

Neighbourhood Management Policy

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1. **Policy information**

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Drafted by	Chris Halliday
Contributors	Neighbourhood Services Team, Community Safety Team, Environmental Team, Customer Service Committee, Janine Green ASB Consultant, Scrutiny Panel, CHANWA, Local Authority Streetscene Services
Responsible Director	Director of Operations
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2. **Policy statement**

This policy sets out our approach to effective neighbourhood management. It will outline our partnership approach with tenants, residents and local partners to ensure our neighbourhoods are attractive and well maintained places to live.

The policy will define our approach to dealing with community level issues to ensure our neighbourhoods are sustainable and enhance the quality of life for tenants living within them.

Through this policy we will ensure we use our influence and powers available to us, as a provider of social housing, to resolve neighbourhood issues and problems. Where our role and responsibility is outside of our control we will work closely with other housing providers, private landlords, police and the local authority.

This policy will apply to all customers including Leaseholders of South Liverpool Homes.

3. **Policy aims**

Through this policy we will aim to:

- Provide excellent quality services, ensuring neighbourhoods are well managed and maintained so that all residents feel safe and proud to live there
- Work in partnership with residents and external organisations to provide safe, clean, and sustainable neighbourhoods
- Try to prevent issues from arising wherever possible
- Ensure our housing stock and communal areas are maintained to a high standard which increases the stability of the community and removes the negative stereotypes of social housing
- Involve and engage tenants in the management of their home, using their insight to improve our neighbourhoods and all aspects of neighbourhood management
- Ensure our tenants, within reason, are satisfied with the services provided and the neighbourhood they live
- Protect our investment and reputation by doing as much as possible to maintain our homes and the immediate environment
- Ensure that works carried out in our neighbourhoods enhance them and provides value-for-money to our tenants

4. Regulatory context

The Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard describes what housing associations must do in relation to neighbourhood management. This policy adopts the requirements of the standard.

This policy has been created in conjunction with residents and key stakeholders. Local co-operation is at the heart of this policy to ensure we will comply with the standard through strong and effective partnership working.

5. Neighbourhood Management Definition

Good neighbourhood management is about keeping neighbourhoods and communal areas clean and safe. This is important for ensuring residents have a good quality of life and it can act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood nuisance and crime.

We make a distinction between neighbourhood management issues, anti-social behaviour, safeguarding issues, domestic abuse, and hate crime. More detailed definitions can be found in their relevant policies.

Neighbourhood management issues can include lifestyle issues affecting residents, noise which is not considered anti-social behaviour, environmental issues, or disputes between neighbours that become a source of distress and frustration. We will only get involved in neighbour disputes when the issue falls under this policy or the ASB Policy.

5.1 Household refuse and recycling

Tenants are responsible for arranging the storage and removal of their household refuse. We may collaborate with local authorities to encourage residents to recycle

and re-use their household waste. We will advise tenants at the start of their tenancy of the arrangements for refuse and recycling collection.

5.2 Fly-tipping and litter

Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of waste. We will aim to remove fly-tipping on our land. If it is not on our land we will report this to the local authority for its removal. Where there is sufficient evidence we will collaborate with police and the local authority to prosecute offenders. If the offender is known and is one of our tenants we will consider action in respect of the tenancy agreement.

5.3 Untidy gardens

Untidy gardens reduce the appeal and appearance of neighbourhoods. We will work with tenants to ensure they rectify the condition of their garden. If the garden remains in a unsatisfactory condition we will consider action in respect of a tenancy breach. Where a garden is unmanageable due to vulnerabilities we will explore support options, although the responsibility remains with the tenant to rectify.

5.4 Graffiti

Graffiti can be more than an unsightly nuisance, it can be a form of vandalism that devalues property, effects the appearance of neighbourhoods and causes offence. We will work alongside the local authority for it to be removed and to identify the offenders.

5.5 Abandoned vehicles

If vehicles are abandoned in our neighbourhoods or do not have the relevant Driver & Vehicles Licensing Agency (DVLA) tax or off road exceptions they will be reported to the relevant agencies and could be removed if there are having an impact on the environment.

5.6 Dog fouling

If dog fouling is caused by an animal that belongs to one of our tenants, action may be taken for breach of tenancy. Should there be a wider problem with dog fouling in a neighbourhood, we will work in partnership with the local authority to gather any evidence to take the appropriate action.

6 Alleyways

Alleyways and service roads are maintained by the local authority. Were we have responsibility within alleyways or service roads to maintain we will ensure we treat to prevent weeds, keep them clean and remove any rubbish.

6 Property condition

We consider poor property condition as a neighbourhood management issue. We will always aim to support tenants to rectify the issues with poor property condition and consider their vulnerabilities if they are struggling to maintain their homes. Wilful neglect and damage will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as a breach of tenancy.

6.1 Hoarding

Hoarding is a complicated issue and often demands a multi-agency response, therefore we will identify and involve relevant organisations from the start. We will follow the guidance in the Liverpool Adults Safeguarding Board's Hoarding Protocol when dealing with hoarding behaviour in our homes. With the exception of our statutory requirements we will aim to get the tenants consent for any intervention or action.

7 Communal areas

Communal areas include shared entrance ways, staircases and landings, bin stores, pathways and parking and the following will apply:

- i. We will ensure that communal areas within buildings and shared schemes are maintained, kept clean, have provision for safety and security, promptly repaired and are adequately serviced and lit.
- ii. We will inspect communal areas on a regular basis. Where recurrent problems arise, we may work in partnership with other property owners, Police, and other agencies to resolve the problems.
- iii. We will provide a cleaning service in communal and shared areas. This will be conducted on a regular basis. We will publish details of the schedule of cleaning services on noticeboards.
- iv. We recognise that personal items in communal areas can increase the risks associated with fire by obstructing an escape route or providing a source of fuel. They may also create a tripping hazard. We do not permit the storage of personal belongings in a shared area. Where personal belongings are identified, the responsible resident may be asked to remove them immediately. Failure to do so may result in the resident being served with a disposal of goods notice and being charged for any costs in removing and of disposing of them.
- v. Personal items with no or little value that are left in communal areas will be removed and disposed of immediately with any costs we incur charged back to the owner. In addition, we will consider enforcement action for repeat offenders under the terms of the tenancy or lease agreement.
- vi. Dogs must be kept on a lead and kept under control at all times in communal areas. If a tenant living in a block of flats wants to own a dog or any other pet or animal they will need our permission which we will consider on a case by case basis. We may refuse permission for tenants to keep dogs in certain blocks where we have issues with animals. Tenants are responsible for any damage

caused to their home or shared areas by any animal kept in their home or visiting their property.

- vii. It is expected that tenants, as part of their responsibilities under their tenancy agreements, will play an active role in keeping the communal areas clean and tidy.
- viii. The communal areas in blocks containing flats are only to be used as a route to and from individual properties. The areas should not be used for any gatherings. If it is found that individuals known to a tenant(s) are using the communal areas for any other reason than access to flats (such as drug taking and drinking alcohol) then this will be dealt with as a breach of tenancy.

8 Grounds Maintenance

Communal grounds includes shared grassed or paved areas, shrubs, flowers beds & pathways.

We will maintain communal grounds including cutting grass at scheduled intervals and keep hedges, flower beds and shrubs neat and tidy.

We will inspect communal grounds on a regular basis. Where recurrent problems arise, we may work in partnership with the relevant stakeholders or other agencies to resolve the problems.

Tenants are expected to play their part in keeping communal grounds neat and tidy and for the enjoyment of others.

Dogs must be kept under control and must not defecate in communal grounds.

9 CCTV

We recognise the growing popularity of CCTV in the prevention or detection of crime. We will not unreasonably refuse permission for the installation of CCTV where it is used for "limited household purposes" unless it:

- (i) extends unreasonably beyond the boundaries of the property
- (ii) where there is an excessive amount of CCTV installed or
- (iii) if it is being used in the harassment of others.

CCTV can also be used to record criminal behaviour or ASB which can be used for legal prosecutions or ASB investigations. In these circumstances we will balance the need to tackle crime and ASB against those of the individual subject to the data.

Tenants will be made aware that if they are recording the activities of other people then they will become a data controller for the purposes of data protection legislation. As a data controller they are responsible for data management and may potentially be held liable if they breach those obligations. In such circumstances, both parties will be directed to the Information Commissioner's Office.

10 **Noise**

We recognise not all types of noise is deliberate or to cause harm to others. Noise can be transferrable due to normal everyday activity or from poor sound insulation within a property or building.

Examples of non ASB noise or transferrable noise includes; but is not limited too:

- Movement around homes
- Noise from washing machines or household appliances
- Noise from children playing
- Pets and animals
- Doors opening and closing
- Television noise

In our approach to noise reports we adopt the finding of the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight on Noise Nuisance Report (2022) and believe that, whilst recognising non ASB noise can have a negative impact on others, it is unfair to the parties involved to always treat this as ASB as it can often lead to disproportionate and unrealistic investigations that don't lead to long term solutions and customer satisfaction.

10.1 **Noise Assessment**

When deciding on whether the noise is reasonable we will consider a number of factors such as the type of noise reported, previous complaints, the severity, frequency, duration, and the harm caused to the complainant or the community. This is known as a 'reasonable test'.

We will use a noise categorisation matrix to determine if the report should be investigated as a neighbourhood management issue or as ASB. If there are multiple types of noise and/or any other types of anti-social behaviour reported the report will be investigated under the ASB policy.

The investigating officer will consider a range of factors, including the accuracy and level of detail in witness statements, any counter-allegations, the number of incidents, whether any other organisations are already involved, and whether there may be disabilities or mental health issues involved.

Where someone makes a report but wishes their identify to remain confidential the complainant will be told that sometimes the circumstances of the incident may make it apparent who made the complaint and confidentiality can never be guaranteed.

Where someone makes an anonymous report and we don't know who it is we will consider the seriousness of the matter, as well as whether there may be possible sources of investigation, before deciding whether to investigate further or simply record as intelligence and close the case.

If the complainant doesn't cooperate (unless good reason) the case may be closed even if the issue remains unresolved.

10.2 Noise prevention

We recognise that prevention is better than cure to prevent noise reports. As part of our strategy to reduce the impact of noise in our homes we will:

- encourage outgoing tenants to leave carpets down if they are in good condition
- discourage tenants from laying hard flooring down in flats above ground floor level and hard flooring will be removed when a property becomes empty
- consider supplying carpets under our voids standard in flats that we have had noise nuisance complaints
- consider party wall sound proofing (in exceptional circumstances only)
- consider providing anti-vibration mats in homes where noise is caused by household appliances
- provide communication, through social media and campaigns, to residents about being considerate to neighbours.
- Provide a leaflet on being a good neighbour to all new tenants

10.3 Investigation of neighbourhood management issues

When investigating neighbourhood management issues, under this policy, we will rarely use legal interventions as an option. Where two parties are involved we will encourage communication and we will treat all parties with respect and sensitivity by not showing bias. Interventions methods for neighbourhood management issues include; but are not limited to:

- Phone calls, texts, visits, emails, letters
- Formal and informal mediation
- Self-help through both parties speaking to each other
- Positive letters to all parties to seek consensus and co-operation
- Good neighbour agreements
- Referrals to other organisations and/or internal teams
- Speaking to other residents
- Joint agency meetings

We will also consider whether one or both parties needs support. This could include support to access mental health support, social care services or drug and alcohol services.

If the issue does not abate and becomes more serious, this may be escalated and dealt with by enforcement action through to legal action or for noise reports that escalate under the Anti-social Behaviour Policy.

If there is insufficient evidence, or if the issue is having a serious detrimental impact on the complainant, or if all other solutions have been exhausted then one or the parties may need to consider rehousing.

11 Vexatious, unreasonable or persistent complaints

With reserve the right not to investigate vexatious, unreasonable or persistent complaints that have no grounds for investigation. Vexatious complainants can be dealt with under our customer feedback policy and options can include restricting the service we provide.

If we decide a report is unreasonable or we get persistent contacts to take action that is outside the scope of this policy, or not proportionate to the issue, we will write to the complainant to advise them that the report will not be investigated and the reasons why this decision has been made. They will have the right to request a review of this decision.

12 Partnership working

In addition to tenants responsibilities and our obligations to maintain homes and neighbourhoods we will work with other organisations to keep our neighbourhoods clean, attractive and safe places to live.

Effective engagement with our tenants is key to good neighbourhood management and working together to achieve positive outcomes and increased satisfaction. We will provide opportunities for tenants to become involved in decision making and consult on services that will affect where they live such as new development programmes.

We are members of several City Safe Partnerships across the Liverpool City Region that bring partner agencies together to achieve better outcomes for residents and communities.

13 Estate Inspections

We will undertake inspections across all neighbourhoods on a monthly basis. An important part of the inspection is to check on residents homes, gardens, alleyways and communal areas. If issues are identified the appropriate action will be taken. We will encourage residents to help us identify problems and work with us to resolve them. At certain times we will advertise the dates of inspections for residents and other organisations to join us and work collaboratively.

13.1 Neighbourhood Events

We will organise an participate in events to deal with emerging issues and/or tackle neighbourhood problems. These events can be delivered in partnership with other agencies and in co-operation with residents. We have a prominent presence in the heart of our communities and events that promote improved health, wellbeing and economic outcomes are done at various locations in our neighbourhoods.

14 Standards & Performance Monitoring

The following performance indicators will be monitored and analysed to measure the success of this policy:

- % of monthly estate inspections completed
- % of communal blocks cleaned every month
- % of communal gardens completed every month
- % of abandoned homes investigated within 1 working day
- % of completed knowing or customer visits completed per month

The following service standards were developed in conjunction with tenants in the development of this policy:

- we will aim to interview the complainant of a neighbourhood management report within five working days
- we will aim to interview the other party involved (if there is one) in a neighbourhood management report within ten working days
- we will report fly tipping to be removed to the relevant agency within one working days from the initial report
- we will report graffiti to be removed to the relevant agency within one working days of being reported

16. Policy Review Considerations

16.1 Equality Analysis

An equality impact assessment was completed to identify and respond to adverse impacts this policy may have on particular groups. In applying this policy we will make reasonable adjustments on a case by case basis in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010.

16.2 Policy Assessment

A full policy assessment was completed for this policy. This review included a value for money assessment and the failure to provide thriving neighbourhoods risk has been updated on the risk register.

16.3 Customer involvement, engagement and consultation

This policy was developed in consultation with our Customer Services Committee, a focus group and surveys with residents in the community. A desk top review was completed on customer complaints, satisfaction surveys and internal meetings with teams who are responsible for the investigation of this policy.

16.4 Statutory and Legislative Framework

We have developed this policy in line with the regulatory framework and legislative framework. Legislation includes; but is not limited too:

- RSH Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Ombudsman Spotlight on Noise Nuisance
- Housing Act 1985 & 1988, 1996, 1998, 2004
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Localism Act 2012
- ASB, Crime and Prevention Act 2014
- Housing & Regeneration Act
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Social Housing (Regulation Bill) 2023

16.5 Links with other policies & documents

This policy should be read and will be supported by the following documents:

- Information Security Policy
- Hate Crime Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- 01 Alert Warning Procedure
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy
- ASB Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Chargeable Repairs Policy
- Tenant Feedback Policy