

TITLE		Falls in Housing Policy	
Policy ref:	R021P	Approval date	October 2023
Owner	Director of Housing Operations	Planned review date	October 2026
Department(s):			
Approved by	Theresa Wilson (Director of Housing Operations), Julie Freear (Customer Operations Director)		

1. Background	Abbeyfield recognises that falls and fall-related injuries are a common and serious problem for older people. People aged 65 and older have the highest risk of falling, with 30% of people older than 65 and 50% of people older than 80 falling at least once a year. For the older person involved, the human cost of falling includes distress, pain, injury, loss of confidence, loss of independence and mortality (NICE Guideline [CG161] Falls in older people: assessing risk and prevention, 2013). Abbeyfield provides a range of housing and independent living schemes which are designed to enable residents to live independently for as long as possible, which includes mobilising safely and mitigating the risk of falls. Abbeyfield's housing and independent living schemes are not registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to provide personal care or other regulated activities. Consequently, Abbeyfield will ensure residents are assisted to access appropriate assessments and support from their GP and others to manage risks and maintain their mobility, as well as any necessary emergency support in the event of a fall. This policy has been developed to ensure residents and prospective residents, their families/representatives, staff members and volunteers understand the limits of Abbeyfield's involvement in relation to falls within housing.
2. Objectives	The aims of this policy are: • To promote resident independence within our housing schemes • To provide clear guidance for staff and volunteers regarding the assistance that they can provide to residents in the event of a fall • For staff and volunteers to understand their role in helping residents retain their independence and live independently for as long as possible

	To ensure residents are enabled to access assistance in the event of a fall and ensure appropriate escalation to the relevant agencies
3. Scope	This policy applies to all established staff, agency staff and volunteers working with residents in Abbeyfield housing schemes. Note: The term ‘manager’ in this policy refers to the person who has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the housing scheme.
4. Policy	4.1 Provision of safe accommodation Abbeyfield has a duty of care to provide housing accommodation for residents and a workplace for employees that is safe and that prevents avoidable harm or risk of harm. Abbeyfield will take all reasonable steps to control risks, including the risks of a slip, trip or fall which will be assessed and managed within our wider risk management system. To reduce the risk of falls, Abbeyfield will ensure that our properties have good lighting, are clear of any obstructions or trip hazards and, wherever possible, there is a contrast between furniture and flooring in the communal areas. In view of the age of Abbeyfield’s resident demographic, additional mitigations will include the provision of suitable handrails, marking the leading edge of steps to improve contrast between the step and edge, and where possible enabling residents with known mobility issues to be accommodated on the ground floor. 4.2 Identifying mobility risks of individual residents Abbeyfield will record any identified mobility needs of a resident as part of an ongoing assessment that a housing setting remains appropriate for them, which will be updated and reviewed following a fall. Where a resident who has a history of falls or believes they may be at risk of falls, e.g. as a result of medical conditions or age-related physiological changes, it is Abbeyfield’s policy that staff will encourage the resident to make an appointment with their GP to ensure a multifactorial risk assessment is undertaken and any necessary support provided. Abbeyfield housing staff and volunteers must not attempt to complete an individualised falls risk assessment, as this should only be undertaken by an appropriately skilled and experienced clinician (usually in a specialist falls service) (NICE – Falls Risk Assessment 2019).

	4.3 Responding to a resident fall As Abbeyfield housing schemes are not registered with the CQC, staff and volunteers must not provide services that are defined in law and considered by the CQC as a 'regulated activity'. In particular, housing staff and volunteers should not attempt to undertake an assessment and / or management of resident falls (aside from signposting to a clinician, and providing an emergency response in the event of a fall – see Preventing and Responding to a Resident Fall SOP). Abbeyfield will ensure all residents are provided with access to an emergency care line pendant to summon assistance 24 hours a day in the event a fall. Residents who choose not to have a care line pendant will be advised to call 999 directly and follow the call handler's instructions outside of staffed hours. 4.4 Training As a minimum, all housing staff and volunteers must be conversant with the contents of this policy and accompanying procedure. All housing staff or volunteers who are, or may be, involved in providing an emergency response in the event of a fall will undergo basic First Aid training.
5. Finance, Value for Money & Social Value	N/A
6. Linked policies	• Accident and Incidents (C014P) • First Aid (YH007P) • Fire Safety (YH006P) • My Life Plan (R011P)
7. Relevant Legislation/ Regulation	None
8. Guidance	NICE Guideline [CG161] Falls in older people: assessing risk and prevention, 2013: https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg161 NICE – Falls Risk Assessment (2019): https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/falls-risk-assessment/

Policy

9. Review	Every 3 years, subject to any regulatory or legislative updates.
10. Procedure(s)	Preventing and responding to a resident fall in housing
11. Process Map(s)	None

Version	Purpose/change	Resident Panel Involvement	Author	Date
1.0	New policy written.	Y/N	J.Conway / T Davis / E Conway / L Garrett	September 2021
2.0	Addition of a new procedure covering Preventing and responding to a resident fall in Housing. Including details of the steps to take in the event of a delayed response from emergency services, further clarity around record-keeping, noting that residents at risk of falls should be offered a wrist pendant, rather than neck pendant, and further steps added in the event of a resident fall during staff hours, including contacting the resident's next of kin, preparing an overnight bag, and securing their room.		J.Conway/L. Garrett	August 2023