

# Abbeyfield

Where older people find care in housing



2010

## OUR STRATEGY FOR GROWTH A SUMMARY

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## Foreword – Abbeyfield, the next 10 years

Abbeyfield was founded on the basis of helping to alleviate loneliness amongst older people. This purpose remains as relevant today as ever.

Our mission is *‘to enhance the quality of life for older people’*. We recognise that in order to do this we need to first understand, and then meet the changing needs and expectations of our residents. We have conducted a wide range of market research to help us gain this insight.

Our strategy for the next 10 years is one of growth, which will build on the heritage of The Abbeyfield Society.

New ways of providing services that provide companionship and alleviate loneliness within the communities in which we operate have been developed that will help us to provide our residents with a home for life. We see the increasing provision of personal care as being an essential element of Abbeyfield development in the future and the new models will increase our capability in this respect. We will offer residents flexibility in the tenure options available, and will enhance their lifestyle through a range of services that are easily accessible and integrated into the local communities.

We believe some of our existing stock will not meet the needs of future residents. In order to fund new developments and make the appropriate level of investment in our existing properties, we will therefore sell such stock in order to raise capital. We also intend to make use of Abbeyfield’s strong balance sheet and borrow up to 25% of the value of that balance sheet. This debt will supplement our own cash resources, social housing grants, and the contributions received via fundraising.



**John Robinson, Chairman,  
The Abbeyfield Society**



**Paul Allen, CEO,  
The Abbeyfield Society**

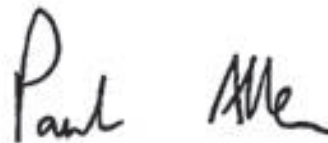
Member societies are the foundation of Abbeyfield. We will provide member societies with the leadership and challenge that will stimulate future growth. We intend to grow Abbeyfield across both the centrally managed operations and across member societies.

In order to manage the growth aspirations and deal effectively with future challenges, we believe that some smaller societies will need to merge with other societies, creating larger, more viable entities.

Volunteers have traditionally been the lifeblood of Abbeyfield and will continue to be at the centre of our organisation. They are an essential part of the Abbeyfield ethos.

To ensure our future viability we expect to generate a modest operational surplus for reinvestment. We will create a Residents Charges Assistance Fund that will help those who most need financial assistance.

We believe that our charitable status, our volunteers, the provision of companionship and high standards of care differentiate Abbeyfield from other providers of Housing and Care and allow us to clearly position Abbeyfield as a unique provider of housing and care for older people in the future. Together, we will continue to enhance the quality of life of older people.

Handwritten signature of John Robison in black ink.Handwritten signature of Paul Mc in black ink.

*“If only we could have a house in every street to which everyone could come.....then everyone could be treated the same and share equally the kindness of the community around them”*

Richard Carr-Gomm

## 1. ABBEYFIELD

The Abbeyfield Society is a charity that was formed in 1956 by Major Richard Carr-Gomm, who noticed that in the neighbourhoods around Bermondsey, South London, many of the older residents appeared lonely and somewhat isolated from the rest of the community.

Using his army gratuity, Richard bought a modest terraced house in Bermondsey, and invited four local, older neighbours to come and join him. By Christmas 1956, Richard had become the very first Abbeyfield Housekeeper.

From this initial house in London, The Abbeyfield Society has grown to over 700 locations across the United Kingdom, and now provides over 7000 older people with a range of sheltered housing and residential care services.

The need to help alleviate loneliness amongst older people is as important and as relevant today, as it was over half a century ago when Abbeyfield was formed.

This document outlines Abbeyfield’s strategy for the coming 10 years. This strategy is fundamentally one of **growth**, enabling Abbeyfield to provide services to a greater number of older people.

*“The need to help alleviate loneliness amongst older people is as important and as relevant today, as it was when Abbeyfield was formed.”*

## 2. THE ABBEYFIELD MISSION – OUR FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE

Abbeyfield’s mission and ethos are essential elements of this strategy, and the Abbeyfield mission has been re-worded as follows:

*“To enhance the quality of life for older people”*

The Abbeyfield ethos characterises the way in which the culture of our houses and homes create an environment within which care and support are provided for ‘the body’ and companionship and fulfillment are provided for ‘the soul’.

*Volunteering has always been, and will continue to be fundamental to our ability to create and sustain the Abbeyfield ethos, and deliver our mission.*

Volunteering has always been, and will continue to be fundamental to our ability to create and sustain this ethos, and deliver our mission. Volunteers play a critical role in enhancing the quality of life of our residents in a wide range of roles including organising social trips and activities, and the governance of member societies.



### 3. ABBEYFIELD – AN EVOLVING SERVICE PROVIDER FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Abbeyfield Society directly manages around a third of the Abbeyfield houses and homes across the United Kingdom from the national office based in St. Albans. The other two-thirds are operated by independent member societies. This strategy document overarches the entire organisation.

It is well documented that the population of the United Kingdom is increasing in number each year. In particular, the number of people aged 85 and over is rapidly increasing; as people enjoy longer, healthier and more active lives than previous generations.

These changes in the general population can also be seen in the groups of residents who live in Abbeyfield properties across the country. 20 years ago, the average age of a resident moving into an Abbeyfield house was 65 years, whereas today it is 87 years. This change means that residents are moving to us when they are frailer than the generations that have gone before them, and often need to arrange for additional personal care to be supplied, even when they are living independently in sheltered accommodation.

The ‘baby boom’ generation have generally experienced a very different life to their parents. They are much more demanding as consumers, and a large majority have enjoyed being able to own their own property. It is expected that these characteristics

*“Residents are moving to us when they are much older and much frailer than the generations that have gone before them”*

will remain with them and they will be far more critical as consumers in their later years, demanding better quality and more choice in how housing and care are provided to them.

Abbeyfield has traditionally provided bed-sit accommodation within

properties that were initially built for family living and that have subsequently been converted to Abbeyfield houses of multiple occupancy. It is often difficult to provide increasing levels of care within these properties and despite modifying the accommodation to include en-suites, the popularity of this type of housing is decreasing.

Government research, along with research conducted by Abbeyfield, concludes that the majority of older people would like greater choice when it comes to choosing suitable retirement accommodation. While bed-sit accommodation continues to meet

the needs of some older people, many others would clearly prefer to be able to move into small, easy to manage 1 or 2 bedrooms flats, with separate living and sleeping spaces.

This means that vacancy levels within bed-sits are rising and it is taking longer to fill vacancies when they arise. In some cases, despite considerable efforts to fill houses, new residents are not forthcoming, making it very difficult for the house to remain viable, or provide the remaining residents with the vibrant community environment that is central to Abbeyfield life.

This challenge faces the entire movement and it is expected that some sheltered houses will need to be closed in the future in order to invest in new facilities that are sustainable by providing older people with a range of high quality accommodation options.

*“Many older people would clearly prefer to be able to move into small, easy to manage 1 or 2 bedrooms flats, with separate living and sleeping spaces.”*



#### 4. ABBEYFIELD – PUTTING OUR RESIDENTS AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO

In order for Abbeyfield to grow in a way that continues to meet the needs of our current and future residents, it is important that we understand the changing needs, aspirations and expectations of older people and reflect these in the services that we offer.

In order to understand what our residents are likely to expect in the future, Abbeyfield have consulted with both current and potential future residents. Our results are consistent with other national demographic research, and have informed many of our strategic decisions.

*“The future for Abbeyfield sheltered housing will be determined by our ability to provide modern, well-designed accommodation”*

Most of the research available, our own included, concludes that people want to remain in their own homes for as long as possible, but that when they do need to move they want flexible care and support packages that can be tailored to their changing needs.

Above all else, people want to know that they are going to be safe and secure when they decide to move and need the confidence that the house or home they are moving to will be able to adapt to their changing needs as they age, and provide them with an increasing level of care. Our future residents will want to move once, and only once; in essence they will want a home for life, and this is what Abbeyfield will strive to provide.

The future for Abbeyfield sheltered housing will therefore be determined by our ability to provide modern, well-designed accommodation that provides residents with more space and enables them to enjoy an independent lifestyle which is consistent with the life they have led in their younger years. This means that additional services need to be integrated into our service delivery model, that allow care to be provided as and when residents need it.

Abbeyfield already has a well-established and successful residential care model that we intend to develop further by increasing the service we offer within this sector. Included in this will be an increase in the provision that we make for residents that are living with dementia.

Abbeyfield have defined three models of service delivery that will be the main focus of future investment.

#### **4.1 Abbeyfield Independent Living with personal care**

Abbeyfield Independent Living will build on our tradition of providing affordable housing, which supports older people to continue to live independently in a sheltered and community environment.

Comprising of purpose built 1 and 2 bedroom flats that are located near to local facilities, residents will be offered a range of tenure options. This means that depending of an individuals own financial priorities, they will be able to either own, rent or take an equity share in the property they are living in.

These new flats will be completely self-contained, enabling a resident to live independently, while still having social spaces that facilitate Abbeyfield community living. This way, residents have greater flexibility over meals and can prepare food and receive guests in their flat, as well as eating in the communal dining room shared by all residents.

One of the benefits of building this type of accommodation is the ability to integrate into the design the features that are needed in order to easily be able to deliver an increasing level of personal care into each of these flats. By being able to provide this, residents will not need to worry about moving should their care needs increase.

Should the needs of residents living with dementia increase, then they will need to move in order to receive the specialist care that they deserve, and Abbeyfield are increasing the provision in this area.



## 4.2 Abbeyfield Residential Care

Abbeyfield's current model of providing residential care is very successful, with the majority of care homes being rated as Excellent or Good by the Care Quality Commission, and we are committed to developing the provision we make in this area.

New Abbeyfield Residential Care developments will be purpose built and smaller in number than most other providers, to enable us to maintain the close community and non-institutional environment that is enjoyed by our current residents, whilst continuing to provide the highest quality service to each individual resident, in their own en-suite room.

Personal care and support will be provided 24 hours a day, in line with individual residents care plans and an increasing proportion of residential care accommodation within Abbeyfield will be registered to care for residents living with dementia, so that their needs can continue to be met, if their requirements should change.

## 4.3 Abbeyfield Integrated Living

Abbeyfield Integrated Care developments will be purpose built and will see a range of accommodation types within the one location. This means that residents will be able to choose and move between Abbeyfield Integrated Care and Abbeyfield Residential Care services, as their needs change.

Abbeyfield Integrated Living will provide residents with a service that will encompass independent living, residential care, respite care and dementia care on a single site.

A larger development of this nature will have a range of tenure options available to residents and will be located close to local amenities. However, a greater range of services will also be integrated into the development itself, allowing residents to enjoy a range of leisure and social facilities, as well as flexibility over where and when they choose to take their meals.



## 5. ABBEYFIELD – QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND CARE FOR ALL

One of the likely longer term effects of the recent economic downturn is a permanent change to the pensions industry. For residents in receipt of a company pension, the impact of this change is likely to be low over the next 10 years with such residents continuing to enjoy the benefits of a final salary pension, but future generations may have significantly reduced incomes giving rise to an increased need for affordable housing and care.

Providing Care in an affordable manner is a national issue and the UK is currently in a period of uncertainty as far as the future funding of Care is concerned.

It is likely within the UK that our aging population coupled with a declining birth rate will place an increasing strain on public expenditure. This is likely to widen the gap between the cost of and the funding of both housing and care and those who rely on state contributions to currently pay for their accommodation will be increasingly in need of alternative financing should benefits such as Supporting People no longer be available.

*“Abbeyfield will assist those residents who most need it through the development of a Resident Charge Assistance Fund.”*

Future residents may therefore potentially have lower income levels but be asset-rich and we therefore need to explore new financial models for housing and care including tenancy options that allow an equity stake.

There is a clear and growing demand for affordable services from the charitable sector and Abbeyfield will financially assist residents in need through the development of a Resident Charge Assistance Fund, to ensure that our services are made available and accessible to all members of society.

## 6. ABBEYFIELD – INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

The three models will form the backbone of our investment in new developments and over the next 10 years Abbeyfield intend to invest £140 million in new directly managed facilities of these kinds and will facilitate investment of a similar level across the movement, partly supported by a number of loans and grants to member societies.

Developments of these types will be funded through a combination of Abbeyfield capital investment; social housing grants; borrowing up to 25% of the development cost; and through fundraising.

In addition to investments in new facilities, we also need to make appropriate investment into our existing houses and homes.

We believe that our future residents will require more than the bed-sit type accommodation that many of our properties currently provide and so within 5 years, it is likely that up to half of our existing directly managed sheltered houses will need to be closed. Houses run by member societies face a similar challenge and again it is likely that some houses will need to be closed.

However, sheltered housing remains an integral part of Abbeyfield's service provision and we will invest in the properties that we are committed to retaining in order to provide the best possible accommodation to our residents.

Abbeyfield already has a strong residential care business with a higher than average percentage of homes being rated as 'Excellent', and with waiting lists of residents wanting to move into many homes. Increasing our capacity to provide residential care to a greater number of people is critical to Abbeyfield as we grow and develop.

Abbeyfield are actively pursuing new ways to provide care to a wider number of older people and are exploring ways through which we can deliver domiciliary care, a service that both meets a clear need and serves as a means of enhancing the quality of life for older people.

Member societies deliver around two-thirds of Abbeyfield's services and a vibrant, viable and sustainable membership is crucial to the growth of the organisation.

*“Increasing our capacity to provide residential care to a greater number of people is critical to Abbeyfield”*

The challenges faced by member societies are exactly the same as those encountered by the organisation as a whole and in many cases larger member societies have more options available to them that allow them to thrive in the future.

In order for member societies to be viable, Abbeyfield believes that an increasing number of smaller societies will need to merge with each other and mergers of this nature will be both encouraged and facilitated. It is estimated that over the next 10 years, the number of member societies will have reduced from the current level of 225, to fewer than 100, but that the number of residents provided for will grow. By merging together and forming larger societies, Abbeyfield will be able to deliver quality, affordable housing and care that meets the needs of our future residents.

## **7. ABBEYFIELD – THINKING AHEAD**

It is clear that with a growing population of older people, the demand for support and care services is going to steadily increase over the coming years.

Abbeyfield is in a strong position to deliver a range of new services and accommodation types by building upon our traditional purpose of helping to alleviate loneliness, and our mission to enhance the quality of life for older people.

We realise that in order to do this we must invest in our existing properties, while at the same time develop new services and accommodation facilities across the UK, so that the needs and expectations of our current and future residents are not only met but exceeded.

*“Abbeyfield – enhancing the lives of older people.”*





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