

Estate Management & Neighbourhood Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy applies to Signpost Housing Association and Signpost Care Partnerships' (the Associations) properties and any accommodation directly managed by the Associations.

This policy has been developed to ensure the Associations comply with current legislation, Tenant Services Authority Standards, Housing Corporation guidance and good practice and includes:

- ensuring that estates and neighbourhoods are well maintained, safe and enjoyable places for residents to live
- involving residents in service design, delivery and evaluation
- putting neighbourhoods at the heart of the Associations' service provision
- working in partnership to effectively manage estates and neighbourhoods.

The Associations strive to achieve the Spectrum Group mission:

'To be recognised and respected for providing quality homes and services. Empowering people, supporting active communities and building better futures'.

This policy supports the Associations' overarching plans and strategies to deliver quality service and ensure accessibility to these services for all the Associations' customers.

2. Definitions

2.1 Estate and neighbourhoods

The term estate relates to land owned by Signpost Housing Association or Signpost Care Partnerships which may contain residential buildings (of any tenure), commercial premises, communal facilities or communal areas.

Neighbourhoods are wider areas and communities within which the Associations operate.

2.2 Communal areas

Communal areas are areas of land or buildings, or facilities owned by the

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Associations that are not for the exclusive use of individual residents within their tenancies. Car parking areas where individual residents have allocated parking spaces within their tenancies, are also considered communal areas for the purpose of this policy.

2.3 Estate management

Estate Management refers to maintaining and managing the appearance and fabric of the estate as a safe and attractive environment.

2.4 General definitions

The term Immobile Vehicles for the purpose of this policy relates to untaxed or unroadworthy cars, vans and motorcycles, trailers, caravans, boats and catering trailers.

Graffiti is any drawing, scribble, message or tag (stylised symbol or name) that is written, carved or painted on walls or other surfaces.

Flyposting is the display of advertising (stickers, posters etc) on buildings and street furniture without the consent of the owner.

Litter has no legal definition but is generally considered to be unbagged items associated with smoking, drinking or eating that are inappropriately discarded by the public, or have fallen from bins/bin bags whilst being removed by waste removal operatives.

Flytipping is defined as the 'illegal deposit of any waste onto land'. Most flytipped items are household waste, bagged rubbish, larger items of furniture, mattresses, fridges and other domestic electrical goods and builders' rubbish and can include asbestos.

For the purpose of this policy, pests are defined as rats, mice, wasps, bees and pigeons.

3. Legislation, Regulatory and Good Practice Requirements

This policy complies with and aims to support:

- Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry 6 – Tenancy and Estate Management

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- CCTV Code of Practice
- Chartered Institute of Housing, Good Practice Brief: Equality, Diversity and Good Relations in Housing (April 09)
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Housing Corporation Regulatory Code and Guidance
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Occupiers' Liability Act 1957
- Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework
- Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations 1992 (amended 1994 &1999).

3.1 Relationship with other Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Spectrum Housing Group (SHG), Signpost Housing Association (SHA), Signpost Care Partnerships (SCP) policies and procedures.

- Access and Customer Care Strategy (SHA/SCP)
- Anti Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure (SHA/SCP)
- Community Involvement Strategy (SHA/SCP)
- Confidentiality, Privacy and Data Protection Policy (SHG)
- Data Protection Policy (SHG)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (SHG)
- Estate Management & Neighbourhood Procedure (SHA/SCP)
- Health & Safety Policy (SHG)
- Income Management Policy (SHA/SCP)

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- Resident Involvement Strategy (SHA/SCP)
- Service Charge Policy (SHA/SCP)
- Value for Money Strategy (SHA/SCP).

4. Policy

It is the Associations' policy to work in partnership with our residents, local authorities and other interested parties to maintain neighbourhoods and work towards achieving sustainable communities.

The Associations are committed to working in partnership with other associations and agencies in neighbourhoods where more than one landlord operates and agreements have been reached for shared responsibility.

The Associations' will actively involve residents in the design and evaluation of estate services and setting the Service Standards delivery including the level of formal estate inspections. (Appendix 1)

4.1 Appearance of estates

The estates and land managed by the Associations will be maintained in a clean, safe condition. The Associations will aim to maintain the appearance of estates by effectively dealing with litter, abandoned vehicles, graffiti, discarded furniture or anything that would cause a negative environmental impact.

Where issues are caused on land not owned or managed by the Associations and this directly impacts on the Associations' residents, the Associations will take a pro-active role to resolve these issues by working with residents and other agencies.

4.2 Estate Inspections

The Associations are committed to undertaking regular estate inspections to ensure staff are present on the Associations' estates and that issues are highlighted at an early stage.

4.2.1 Formal estate inspections

Residents and other interested parties will be invited to attend formal estate inspections. The frequency of formal estate inspections will be undertaken in accordance with the Service Standards and will be responsive to the needs of the estate or neighbourhood including:

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- the number of properties on the estate that are owned or managed by the Associations
- issues with anti-social behaviour
- issues with estate services.

The outcome of informal estate inspections will be recorded and residents will be informed of the outcome of the inspection and any actions taken.

4.3 Informal estate inspections

The Associations' staff will undertake informal estate inspections at other times when they have reason to visit estates.

The Associations' staff will take responsibility for any issue or repair that they see or that is reported to them whilst on estates, and will report this to the relevant department.

4.3.1 Untaxed or abandoned vehicles

The Associations will work in partnership with Local Authorities to remove untaxed or abandoned vehicles from the Associations' land and the surrounding community.

4.4 Graffiti

The Associations recognise that graffiti can have a detrimental effect on the appearance of an estate or neighbourhood. Graffiti will be removed in accordance with the Service Standards.

Where there are ongoing issues with graffiti and where the perpetrator is known and is either a resident of, or a visitor to a resident of the Associations' accommodation, action may be taken against the resident for breach of tenancy in accordance with the Anti-social Behaviour Policy and Procedure.

4.4.1 Flyposting

The Associations recognise that flyposting can have a similar effect on an estate or neighbourhood. Removal of flyposting will be undertaken in accordance with the Service Standards.

4.4.2 Bodily fluids and excrement

The Associations recognise that bodily fluids, such as blood, urine, vomit, saliva, and excrement in communal areas can be extremely unpleasant and

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unhygienic for residents and will clear bodily fluids or excrement from communal areas in accordance with the Service Standards.

Where the perpetrator is known and is either a resident of, or a visitor to a resident of the Associations' accommodation, action may be taken against the resident for breach of tenancy in accordance with the Anti-social Behaviour Policy and Procedure.

4.4.3 Dog Fouling

The Associations recognise that dog faeces carry infections that are harmful to humans, such as Toxocariasis. Dog faeces will be removed in accordance with the Service Standards.

The Associations will work in partnership with Local Authorities where there is a wider problem with dog fouling or stray dogs in neighbourhoods.

If residents identify the need for dog waste bins and these are not currently provided in the neighbourhood the Associations will support and assist residents to approach the relevant Local Authority.

If dog fouling is caused by an animal that belongs to either a resident of, or a visitor to a resident of the Associations' accommodation, action may be taken against the resident for breach of tenancy in line with the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

4.4.4 Litter and household refuse

The Associations recognise that litter and household refuse can make an area look unsightly and uncared for and can be a health hazard. The Associations will take action with the aim of reducing litter on estates and within neighbourhoods including:

- Identifying issues during estate inspections and, where appropriate, arrange for litter to be removed
- working with residents to arrange litter picks as part of community involvement events
- where appropriate and in liaison with the relevant Local Authority ensuring the provision of adequate refuse facilities in communal refuse areas
- providing information to residents on the appropriate storage of refuse, disposal of refuse and recycling opportunities in the residents newsletter 'Your Voice'

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4.4.5 Flytipping

The Associations recognise that flytipping can have a detrimental impact on estates and neighbourhoods. The Associations will remove flytipped items from estates in accordance with the Service Standards.

Where the perpetrator is known and is either a resident of, or a visitor to a resident of the Associations' accommodation, action may be taken against the resident for breach of tenancy in accordance with the Anti-social Behaviour Policy and Procedure.

4.4.6 Pests

The Associations recognise that pests can impact on estates and may create a health hazard. The Associations will remove pests in accordance with the Service Standards.

4.4.7 Wildlife

Where wildlife such as foxes, or protected species such as badgers, cause a nuisance on Association land, the Associations will work with in partnership with the relevant agency to resolve the issue in accordance with current legislation.

4.4.8 Needles & Syringes

The Associations recognise the risk that can be caused by discarded needles and syringes. Needles and syringes will be removed in accordance with the Service Standards.

Were appropriate the Associations will encourage safe disposal of needles and syringes will be encouraged in accordance with the Drug and Alcohol Misuse Policy and Procedure.

4.4.9 Grounds Maintenance

Regular grounds maintenance of communal gardens and landscaped areas will be undertaken by the Associations. Specifications for grounds maintenance will be developed in consultation with residents.

All contracts for grounds maintenance services will take into account value for money.

4.4.10 Play Areas

The Associations will ensure play areas owned by the Associations provide a

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safe place for children to play. Play areas will be maintained in accordance with the latest European Standards.

Regular inspections of play areas will be undertaken in accordance with the Service Standards.

4.5 Trees

The Associations recognise that trees on estates may require maintenance on an either an on-going or ad-hoc basis.

4.5.1 Trees on estates

The Associations will maintain trees on estates which will include:

- works to reduce a hazard to either the public or surrounding buildings
- where trees require regular maintenance the Associations will appoint an appropriate contractor to undertake the required works.

4.5.2 Trees within the grounds of an individual property/tenancy

Where the tree is within the grounds of an individual property the resident will be responsible for maintaining the tree. Exceptions to this will be considered on a case by case basis and will take include:

- whether the condition of the tree constitutes a health and safety hazard
- the condition of the tree constitutes a hazard to the structure / fabric of the Association or adjoining properties
- any failure to carry out works to the tree that will cause unreasonable impact on adjoining properties
- any failure to carry out works to the tree that will impact on a public footpath or highway
- if the resident or Association has been served with a notice by the local authority instructing that remedial works are carried out.

4.6 Recharge and service charge costs

Where a cost is incurred by the Associations to remove graffiti, flyposting, dog fouling, flytipping, litter and household refuse or needles and syringes and the perpetrator is known, the Associations will recharge these costs to the perpetrator in accordance with the Income Management Policy and Procedure.

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If the perpetrator is not known, or if the cost is incurred as result of dealing with pests, wildlife and trees, the costs will be recharged to the scheme Service Charge account.

4.7 Installation and siting of TV aerials & satellite dishes

Installation and siting of TV aerials or satellite dishes will be subject to permission from the Associations. Prior to granting permission the Associations will consider various factors including:

- local planning requirements which must be adhered to
- the position of the TV aerial or satellite dish and the impact on the estate or neighbourhood, with the preferred position to be within the roof space. Where this is not possible installation should be in such a place as to minimise the impact on the estate or neighbourhood, for example to the rear elevation of the property.

4.8 Siting of sheds

Where the Associations provide a shed this will be maintained by the Association.

Where a resident wishes to erect a shed this will be subject to permission from the Associations. Prior to granting permission the Associations will consider various factors including:

- the position of the shed and the impact on the estate or neighbourhood.
- any potential fire hazard to the property, boundary fence or adjoining property.

4.9 CCTV

4.9.1 The Associations use of CCTV

The Associations' Data Protection registration allows for the installation of CCTV for the prevention and detection of crime. Before CCTV is installed to a scheme or estate the Associations will ascertain the appropriateness and reason for the installation.

4.9.2 Residents use of CCTV

Where a resident wishes to install CCTV this will be subject to permission

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from the Associations. CCTV use for 'limited household purposes' does not fall under the terms of the Data Protection Act (DPA). Prior to granting permission the Associations will consider various factors including:

- ensuring appropriate siting of the camera to only covers the area of the resident's property and not any public area
- any impact on the estate or neighbourhood

4.10 Estate Improvements

The Associations will consider improvements to estates on a case by case basis and in full consultation with residents.

4.11 Monitoring & Control

Performance against the Service Standards will be monitored by the Housing Services Managers at individual performance reviews.

4.12 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

This policy has been developed to ensure the Associations provide equality of access and service delivery and includes:

- ensuring that no customer is disadvantaged irrespective of their race, gender (including gender reassignment), religion or belief, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, or social position in accordance with Spectrum Housing Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- ensuring specific communication or support requirements and equal access to the service is available
- identifying and addressing any inequality of access to the service
- recording and monitoring the inspections of the Associations' estates and the actions taken to ensure no individual or group is excluded.

4.13 Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has had an equality impact assessment. This policy does not discriminate either directly or indirectly and does not disadvantage any individual or group.

4.14 Responsible Officer

The Divisional Director Housing Services, Signpost Housing Association, and

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the Divisional Director Support Services, Signpost Care Partnerships will be responsible for monitoring and implementing this policy.

5. Appendices

5.1.1 Appendix 1: Service Standards, Estate and Neighbourhood Management Policy

The Associations will manage estates and neighbourhoods in accordance with the agreed service standards including.

- Estate inspections: Formal estate inspections will be undertaken not less than quarterly where there are three or more units which share communal facilities and are owned or managed by the Associations. The outcome of these inspections will be reported to residents within 10 working days of the inspection.
- Untaxed or abandoned vehicles: Where the Associations are required to obtain the details of the last registered keeper of the vehicle from the DVLA, the Associations will make an application for information within 5 working days of receiving the report of the immobile vehicle.
- Graffiti removal: Racist or obscene graffiti will be removed within 24 hours from receiving a report. All other graffiti will be removed within five working days of receiving a report.
- Removal of bodily fluids or excrement: Bodily fluids or excrement will be removed three hours of receiving a report, or within 24 hours of receiving a report if it is necessary to employ the services of a specialist contractor.
- Removal of dog faeces: Dog faeces in internal communal areas or areas which are direct pedestrian walkways will be removed within 24 hours of receiving a report.
- Removal of flytipped items: Items will be removed within 28 days of receiving a report unless the item is causing a Health and Safety issue and it is necessary to employ the services of a specialist contractor, when the Associations will aim to remove the item within 24 hours of receiving a report..
- Rats and Mice: Issuing a work order within 24 hours of receiving the report.
- Pigeons: where there is a potential health hazard the Associations will

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with other agencies to identify measures to discourage pigeons from roosting

- Wasps: wasps nests in internal communal areas or areas where there is a potential risk to residents will be removed within 5 working days of receiving the report
- Bees: bees nests in internal communal areas or areas which may pose a potential risk to residents will be dealt with by contacting an apiarist, within 3 working days of receiving the report to arrange removal of the nest while maintaining the colony
- Needles and Syringes: Needles and Syringes will be removed within 24 hours of receiving the report
- Play Areas: Play areas will be inspected on a fortnightly basis between April and October and monthly between November and March. Each play area will have an annual safety check carried out by an independent specialist
- Estate improvements will be considered on a case by case basis and in full consultation with residents
- Publicity: The Associations will include articles on estate management issues in the residents newsletter 'Your Voice' in agreement with the Editorial Team.

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