

Abbeyfield Living Society

Trustees Candidate Information Pack 2025





Welcome from the Chair

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Abbeyfield Living Society (ALS) Board.

I joined the Board as a voluntary trustee in 2021 and became chair in 2023.

It is an exciting time to serve on the Board of ALS as we look forward to a period of growth, however, this also comes with challenges and hard work ahead of us as we strive for a sustainable future in a hugely demanding sector.

This year, we have published our 5-Year Corporate Plan which sets out our ambitions and priorities for the period 2025-30. The plan has been shaped by feedback from residents, colleagues, board members and partners, as well as in depth analysis of the challenges and opportunities in housing and social care. Having been through a turbulent period over the past three years, including site closures, we are now focused on a future of sustainable growth – providing high-quality homes, care and support in later life to residents and communities. We are looking forward to the next 5 years with ambition and confidence, ready to respond with creativity and collaboration, while continuing to champion the voices of those in later living and ensuring they can influence change.

To help us achieve our plans we are looking for two trustees with the right experience and expertise who can make a significant contribution to the governance of ALS. In particular we are seeking one trustee with skills in social care and/or housing, and a further trustee with skills in property and development/growth.

As a trustee in a charity, you will be at the heart of our team of over 1,000 residents and around 900 colleagues who live and work in our homes and extend their reach into local communities.

You will have the opportunity to contribute to the long-term vision and strategy and will help us to build a sustainable future. You will be part of a charity with a 70-year legacy of combating loneliness by keeping people connected in their communities and providing friendly, welcoming homes that are filled with warmth, companionship and a sense of belonging.

Mike Turner
Chair, Abbeyfield Living Society

About Abbeyfield Living Society

Established in 1956, Abbeyfield Living Society (ALS) is a charity providing housing, care and support to older people across England.

Rooted in the values of care, compassion and community, we create welcoming environments that help people stay connected in later life. Our wide range of services - including sheltered housing, care homes and independent living options - allows us to deliver person-centred services tailored to our residents' individual needs.

We are committed to helping our residents maintain a sense of independence and choice within safe, warm and stimulating communities where they can build relationships, stay active and live life to the fullest.

As a charity, we reinvest all surpluses to further enhance our services and the lives of our residents. ALS is a registered charity (no. 200719) and a registered provider of social housing (No. H1046). We currently own 1,358 housing and care rooms/apartments across 63 properties and 28 counties in England. Properties include sheltered housing schemes, care homes, nursing homes, and dementia care homes. In addition, some larger 'extra care' units combine apartments with specialist care facilities such as dementia care and day care facilities.

ALS employs circa 900 people, plus Bank/casual colleagues as required, and we are also reliant on the support of hundreds of volunteer helpers - together delivering the quality of care and lived experience that is the hallmark of an Abbeyfield home.

In 2024/25 our turnover was £44.3M, and overall ALS had net assets of £97.4M. ALS is part of a membership organisation and is the largest society within the wider Abbeyfield 'Family'.

Our Vision, Mission & Values

Our Vision:

A world where everyone thrives in later life within a caring, compassionate community.

Our Mission:

To provide great homes and inclusive communities where you can enjoy outstanding levels of service and support in later life provided by committed people.

Our Values:

Our core values guide our actions, decision making and interactions and help shape our culture and behaviours.

- **Care** – we care for the people we support, for each other and for our communities.
- **Compassion** – we treat everyone with kindness, empathy, and respect, honouring their dignity, independence, and individuality.
- **Community** – we foster a sense of belonging, inclusion, and mutual support, creating environments where older people feel safe, connected, and empowered.
- **Integrity** – we are honest, transparent, and accountable in all our actions, doing what's right, even when it's not the easy option.
- **Excellence** – we are committed to being a high performing organisation, delivering exceptional services that add value, exceed expectations, and make a real difference.



OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Given that community is at the heart of Abbeyfield, we are working towards a board that is representative of the people and communities we serve. A diverse board will help to broaden our reach, and ensure Abbeyfield is demonstrating its commitment to helping diverse communities.

Furthermore, ALS has signed up to the National Housing Federation (NHF) Code of Governance 2020 which includes the requirement that:

‘The membership of board and committees comprises people with diverse backgrounds and attributes, having regard to the diversity of the communities the organisation serves and in line with the organisation’s stated commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion’ (para 3.4(3)).

To these ends, we actively seek applications from a diverse range of candidates.

ALS is deeply committed to inclusive working practices, so during the application process we commit to:

- Offering a guaranteed first stage interview for disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the role.
- Covering travel costs to and from in-person interviews.
- Making reasonable adjustments at every stage of the process — for example, arranging a BSL interpreter or accessible interview format as needed.
- Providing recruitment documents in alternative formats, such as accessible Word versions, on request.

If there is anything else you’re concerned about or think we could provide to enable you to apply for a trustee role, please do get in touch and let us know.

Governance and Structure

The Abbeyfield Family

The Abbeyfield Family is a membership organisation that encompasses a network of independently governed member societies operating under the Abbeyfield brand, of which ALS is the largest. Each member society is managed by its own board of trustees and shares a common goal to support older people through housing, residential care and nursing services. Abbeyfield homes offer supportive environments for residents with a strong emphasis on community and independence.

Following a restructure in recent years, ALS is now a fully independent member society although continues to provide some support to the wider Abbeyfield Family.

Today, the Abbeyfield network includes hundreds of homes across the United Kingdom, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Jersey, South Africa, Poland and New Zealand, delivering care, compassion and community to thousands of older people around the world.

The Abbeyfield Society World Council (TASWC) oversees the Family, with Abbeyfield England (AE) acting as an umbrella organisation for all English members including Abbeyfield Living Society.



Governance and Structure

Abbeyfield Living Society

Board - our Board of Trustees is currently made up of 8 volunteer members, each selected for their expertise and experience in sectors including housing, care and finance.

The main function of the Board is to provide strategic direction, oversight, and governance to ensure ALS meets its objectives, operates legally and ethically and uses resources effectively.

There are a number of sub-committees of the Board, these are all chaired by a trustee and trustees are members of these committees, depending on their skills and experience. Members of the Executive Leadership Team and other staff regularly attend the Committee meetings.

Executive Leadership Team – the team is responsible for shaping the strategy set by the Board, ensuring the Senior Leadership Team delivers the strategy and oversees performance to deliver a great customer experience, in line with our values and goals.

Senior Leadership Team – the team leads functional teams/areas and is collectively responsible for operational delivery, managing people, performance and resources, driving continuous improvement, and embedding our values and goals in the way we work.

Our People - the majority of people are based in our housing and care properties where they provide support to residents. They are supported by c 90 people in our central support teams who are home-based with meeting places and spaces used to connect and collaborate with colleagues.

Regulators - ALS is regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and the Charity Commission. We have also adopted the NHF Code of Governance 2020 and the NHF Code of Conduct.

Strategic Priorities

ALS has undergone a major business turnaround over the last 3 years addressing many strategic, financial and operational challenges. We are now commercially stronger looking forward to 2025-30 with a costed and focused improvement and growth plan. Our strategy is 'sustainable growth' as a provider of high-quality homes and services including housing, care and support to later living residents and communities. We will achieve this by:

- Continuing to improve our performance
- Investing in existing and new homes
- Broadening our service offer to residents and the communities we serve
- Developing our brand and fundraising offer
- Attracting volunteers back to the ALS
- Seeking to build effective strategic partnerships

Our [5-year Corporate Plan](#) sets out how we will achieve these aims.

The social care and housing sector is complex; we are amid a housing crisis and facing major challenges in social care, many of these are outside of our control. However, ALS will be both creative and collaborative in our responses and solutions. We are passionate about advocating for those in later living and ensuring they can influence change. In summary, our strategic priorities in the next 5 years are:

- **Great Services** - we aim to expand our reach as a provider of high-quality services to residents, communities and stakeholders that make a difference to people's lives. By investing in our homes and encouraging and responding to customer feedback we will ensure warm and welcoming places and spaces where we enrich the lives of all who live and engage with us
- **Achieve Financial Resilience and a Sustainable Future** - the strength of our finances is critical to our plan delivery, our ability to continue to provide high quality homes and services for our customers and grow our provision in the future. A strong financial position is demonstrated through a good mix of revenue streams and well controlled expenditure, a strong balance sheet and cashflows will enable us to meet our future liabilities underpinning our strategy
- **An Employer of Choice** - we rely on our colleagues to provide services to our customers every day and deliver our mission. We aim to be an employer of choice, with a diverse, highly skilled and engaged workforce who live our values, support our ambitions and are passionate about customer service
- **Provide More Homes** - ALS is entering a period of sustainable growth, with the aim of providing a portfolio of good quality homes to meet customer demand and increase revenue. This will allow us to invest in existing and future homes, broaden our services within homes and communities and reach more older people.

Background to the Appointments

Each trustee is appointed by the Board and holds office for a term of three years; this may be extended for a further term. A third term may be possible if deemed in the best interests of ALS.

Due to a number of trustees coming to the end of their terms, we are seeking up to two committed individuals to be appointed to the Board by December 2025.

We are seeking candidates who understand and feel passionately about our vision for a world where everyone thrives in later life within a caring compassionate community.

We are particularly looking for candidates with experience of a care/housing organisation, ideally in a charity.

The new trustees will complement the skills of the existing Board and will each bring specialist knowledge and experience in at least one of these specific areas:

- Care &/or housing services management and CQC &/or housing regulation
- Property growth & development

Regardless of professional background, candidates must be able to contribute at a strategic level to steer and drive the strategy, ensure good governance, help to promote the reputation of ALS and be advocates for the Abbeyfield movement.

It is important that candidates understand the environment in which ALS operates and share the established team's core values which guide our actions, our interactions and the decisions we make.



The Role of a Trustee

Our Board of Trustees takes ultimate responsibility for the way that ALS operates, and how it spends and invests, to achieve its aims. This is a big responsibility, focusing on the strategic direction of the organisation, agreeing overarching plans and budgets, and holding the CEO to account for the delivery of the plans.

Trustees are legally responsible for ensuring that ALS operates to standards set by Parliament and the Charity Commission; ALS is also regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing and the Care Quality Commission.

This position is not remunerated but reasonable expenses are paid.

- **Location** – the majority of meetings are held virtually, in person meetings are most likely to be held in the Midlands. Currently the full Board meets four times per year, plus occasional additional meetings if required.
- **Commitment** - the role is estimated to require a commitment of around three days a month. This includes attending meetings and meeting preparation, agreed actions, reading and digesting information, personal development as a trustee etc.

There are a number of sub-committees of the Board, these are all chaired by a trustee and trustees are members of these committees, depending on their skills and experience. These meet quarterly and include:

- Customer Committee
- People Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Finance and Investments Committee

Trustees may be asked to represent Abbeyfield at outside meetings with potential funders or influencers, attend any launches, or work alongside staff at events and receptions. The Board normally has one or two strategy and development days per year, which all board members attend. These tend to be held in June and December.

Other meetings will arise from time to time for example, with representatives from Member Societies. Trustees are also encouraged to visit Abbeyfield properties to enhance their understanding and connection with the Abbeyfield Family.

All board and committee papers are made available electronically and are sent out one week before the board meetings and trustees are expected to have read and understood the papers prior to the meeting.

Trainee Board Trustee at Abbeyfield Living Society

We are excited to offer an opportunity for the right candidate to add valuable insights and a younger perspective at the top level of ALS – by becoming a Trainee Board Member. This is a development role designed for up-and-coming leaders who want to develop their careers and learn about how a charity is run, how important decisions are made, and how we make sure we are doing the very best for older people in our housing and care services.

As a Trainee Board Member, you will:

- Take part in board meetings and get a real insight into how a charity is governed
- Have your say and bring fresh perspectives to the table
- Learn new skills and develop your leadership experience for the future
- Be paired with a mentor and given training and guidance to support your growth and success in the role

We are keen to hear from younger individuals who:

- Have digital expertise, particularly in using AI in a customer environment
- Are interested in reverse mentoring
- Are confident and keen to contribute their skills to support ALS's mission and values
- Are curious, open minded and passionate about making a positive difference to the lives of older people
- Have time available to attend board meetings, prepare for meetings and follow up actions as required – around 2 days per month, some of which can be done outside of normal working hours if necessary

You don't need to have board experience — just a willingness to learn, listen, and contribute. This is a voluntary role, and we'll cover any reasonable expenses.

Role Description

Key Responsibilities:

Working with other board trustees to ensure the future viability and sustainability of Abbeyfield by:

- Ensuring that ALS has a clear business plan that supports its vision, mission and strategic direction, and is focused on achieving these
- Being focused on the needs of residents and their wellbeing through the provision of high quality and compliant services
- Being responsible for the performance of ALS and upholding the values of the organisation
- Ensuring that ALS complies with all legal and regulatory requirements
- Satisfying themselves as to the integrity of financial information, approve each year's budget and business plan and annual accounts prior to publication
- Acting as guardian of ALS's assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application
- Ensuring that ALS's governance and risk management are of the highest possible standard
- Establishing, overseeing and reviewing annually a framework of delegation and systems of internal control
- Safeguarding Abbeyfield's reputation, and other intangible assets
- Working in partnership with other trustees, the CEO and other senior staff, contributing to and sharing responsibility for the Board's decisions
- Complying at all times with the National Housing Federation's Code of Conduct for its board members and staff.
- Upholding the principles set out in the National Housing Federation's Code of Governance and fulfilling the duties set out in the Code such as undergoing periodic appraisals.
- Declaring any relevant interests
- Respecting confidentiality of information

Role Description

Duties

- Bring to the role their independence, skills and experiences
- 'Go and see for themselves' how the organisation goes about its business
- Reflect annually on the Board's performance and their own performance as a trustee
- Sign a letter of appointment which sets out formally their main duties
- Participate in annual strategic planning meetings
- Attend board meetings, read relevant papers and be prepared to contribute
- Read background briefings, articles in the housing press and in other publications so that they are informed about the context in which the organisation operates (The Company Secretary will give guidance on appropriate briefing material)
- Support our people when requested, sharing expertise, as a member of a working group or in other appropriate ways
- Attend events as an ambassador for Abbeyfield, to network and promote the work of Abbeyfield, helping to build its reputation and brand awareness
- Take part in activities designed to improve their understanding of the organisation and its work and to enhance board performance



Person Specification

Experience:

Demonstrable experience of operating in a senior leadership role/board level in a charitable, public sector or commercial organisation.

Knowledge, Skills and Understanding:

- Adept at building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues
- Experience of leading and guiding strategic vision
- Leading and embedding change
- Ability to think creatively
- Respecting confidentiality
- Willingness to speak their mind and provide positive and constructive stretch to fellow trustees and our people
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team and exercise influence
- Demonstrate alignment with ALS's values
- An understanding of care and/or housing services and the current CQC and/or housing regulatory and policy environment would be useful



How to Apply

The recruitment process is being undertaken by Inclusive Boards on behalf of Abbeyfield Living Society. If you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following by 11.59pm on 02/11/2025:

- A detailed CV, setting out your career history, with responsibilities and achievements.
- A cover letter (maximum two sides of A4) highlighting your suitability for the role for which you're applying and how you meet the person specification. Please note that the cover letter is an important part of your application and will be assessed.
- Details of two professional referees together with a brief statement of their relationship to you and over what period of time they have known you. Referees will not be contacted without your prior consent.

If you have further questions after reading this pack, please email ALS@inclusiveboards.co.uk or call 0207 267 8369.

Please visit www.inclusiveboards.co.uk/opportunities to apply online or send your CV and cover letter to ALS@inclusiveboards.co.uk

Further Information:

The Charity Commission's guide to the Trustee role – "[The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do](#)" or a [briefer overview of the role of a Charity trustee](#).

The [NHF Code of Governance 2020](#).



Abbeyfield Living Society Registered Office:
Hampton House, 17-19 Hampton Lane, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 2QT
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Abbeyfield Living Society is a trading name of The Abbeyfield Society.
Registered Charity No. 200719 Company No. 574816
Regulator of Social Housing. Registration No. H1046

INCLUSIVE BOARDS

About Us

Inclusive Boards is the UK's leading board diversity practice. We have worked alongside over 300 organisations to provide support with Board recruitment, development and governance reviews. We strive to be at the forefront of equity and diversity, and believe that everyone should be represented at Board level. Additionally, we also provide bespoke training sessions on a variety of subjects including personal branding, inclusive recruitment practices and board structures and governance as well as delivering leadership development programmes for underrepresented leaders across a range of sectors.

Contact us today

Improve diversity on your Board, please don't hesitate to contact us via hello@inclusiveboards.co.uk.

To join a Board, sign up to become a candidate via our website and be notified of the latest opportunities as and when they become available.



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