THE ABBEYFIELD BASILDON SOCIETY LIMITED

THE RESPONSE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO THE ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 01.04.23 TO 31.03.24

On 30 June 2025, the Board received:

• the 2023/2024 annual complaints performance and service improvement report for residents living in our two Houses;

• the Complaints Policy for residents living in our two Houses, updated to meet the requirements of the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024; and

• the current self-assessment against the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024.

There has been an extended and regrettable delay in the processing of this response which has resulted from Trustee illness and for which the Board collectively apologises. We strive hard to deliver high quality services, but we accept that we may not always get it right and, when we do not, we will acknowledge this and attempt to correct it.

The Board has a Member Responsible for Complaints (the MRC) who provides additional assurance to the Board on the effectiveness of Abbeyfield Basildon's complaints system. The MRC and the Board have considered and approved the current self-assessment that Abbeyfield Basildon complies with all aspects of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024. The Board is satisfied that we have now ensured that all of our policies are in alignment with the Code although the Board accepts that they were not in alignment during the reporting period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The Trustees use their monthly Executive Meetings to discuss and challenge the data and information provided to the Board.

Abbeyfield Basildon adopts the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction. This gives the Board assurance that Abbeyfield Basildon is recording an accurate volume of complaints. The Board acknowledges that a low volume of complaints is not necessarily a positive sign. A new complaints management system is now in place and this will provide the Board with additional assurance on the accuracy of data on complaint handling.

One of Abbeyfield Basildon's values is 'we learn'. The Trustees will consider at their monthly meetings a summary of all complaints received and will discuss the lessons to be learned from individual complaints. Given our size, Abbeyfield Basildon does not have enough complaints to learn from trends. However, we will strive to learn lessons from our discussions about individual complaints and to make any necessary improvements. Communication, openness and transparency are key factors in ensuring that we have an effective system for encouraging and handling complaints. We will strive to improve the effective operation of our complaints handling procedure through training and greater staff awareness. The Board will be vigilant in monitoring the feedback on individual complaints from our House Managers.