

TITLE			
THE ABBEYFIELD PIRBRIGHT AND DISTRICT SOCIETY LIMITED Complaints, Concerns and Compliments Policy			
Owner:	Executive Committee	Approval Date:	March 2025
Approved by:	Ann Bourne, Chair	Planned Review Date:	March 2028

Version	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1.0	Creation of Policy	Carol Clarke	March 2025

1. Background

The Abbeyfield Pirbright and District Society Limited (known as Cunningham House) is committed to providing the highest possible quality of service to residents and others who access our services.

We actively encourage complaints and compliments. Feedback – whether positive, negative or neutral – from residents, their friends and family members, and other stakeholders is an opportunity to learn about our strengths and to understand our weaknesses, and is key to ensuring that Cunningham House is consistently meeting the needs of those using our services.

Where an individual is dissatisfied with the level or type of service that they have received from Cunningham House, it is important that they let us know. Cunningham House aims to use any complaints received as an opportunity to learn and improve our services.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure that all complaints are handled promptly, fairly, consistently and confidentially (in line with data protection regulations)
- Be clear about who is responsible for complaints at each stage, ensuring that designated individuals are not the subject of the complaint and that, as the complaint is escalated, it is dealt with by a more senior member of Cunningham House. In particular, the Chair will not usually be involved at Stage 1
- Ensure records are kept of all complaints and prompt review of their handling in order to drive improvement
- Ensure details of complaints are included in our annual report
- ‘Put things right’ where a complaint identifies that we have failed to deliver a service to the expected standard

3. Scope

This Policy is intended to cover current and prospective residents and their representatives but, with the exclusions below* also applies to any stakeholder who wishes to make a complaint about Cunningham House. Complaints should be made as soon after the event as possible (or came to the attention of the complainant), and ideally within 12 months.

If the complainant expresses a desired outcome that we believe to be unreasonable, we will explain our position at the outset, while continuing to investigate.

If a complaint is accompanied by inappropriate behaviour, we will seek to manage this behaviour separately in line with the Equality Act 2010.

*The following are excluded from the scope of this policy:

- Resident complaints about another resident, for example of bullying or harassment, or complaints about a resident from someone outside Cunningham House. These are dealt with in line with our Professional, Ethical and Legal Boundaries Policy
- Staff complaints, which are dealt with in line with our Staff Disciplinary and Grievance Policy
- Complaints about something for which Cunningham House is not responsible (for example, care a resident receives from an external agency). With permission, we will share such concerns with the relevant organisation, or signpost the complainant to the organisation's complaints procedure.
- Complaints already subject to legal proceedings, or relating to an issues likely to be dealt with by our insurers.

Where there is doubt about which policy is applicable, the Chair of the Executive Committee will make a decision.

4. Defining a Complaint

The term complaint is defined here as:

- 'An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents' residents'
- We recognise that the word complaint does not have to be used in order for it to be treated as such. This policy is intended for residents but also covers an expression of dissatisfaction by any stakeholder affected by the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Cunningham House. Conversely, a request for a service is not in itself a complaint – it is only where the request for service is not dealt with adequately or within a reasonable timescale that it would become a complaint.

5. Our Complaints Process

Cunningham House aims to make it easy for residents and stakeholders to make a complaint by offering a choice of channels that can be used and ensuring that the Cunningham House policy is publicised by:

- Providing information on the complaints process in the residents handbook
- Putting information on the complaints process on the Cunningham House website

We will accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so.

Where a resident or their representative is dissatisfied with any aspect of the service provided by Cunningham House, the first course of action should be to raise the problem directly with the relevant manager or individual concerned. We will try to resolve the issue informally on the day it is raised, and, in most cases, will be able to do so quickly and satisfactorily.

Where an individual is having difficulty in making a complaint, we will make all reasonable adjustments to assist the complainant in registering the complaint. A representative can attend any meeting on a residents behalf.

At all stages, please provide contact details, details of the complaint and any suggestions you may have for resolving the complaint. Anonymous complaints will be investigated under the same procedure; however, it is better where contact details are provided so that we can inform the complainant of the outcome of our investigation.

Complaints received via social media will receive a generic response and be passed to The Chair of the House Committee to be addressed through the standard procedure. Where the complaint is made publicly on social media, confidentiality cannot be protected.

Where the issue raised cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint can be made using the procedure below.

Stage 1: Investigation

Complaints can be made to the House Manager:

- In person or via a representative
- By email cunninghamhousepirbright@gmail.com
- By telephone at 01483 488751
- By post, address Cunningham House, School Lane Pirbright, Surrey GU24 0JN

If the complaint relates to the House Manager, complainants may contact The Chair of the House Committee. A form is included with this policy for complaints to use to record their complaint, if desired.

We will log details of the complaint and acknowledge it in writing to the complainant within **5 working days** of receipt. We will set out our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking.

An investigation will be carried out and a full written response, including any actions planned, will be provided **within 10 working days**, which may be **extended by a further 10 working days**, where necessary, subject to agreement with the complainant. A response will be provided as soon as the answer is known. The complainant will be asked if their complaint is resolved and if they are happy with the way in which it has been dealt.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may escalate the complaint to stage 2 by notifying the House Manager in person or using the contact details above. Requests for Stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged **within 5 working days** of the request being received. Residents are not required to explain reasons for requesting a Stage 2 consideration.

Stage 2: Review

When a complaint is escalated, the complainant and its Stage 1 investigation will be subject to a full review by the Cunningham House Complaints Officer. The current contact details of the Cunningham House Complaints Officer can be found on our website.

We will provide a full written response within **20 working days** from the request to escalate. Where this is not possible, an explanation will be given and an agreement reached to extend the response period by no more than **a further 10 working days**. All outstanding actions will be tracked with appropriate updates provided. Complainants will receive a written statement of the complaint, a decision and reasons for that decision, and details of any outstanding actions by staff members. The complainant and all staff involved in the complaint will be informed that the response following Stage 2 concludes Cunningham House's internal complaints procedure.

6. After conclusion of our complaints process

Cunningham House is registered with the Ombudsman Service – Housing. The complainant can be referred to:

- The Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ
- Telephone 0300 1113000
- Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

A complainant is required to wait eight weeks following conclusion of Cunningham house's complaints process before taking the complaint to the Ombudsman directly. They may choose to refer the complaint to a 'Designated Person' (such as their MP or local councillor) during this time to help them resolve the complaint or refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman on their behalf.

Cunningham House will co-operate with the Ombudsman during any investigation and comply fully with the resulting final decision, which will be binding.

At each stage of the Complaints Process we will deal with complaints on their merits, give residents the chance to present their case, address conflicts of interest and carefully consider the evidence.

7. Putting things right

Where we have failed to deliver a service to the expected standard we will seek to resolve the complaint and to 'put things right' – this may include an apology, corrective action, including, where appropriate, making a compensation payment. Any significant findings will result in a review and any lessons learned will be recorded. We will agree the timing of any remedies with the complainant, following the Ombudsman guidance.

8. Reporting on Complaints

The Executive Committee/Board will have access to full records of any complaints received at Cunningham House. A self-assessment to review the volume, outcomes, complainant satisfaction and compliance with timeframes will be undertaken on an annual basis.

Legislation requires that details of the number, content and results of complaints received are to be shared with residents and published in the Annual Report.

9. Linked Policies

- Staff Disciplinary and Grievance Policy
- Professional Ethical and Legal Boundaries Policy

THE ABBEYFIELD PIRBRIGHT AND DISTRICT SOCIETY LIMITED	
Complaints Form	
Please fill in this form and send it to Lucy Beasley, House Manager	
Name	
Address for reply	
Phone number	
Address of your home (if different from above)	
In the space below, please tell us about the service or event you are commenting on or complaining about, when the incident happened, who was involved and so on. Please provide as much information as possible to help us consider all of the facts and respond quickly.	
Signed:	Date:

If you would like us to send a copy of this form to someone else who may be able to help sort out your complaint, please provide their contact details.