



Places to live. Space to grow.

Neighbourhood Management Policy

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1. Introduction: the purpose of this policy

Our vision is “to deliver places to live and space to grow for our current and future residents”. This policy sets out how we will work with residents and partner agencies to improve services and ensure our neighbourhoods and communal areas provide safe, attractive and well maintained places to live.

2. Policy Statement

There is a clear relationship between the quality of the local environment and desirability of a neighbourhood as a place for residents to live and grow. The purpose of this policy is to set out how we commit to effectively maintain and manage neighbourhoods within our responsibility. It also sets out how we will work with shared landowners or managing companies in areas where we do not own the whole estate or have exclusive management responsibilities.

This policy sets out the services and activities we provide, how we will work with residents and local partners, and the responsibilities of residents.

We will consult with residents about the standards that are set for the management of neighbourhoods and communal areas under our control, and work with our residents to ensure that standards are met.

Neighbourhoods are diverse and may include estates, blocks of flats, sheltered and supported homes and groups of homes with shared external or internal areas. This policy applies to all areas where we own or manage homes.

The policy applies to our residents including general needs, affordable rent, shared owners, leaseholders and supported and Emerald housing residents.

It does not apply to Kent Excellent Homes for All (KEHFA) managed properties.

3. Health and Safety

We are responsible for ensuring that our estates and blocks are safe and well maintained and that any hazards are addressed promptly. To facilitate this, we will:

- Carry out risk assessments in all blocks of flats and ensure that risks identified are addressed in line with risk level. In low risk blocks fire risk assessments will take place every three years. High and medium risk buildings will receive more frequent risk assessments.
- Ensure all hazards are reported and addressed.
- Carry out regular health and safety inspections in our communal areas including weekly checks on fire alarm points and monthly checks on emergency lighting.
- Carry out checks in fire doors for safety at each block inspection.

- Carry out a programme of maintenance and checks of shared facilities such as lifts, water tanks and play areas to ensure they are safe and fit for purpose.
- Where we own playground equipment, we will ensure it is safe to use properly inspected and fit for purpose.

4. Neighbourhood Inspections

- 4.1 We will conduct regular estate inspections to check our neighbourhoods and ensure they are clean, safe and tidy. This includes taking a zero-tolerance approach to items which cause a fire hazard. We will publish a list of our inspection dates and times on our website.
- 4.2 In general needs and leasehold blocks, the internal and external communal areas and grounds are inspected regularly, with the frequency based on the risk associated with the estate or block. The purpose of these inspections is to:
 - Ensure buildings are safe, including fire safety. Report any issues that could be a risk to health and safety such as trip hazards or obstructions of fire access routes.
 - Monitor grounds maintenance and cleaning contractor performance.
 - Report indicators of anti-social behaviour.
 - Identify any fly tipping, dumped items or graffiti.
 - Ensure sufficiently displayed signage.
 - Ensure blocks and associated communal areas are in a good state of repair
 - Collect data to help drive future works programmes and improvements
- 4.3 Supported and Sheltered Schemes will be inspected by the scheme manager. Due to the onsite presence and additional risk at these schemes, these sites will be inspected monthly to ensure communal areas are well maintained, free from hazards, and health and safety compliant.
- 4.4 We will encourage residents to attend inspections and to give us feedback on their neighbourhood, our services and where improvements can be made.
- 4.5 In addition to the formal process of estate inspections, it is the responsibility of all staff who are out and about in our neighbourhoods to report issues that may cause a risk to health and safety, any concerns for the safety of residents or issues that may be causing damage to our properties or communal areas.

- 4.6 We will gather data in our inspections, listen to the views of our local staff and resident feedback. This will allow us to assign a risk score to each estate or block. The regularity of inspections will be driven by the risk. This will be flexible and may change as conditions in an estate or block change. As a minimum we will review annually to ensure the correct frequency of inspections.

5. Estate Services

We will provide a range of services either directly, or through contractors. Services may differ between neighbourhoods depending on local factors. We will be mindful of affordability and value for money, and transparent on costs, as estate services are charged to customers via service charges.

5.1 Communal cleaning and grounds maintenance

We recognise the importance of delivering quality services to keep communal and external areas owned by us clean and maintained to a good standard. This includes contracts with external suppliers to deliver services on our behalf. To achieve this, we will ensure a robust procurement of external contracts that deliver value for money and quality services. We will involve residents in the procurement of services and carry out appropriate Section 20 consultation.

We will ensure areas within our ownership are maintained to an agreed standard whether services are provided by external contractors or inhouse cleaning and caretaking staff.

Performance will be monitored against the frequency of visits and quality of work completed. The expected quality of work is set out in our service standards and contract specifications.

We understand the importance of considering the individual needs and circumstances of our customers when managing our neighbourhoods. For instance, if a customer is unable to maintain their garden, which could affect the overall appearance of the area, we may offer assistance.

5.2 Tree Maintenance

All trees situated on communal land owned by us will be surveyed every five years. This is conducted by a contractor. We will collect data on our trees, assess their condition, and determine their suitability for their respective locations. Subsequent work, based on survey findings, will be completed on a priority basis, and follow-up surveys will be targeted based on the tree's condition.

Reactive tree inspections can be requested by anyone concerned about a tree on our land. Our staff members are obligated to report any trees posing health and safety risks. We will prioritise budget expenditure on trees that are found to pose a health and safety risk, or where the tree is found to be in poor health or condition. Tree works

outside of this, such as for serious loss of light, will only be considered under exceptional circumstances and subject to budgets.

Residents are responsible for managing trees in their own gardens as set out in their tenancy/licence/lease agreement.

5.3 Waste Management

We will work closely with local authorities to ensure that estates have appropriate facilities for disposing of rubbish and recycling. We will seek to promote the recycling of household waste and, wherever possible, provide facilities to support this effort.

We are responsible for addressing litter and fly-tipping on communal land under our ownership, and we will arrange clearance accordingly. Where items have been fly tipped on our land we will investigate to see if we can establish the person/s responsible and recharge them for the removal of items. We will remove the fly-tipping within 5 working days. If a resident persistently fly tips, we will work with partner agencies to take enforcement action. We may also take action against the tenancy or lease.

Residents are obliged to ensure the responsible disposal of their household waste. Dumped items will constitute a breach of their agreement. Where we remove rubbish for items inappropriately disposed of, we may apply recharges to the resident responsible or charge for removal via service charges.

5.4 Pest Control

We are responsible for the eradication of pest issues on our communal land. We will arrange for pest control contractors to attend to inspect any infestation concerns raised to us and order any subsequent treatment, where necessary.

5.5 Graffiti

We will remove graffiti we consider offensive within 24 hours and other graffiti in 21 days.

6. Community Safety

6.1 Anti-Social Behaviour

We will provide high standards of safety on our estates through proactive neighbourhood management and, when necessary, firm tenancy enforcement actions. We work in partnership with key stakeholders and agencies to ensure that our estates are safe and anti-social behaviour is addressed in line with our Community Safety Policy. [community-safety-policy.docx](#)

Where appropriate we may make improvements to a neighbourhood to manage ASB. This may include the installation of CCTV, improved lighting or additional security.

6.2 Vehicles and Parking

Parking provisions will vary across our estates, and we will support with ensuring our customers park appropriately. We will check that vehicles parked on our land are road worthy and appropriately parked. Where there are persistent parking issues that affect the neighbourhood, we may consult with customers about introducing parking control measures.

Where parking control is introduced, we will use a car parking enforcement agency. They will raise penalty charge notices for vehicles not properly parked. Appeals against penalty charge notices must be made directly to the enforcement company.

In areas where there are allocated parking bays but not enough parking for all residents, we will hold a waiting list.

Abandoned vehicles and inconsiderate parking can impact on the appearance of a neighbourhood, create health and safety issues and encourage ASB. We will follow our procedure for dealing with abandoned vehicles on our land and, where necessary, work with the police or local authority.

6.3 Fencing

In communal areas we will repair existing fencing to ensure the security and define boundaries of a neighbourhood.

7. Resident Involvement

- 7.1 We will provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to be involved, scrutinise and influence how neighbourhood services are delivered.
- 7.2 We will communicate to residents via Neighbourhood News, our website and on social media on the role that we play in promoting social, environmental and economic wellbeing.
- 7.3 We will continuously and proactively seek feedback from customers using satisfaction surveys and will ensure we are easily contactable for reactive feedback through email, telephone, on site meetings with Neighbourhoods Teams, and via our online portal. Where necessary, we will aim to adapt our communication with customers to meet their needs and ensure the voice of our residents is heard.
- 7.3 We will encourage residents feedback on grounds maintenance and cleaning services through our Resident Inspectors programme. We will train residents on our standards and provide regular updates to Inspectors on the impact of their inspections.
- 7.4 We will work closely with local residents, the Resident Involvement and Communities Teams, to develop local resident engagement, activities and events to support and develop active, vibrant communities.

8. Community Investment

- 8.1 We will deliver community investment which strengthens communities across Kent by working alongside residents and partners to tackle inequalities, increase opportunities and promote wellbeing.
- 8.2 A key theme of our Community Investment Strategy is to build active, resilient communities. We will monitor our progress in achieving this outcome reporting to the Communities and Housing Committee

9. Areas managed by others

- 9.1 As well as managing and maintaining our own stock across Kent we own some properties on sites with shared spaces where the provision of services is the responsibility of managing agents or the Local Authority.
- 9.2 We will work proactively with our Local Authority partners to drive up standards in neighbourhoods and try to minimise costs to residents by ensuring effective partnership working.
- 9.3 We will maintain relations with managing agents appointed by estate management companies and work to ensure that the services they provide are delivered to specification. This will include services such as grounds maintenance, maintenance of unadopted roads and footpaths, and ensuring that communal areas used by our customers within the control of the estate management company are maintained to an acceptable standard.
- 9.4 During site inspections, we will report any issues identified that fall under the remit of a managing agent, the local authority or another landowner. Additionally, we will ensure our residents are informed about who is responsible for maintaining their living areas when they move to a new home. Where necessary, we will actively engage with the managing agents or the local authority to facilitate prompt action on any issues reported by our customers that fall under their responsibility.

10. Residents' Responsibilities

Areas of resident responsibility are set out in the tenancy agreement or lease. However, we also welcome and encourage customers to report anything to us which impacts on the quality of their neighbourhood. In order to assist in keeping neighbourhoods well maintained and safe residents should:

- Report repairs promptly for which we are responsible.
- Keep all communal areas clean, safe, and free from obstruction to ensure the safety of everyone living in and visiting the blocks you live in. Items should not be stored in the communal areas with the exception of a door mat.
- Dispose of all rubbish and unwanted items responsibly, this includes arranging collection of large/bulky items.

- Apply for permission to keep pets in line with the lease or tenancy. Make sure pets are kept under control and do not defecate in communal areas and are not used in a threatening manner. Residents are responsible for ensuring their gardens are secure.
- Not engage in anti-social behaviour, nuisance or annoyance to neighbours.
- Keep own gardens in a tidy condition.
- Seek permission to park caravans, trailers, boats or commercial vehicles in our parking areas or in the gardens of our properties.

11. Responsibilities

- 11.1 The Head of Housing holds overall responsibility for this policy and ensuring that it is followed but many teams have responsibilities within the policy.
- 11.2 It is the responsibility of all staff who are out and about in our neighbourhoods to report issues that maybe a risk to our residents, properties or the wider neighbourhood.
- 11.3 We recognise that effective management of our neighbourhoods is built on the shared responsibilities of us, residents and partner agencies who either own land or property within the neighbourhoods, or they deliver a key service to that neighbourhood.

12. Regulation

- 12.1 Regulatory standards must be complied with. The Neighbourhood and Community Standard states that 'Registered providers must co-operate with relevant partners to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they provide social housing'
- 12.2 The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 set out recommendations for ensuring the fire safety of all multi-occupied residential buildings with two or more sets of domestic premises, and additional duties for properties over 11 metres.
- 12.3 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – This requires all those in control of non-domestic premises including the communal areas of blocks of flats to take adequate measures to ensure the safety from fire of all occupants and visitors to the building.
- 12.4 The Fire Safety Act 2021 – This act amends the Regulatory Reform 2005 to include the building's structure and external walls, communal doors and common parts, doors and windows of external walls and anything attached to the walls, including balconies.
- 12.5 Building Safety Act 2022 clarifies the scope of Fire Risk Assessments.
- 12.6 Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977 – This defines what responsibilities we have in removing a tenant's property and setting out how and when to dispose of it.
- 12.7 Occupiers Liability Act 1957 – This Act imposes a 'duty of care' on the occupier of a property. When a visitor frequents a property, the occupier of that property has a duty to take such care to see that the visitor will be reasonably safe in using the premises.

- 12.8 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 – This is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety, which includes requirements for protecting the health, safety and welfare of members of the public as well as staff.
- 12.9 The Removal, Storage and Disposal of Vehicles (Prescribed Sums and Charges) Regulations 2008 sets updates sums that can be charged for the removal, disposal and storage of vehicles.
- 12.10 Equality Act 2010-provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality for all, setting out personal characteristics that are protected by law.
- 12.11 The ASB, Crime and Policing Act - introduced the ASB case review or community trigger

13. Reporting

Monitoring of neighbourhood management will be carried out by:

- Publishing cleaning and grounds maintenance standards, so customers know what to expect.
- Measuring satisfaction that we keep communal areas clean and well maintained and that we make a positive contribution to the neighbourhood. Satisfaction scores will be reported to the Executive Team, Communities and Housing Committee and the Board.
- Having regular contract meetings with ground maintenance and cleaning contractors to ensure they are meeting specification and delivering on performance indicators.
- Carrying out regular routine estate inspections following a set proforma. The outcome of these inspections will be recorded.

14. Consultation

This policy has been consulted on with the Resident Scrutiny Panel and Communities and Housing Committee.

15. Communication

This is an outward facing document as provides our commitment to customers on how we will maintain and keep safe their neighbourhoods and communal areas. It will be published on our website. It will be available to staff on Bettie.