation. Abbeyfield South Downs staff will continue working proactively to promptly solve tenants' service requests, preventing the need to raise a complaint.

Nikki Moss  
General Manager

---

## **BOARD'S RESPONSE TO THE ANNUAL COMPLAINTS, PERFORMANCE, AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT 23/24**

On 12 May 2025, the Board received:

**Annual complaints performance and service improvement report 23/24** - The report reflects the information our Operational Management team provided at each quarterly board meeting. Throughout the year, the Board discussed and examined the information provided.

**Complaints policy** – Reviewed to meet the requirements of the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024.

**Self-assessment** against the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024.

Abbeyfield South Downs adopts the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction. This assures the Board that Abbeyfield South Downs is recording an accurate volume of complaints.

The Company Secretary is the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) who provides additional assurance to the Board on the effectiveness of Abbeyfield South Downs' complaints system. The MRC and the Board have considered and approved the self-assessment that Abbeyfield South Downs complies with all aspects of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024.

The Board will continue to review the number of complaints against the annual tenant satisfaction surveys to ensure that tenants are aware of how to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied and that their voice is heard. The Board will monitor the feedback and outcomes at the quarterly board meetings.

Ian Thomas  
Chair

Peter Anderson  
Company Secretary