



# Neighbourhood Management Policy

This policy sets out our approach to managing, maintaining and improving our places.

## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Neighbourhood Management is a key role of housing providers. The Regulator of Social Housing requires us to publish a policy setting out how, in consultation with customers, we will maintain and improve the neighbourhoods around their homes.
- 1.2 This was further strengthened in the Housing Regulation Bill 2023, which brings about a new proactive consumer regulation regime, including 22 mandatory Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

## 2. Policy Aims

- 2.1 In this policy we'll set out our approach to neighbourhood management specifically:
  - a. Our approach to place planning.
  - b. How we will work in partnership with others to tackle issues such as low-level anti-social behaviour.
  - c. Making sure garden areas are well maintained.
  - d. Grounds maintenance is carried out to the required standard.
  - e. Customers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to their home and place.
  - f. How we will work with customers to identify and co design improvements where they live.

## 3. Definitions

<b>Place</b>	A group of homes in a sensibly grouped geography
<b>Communal Area</b>	These include areas used by more than one household such as a corridor, landing, lounge, balcony or a patio/garden space
<b>Sheltered accommodation</b>	For people who can normally live independently but need occasional help or support

## **4. Our Approach**

### **Place Planning**

- 4.1 We'll have a three-year Place Plan for every area where we have stock. The plans will be grouped by local authority and allow us to draw in opportunities from the devolution currently taking place, but also to drill into local issues.
- 4.2 The plans will be data and intelligence driven overlaid with real customer insight and local knowledge. For some areas we'll firmly be in the driving seat, for others we may support partners who have greater expertise or a larger stakeholder in that place. We will flex our resources to meet the needs of each plan. Some places will need a very local and consistent presence; others need less interaction with us.

### **Keeping customers safe in communal areas**

- 4.3 We ask customers not to leave items within the communal areas including barbecues, prams, bikes, shoes, plants, decorative items and refuse as this may stop someone escaping in the event of a fire.
- 4.4 We carry out fire risk inspections and if any items are found we will remove them to make sure we keep customers safe.
- 4.5 We do not allow mobility scooters to be stored or charged in the communal areas unless there is a designated place for them.

### **Neighbourhood Walkabouts**

- 4.6 We carry out neighbourhood walkabouts where we have concentrations of homes. The frequency of these will be determined within the Place Plan. We encourage customers to join us on these walkabouts so they can tell us about any areas which need improvement, and we can decide together how best to tackle these. We'll advertise walkabouts locally.

### **Grounds Maintenance and Caretaking**

- 4.7 We provide a grounds and / or caretaking service for some of our places. This is paid for by a service charge based on the actual cost to provide the service. Wherever possible we do this work in-house but for some areas we use contractors.
- 4.8 To ensure customers receive value for money we audit all of our sites to ensure they meet standards. For the vast majority we provide cut and collect on mown areas and also have a programme of winter maintenance to cut back shrubs and remove moss etc. We maintain trees in line with any specific local arrangements and we will not remove healthy trees.
- 4.9 In the winter we also carry out a gritting service where we have sheltered properties, this is in the event of bad weather such as heavy snow fall. On other sites where we

know we have a number of older or vulnerable customers we will provide grit bins which we keep topped up over the winter months.

### **Vandalism and Graffiti**

- 4.10 Any offensive or racist graffiti will be removed within 24 hours of it being reported to us. All other graffiti will be removed within five days.
- 4.11 Vandalism will be repaired in line with our repairs policy, this includes anything which is a health and safety risk being made safe within 24 hours. We will investigate any reports of vandalism and graffiti and action will be taken where those responsible are identified.

### **Litter and Fly Tipping**

- 4.12 We will remove fly tipping within five working days. We will recharge customers for the cost of removing and disposing of the item/s where we can identify the responsible person.

### **Vehicles and Parking**

- 4.13 Any vehicles parked at your home must be road-worthy, insured and taxed. Any customer seeking permission for a driveway will need to ensure a dropped kerb is in place and there is an appropriate hard standing in place.
- 4.14 Customers have a right to park a taxed and insured vehicle on the public highway, even if it is outside someone else's home. Where customers park irresponsibly, we may offer to intervene to help resolve a dispute, however we will not usually take tenancy action about parking as a sole issue.

### **Pets**

- 4.15 Our tenancy agreements set out the pets that we allow in our homes. All customers can request permission to keep a pet regardless of the type of home they live in, we may refuse permission if we believe this would cause problems for other residents or stop us from keeping communal areas safe and clean. We may ask customers to enter into a Pet Ownership Contract with us and we reserve the right to remove permission to keep a pet which causes problems for other customers.

### **CCTV and camera doorbells**

- 4.16 We'll consider requests from customers to install CCTV where appropriate. We will install CCTV where we need to gather evidence of any issues reported to us. We may also on occasions gift recording equipment such as doorbell cameras to help customers feel safe. This will be decided on a case by case basis and the customer will be responsible for its appropriate use and the data recorded.

### **Gardens**

- 4.17 Unless customers share their garden with others, they are responsible for the maintenance of it. Customers should ask us for permission to build any structure in their garden including a greenhouse, garage, patio, aviary, conservatory, dog kennel, fishpond or pool.
- 4.18 We also ask that customers do not replace fencing without permission as there may be local by-laws or restrictive covenants which we need to comply with.

### **Signs**

- 4.19 We do not provide signs such as “no ball games” or “residents only” as these are not in-keeping with the vibrant places we want our customers to enjoy. Nor are they enforceable. We believe that children should be allowed to enjoy any green areas where they live.
- 4.20 The only signs that we permit are those which either help direct someone, for example, block names and numbers or are there for a legitimate purpose, for example, to advise of a parking permit scheme or a fire exit which must be kept clear.

### **Noise**

- 4.21 We know that noise can have a significant impact on people’s lives, we are committed to effectively tackling these issues quickly. For more information about this please see our [Anti Social Behaviour and Harassment Policy](#).
- 4.22 We expect a reasonable level of tolerance between neighbours, and we’ll consider fairly the views of each party. We’ll support customers to reach a resolution between themselves initially – we believe this leads to strong and inclusive communities.
- 4.23 We will investigate whether the noise reported meets our threshold to investigate it under our [Anti-Social Behaviour and Harassment Policy](#). We will first offer the ASB App in order for people to capture the type of noise they are hearing, or we may carry out sound testing in homes so we can listen to what can be heard.
- 4.24 We know that people’s lifestyles can be very different, it’s unlikely we will take formal tenancy action on the following types of disputes:
- Customers lifestyle – children playing outside, babies crying, television noise, occasional loud music, DIY sounds, toilets being flushed etc.
  - Concerns which do not breach the tenancy agreement or cause detriment such as smoking, cooking odours or people looking at each other.
  - Concerns where customers or members of their families (including children) are not friendly towards each other.
  - Inconsiderate parking.
  - A one-off party.
- 4.25 In instances like those above we may offer the use of our mediation service, but we do not consider these in isolation to be breaches of tenancy.
- 4.26 We ask customers to be considerate of others this includes:

- Telling your neighbours if you are planning a party or doing some noisy DIY.
- Check your local authorities website – they often have useful guidelines about noise.
- Checking with them if your music is too loud.
- Keeping dogs and pets under control.
- We ask customers not to fit wooden/laminate flooring in flats above the first floor unless they have used an insulating underlay.
- Be aware of where your children are playing and what they are doing.
- Use appliance mats if you are using washing machines overnight.

4.27 Where there is noise transference as a result of the structure of a building, we will consider using sound proofing insulation or other measures to minimise sound.

4.28 When a property comes empty, we will always leave carpets in place provided they are clean and in reasonable condition – this can make a big difference to noise levels in the home.

## **5. Diversity and Inclusion Implications**

5.1 Making sure that our policies are inclusive and ensure fair treatment for all is really important to us. The policy ensures fair treatment for anyone who may raise a concern under this policy or is part of an investigation, regardless of race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, disability, religion, marital status, maternity, sexuality or sexual orientation, or age. If you think we've got this wrong, please contact the policy owner.

5.2 There are no apparent equality and diversity implications from this policy. The policy ensures fair treatment for all members of the community regardless of race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, disability, religion, marital status, maternity, sexuality or sexual orientation, or age. This is because we consider each case individually and consider the customers involved and how we may need to flex our approach to meet their needs.

## 6. Reporting and Monitoring

6.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly to reflect current legislation and good practice.

<b>Date approved</b>	28/03/2024
<b>Approved by</b>	Homes and Places Committee
<b>Recommended / scrutinised by</b>	Customer Voice and Review Committee
<b>Summary of changes</b>	New policy
<b>Frequency of review</b>	Every 2 years
<b>Next review date</b>	2026
<b>Policy owner</b>	Head of Place
<b>Policy author</b>	Place Services Manager
<b>Associated policies or guidelines</b>	<a href="#">Anti-Social Behaviour and Harassment Policy</a>
<b>Associated procedure</b>	35 Neighbourhood management procedures