



Estate management policy

1.0 Purpose and scope

This policy sets out our approach to estate management. It outlines how we aim to ensure that our properties, internal communal areas and external environments are clean and safe for our residents.

We are committed to maintaining our communities and estates in a holistic and tenure-blind way that meets the needs of our residents and their local community. This policy aims to facilitate the creation of thriving neighbourhoods where residents can feel at home and enjoy a sense of community.

Where the provision of services falls outside NHG's responsibility, we will work in partnership with other housing associations or local authorities, to ensure all shared spaces are well maintained and promote community cohesion.

This policy applies to estates within general needs, care and support, Home Ownership, Temporary Housing, freeholders and any appointed managing agents. It also covers our approach to health and safety within the communal area.

For issues surrounding parking please refer to our parking policy.

2.0 Definitions

Communal area (also common parts) – all parts of the property or estate which are not exclusively demised to any resident, and which are designated by the landlord as available for use in common by the residents of the building, the landlord and those properly authorised or permitted by them to do so. These areas include, but are not limited to, hallways, stairways, landings, communal lounges, communal toilets, electrical cupboards, riser cupboards, communal front door entrances, communal car parks, playgrounds, pathways and communal gardens. It does not include areas that are part of a resident's flat or house. Depending on the resident's lease or tenancy agreement, NHG may be responsible for the front door.

Shared spaces - An internal and external area connected with NHG homes and used by our residents, such as a public walkway leading to a building. The area is not our direct responsibility, but the responsibility of a local authority or another housing association.

Estate – An area of multiple buildings with shared grounds, communal areas and services. These include mixed-tenure developments, Temporary Housing, sheltered and support services where we have a housing management responsibility. These areas are service chargeable, and residents are liable for the cost to support its upkeep.

Places and Estates- Our places and estates team manage some of our largest or more complex estates. Each of those estates will have a named estate operations manager who will co-ordinate issues such as contracted repairs and concierges.

Community protection notice (CPN) - A CPN is a notice which can be served on an individual or organisation by the local authority or police. Failure to comply with a CPN is an offence under the Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2014). If found guilty, organisations can face an unlimited fine.

3.0 Estate Services

The appearance of our estates is important to us and we recognise the positive impact a lovely place to live can have on our residents. Good estate management makes residents proud of where they live and in turn can promote good community cohesion and can reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour.

Where services are provided, we are responsible for ensuring that our estates and communities are clean and well maintained. Cleaning of internal and external areas and gardening is undertaken regularly in accordance with contract agreements.

3.1 Cleaning and Gardening

We employ several different cleaning and gardening contractors across our estates. To ensure a consistent service across all estates, we monitor the contracts, ensuring that individual contract specifications include as a minimum:

- Cleaning of all communal areas
- Hard surface maintenance
- Grass cutting
- Weeding
- Removal of litter
- Plant and shrub maintenance
- Leaf clearance

3.2 Estate Inspections

We complete estate inspections regularly and within a reasonable timeframe after a service has been carried out, in accordance with the requirements of the estate. The estate inspection ensures that the contractors are adhering to their agreements with us. We inspect their cleaning of the communal areas to ensure it is done to the highest standard. We inspect how well they maintain the grounds on the estate, for example, whether the gardening has taken place.

3.3 Contractor performance

Where there are frequent issues with the standard of services provided, we ensure that the contractor is meeting the requirements in accordance with their contract. If they continue to not meet the standards, we enforce the clauses in the contract. In an extreme case the contract may be terminated.

Where a complaint is made about the standard of service, we raise the matter in the first instance with the responsible contractor and request they rectify the issue as soon as possible.

If a resident makes a request for the issue to be escalated as a formal complaint, we support this and work with the resident in accordance with our complaints and compliments policy.

3.4 Service Charges

The costs of estate services are usually recovered through a service charge which is paid by the residents in accordance with lease or tenancy agreements.

4.0 Community involvement

We recognise the important contribution residents can make by providing scrutiny and feedback on our services. This is particularly true when considering estates, and effective resident engagement forms key part of their management.

Due to the unique nature of estates, compared to individual or street properties, there are substantial opportunities for the empowerment of residents to have a tangible impact on their communities.

4.1 Estate action plans

Local officers are encouraged to produce action plans for estates they manage. These seek to address simple problems or concerns on an estate whether physical and/or social – for example, groups loitering. They provide realistic solutions in a short to medium timeframe, at the same time as capturing longer-term plans (which may include the involvement of outside agencies/bodies).

4.2 Community protection notice (CPN)

A CPN is a notice which can be served on an individual or organisation by the local authority or police. When served, it requires the person or organisation to take certain actions (for example, clear rubbish or stop an area becoming overgrown with shrubbery). Failure to comply with a CPN is an offence under the Crime and Anti-social Behaviour Act (2014) and organisations, if found guilty, can face an unlimited fine.

In the case where we have been warned of CPN, we work closely with the relevant local authority, housing association or organisation to rectify the issue. We work closely with our senior managers to ensure the case is handled effectively.

4.3 Resident engagement

Resident engagement is a key driver for good estate management. The feedback and input we gain from residents who, for example, join us on an inspection, provides invaluable insight into what does and doesn't work for residents. We consider the risks when planning and carrying out joint estate inspection.

Involved residents are ideally placed to monitor the quality and frequency of contractor services. This feedback is vital in ensuring good value for money for cleaning and gardening services and helps to raise standards and enhance a sense of pride on our estates.

We have opportunities for residents to join the resident monitor programme, a role where residents can grade the quality of contractors' works and report on issues.

To ensure services are well tailored to meet the preference of our residents, we consult with residents on introduction of and frequency of any new service.

5.0 Partnership working

We work in partnership with local authorities, other housing associations and agencies to help keep our estates and communities thriving. There are some issues that we cannot directly control such as refuse collections and illegal parking. However, in accordance with our commitment to maintaining shared spaces we will advocate for our residents and work collaboratively with other organisations to resolve any issues.

5.1 Anti-social behaviour

We recognise that estate management has a direct impact on anti-social behaviour and how proactive we are will help maintain a harmonious environment for our residents. We aim to work collaboratively with other organisations and manage our shared spaces together so that ASB can be resolved effectively.

We work quickly to resolve issues such as, but not limited to, liaising with contractors so that hazardous fly tipping can be removed as soon as possible, arranging for defective lighting to be repaired where it presents a safety issue for residents and the removal of offensive graffiti.

Any criminal activity should be reported to the police or dealt with in accordance with our anti-social behaviour policy.

6.0 Communal areas and equipment

As part of their occupancy agreement, residents are required to keep communal areas free from obstruction and must not store any personal items such as bikes or prams there. Any resident items found in the communal area will be removed in line with our communal areas storage policy.

In line with the relevant agreements, residents are not allowed to undertake any actions in their property or in common parts which may cause nuisance or harm to other residents. In the event of residents falling short of meeting their safety obligations, we will issue a contravention notice. Where residents cause harm or nuisance to other residents this will be dealt with in accordance with our anti-social behaviour policy.

Residents must first seek our permission if they wish to use the communal area for personal purposes such as a garden party.

6.1 Playgrounds and play equipment

Where we own or manage play equipment on estates, we ensure that it is safe to use, properly inspected and fit for purpose.

We ensure that our contractors carry out regular weekly inspections of the play equipment and areas. An annual full safety inspection of all areas and equipment is carried out by an independent play area specialist and all faults will be reported for repair on receipt of the report.

Where this is part of our contract with a grounds' contractor, we expect them to perform assessments to this standard.

6.2 Specialised equipment

Several of our estates have specialised equipment for communal use. We will inspect the equipment regularly. All staff and contractors visiting these areas have a duty to report any obvious risks or repairs immediately.

Examples of specialised equipment are as follows:

- Communal bathrooms with hoists
- Hairdressing facilities and their equipment
- Lifts and door entry systems.

6.3 Green Spaces

We ensure that we provide good quality green spaces for residents and enhance biodiversity on all new developments. Where we have green and brown ecological roofs, we work with the relevant contractors biannually to ensure their maintenance and proper upkeep.

7.0 Health and safety

Health and safety are paramount in our communities, and we are responsible for ensuring there are no health and safety risks on our estates. We ensure that reasonable steps are taken, in accordance with our health and safety policy, to provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment on our estates and communities.

8.0 Our approach

In writing this policy we have carried out assessments to ensure that we are considering Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. If you'd like more information about this work, please get in touch at policy@nhg.org.uk

9.0 Reference

- Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Occupiers Liability Act 1984
- Regulatory Standard for Social Housing in England from February 2024 – Neighbourhood & Community Standard
- Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977 and The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Document control

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Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version
20.05.2020	New policy	1.0
22.06.2023	Updated the policy to align with the Building Safety Act 2022 in relation to contravention notices.	1.1
19.03.2024	Policy review	2.0