

# Neighbourhood Management Policy

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<b>Policy author /holder</b>	Head of Neighbourhoods
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## 1 Purpose and anticipated outcomes

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LiveWest recognise that neighbourhood management is an integral part of our landlord role through the provision of safe, secure, and well-maintained neighbourhoods.

Well managed neighbourhoods provide a better quality of life for our customers and can act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance, and crime. We aim to provide high quality services, create sustainable communities, and promote pride in our neighbourhoods. We will comply with the Regulator of Social Housings Neighbourhood and Community Standard through partnership working with our customers and external organisations and our commitment to keeping neighbourhoods and communal areas clean and safe.

The purpose of this policy is to set out our commitment to maintaining and improving neighbourhoods and providing services to customers which enables them to have quiet enjoyment of their homes in a safe and secure environment and neighbourhoods they are proud to live in.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Develop a pro-active approach to the management of our properties and neighbourhoods, utilising our 'Don't Walk on by' guide and keeping us all safe
  - Ensure the grounds and communal facilities we own and manage are well maintained and that where we instruct work, it provides value for money for our customers.
  - Manage the environment with partner agencies and customers to create sustainable neighbourhoods.
  - Ensure that all customers are aware of their respective responsibilities.
  - Ensure we continue to comply with legislation and the Regulator's Consumer Standards
  - Create thriving and sustainable communities through customer-led partnership working.
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We aim to put customers at the heart of their neighbourhood by encouraging customer involvement and consultation on neighbourhood management. We are committed to working in partnership with relevant partners and external agencies, such as the local authority and the police, to help promote the social, environmental, and economic wellbeing of our neighbourhoods.

We will work in partnership with relevant organisations and community safety partnerships, to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods in conjunction with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

This policy operates within our values:

- Customer focused – we work with our customers to find solutions.
- Challenge convention – we are resilient and aren't afraid of change.
- Together we deliver - we work together to achieve outcomes.

Successful implementation and management of this policy will deliver improved outcomes for both our customers and LiveWest and increase customer satisfaction through the following Tenant Satisfaction Measures:

- Satisfied that landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.
- Satisfaction landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.

Key outcomes are:

- Increased levels of satisfaction from our customers when asked about their neighbourhood.
- A reduction in the number of complaints linked to our neighbourhoods and their management.
- Increased customer engagement through Community Investment and neighbourhood management activities such as Estate Champions

This policy aims to demonstrate compliance with the following consumer standards under the Neighbourhoods and Communities standard:

- Safety of shared spaces
- Local cooperation

## **2 Scope and definitions**

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This policy applies to customers of all tenures and sets out clear guidance for LiveWest staff and contractors in our approach to managing our neighbourhoods.

It explains our approach to managing our neighbourhoods, how we will involve customers in neighbourhood improvements and our partnership working with other agencies.

This policy works alongside other existing policies and procedures such as Anti-Social Behaviour and Tenancy Management, as detailed in section 6.

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This policy links with our customer offer and vulnerability policy and aims to demonstrate a holistic approach to neighbourhood management, flexing the offer to the needs of our customers.

### **3 About this policy**

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#### **3.1 Partnership Working**

Keeping our neighbourhoods safe, clean, and tidy requires joint working with our customers, local authority services and other agencies. To do this we will:

- Ensure a range of opportunities for customers to be involved in the management of their neighbourhood.
- Work together with our partners, including local Councillors, the Police, Highways, other housing providers, Environmental Protection and resident groups to make neighbourhoods a safer place to live in
- Support local initiatives to improve neighbourhoods.
- Work with neighbourhood community groups to identify local priorities and improvements.
- Conduct regular inspections to communal areas and ensure that they are well maintained and comply with safety regulations.
- Maintain hard and soft landscaped areas owned by LiveWest to a high standard.
- Work closely with local Police and other services to help keep our estates free from anti-social behaviour, harassment and hate crime.
- Conduct fire risk assessments in blocks of flats to identify and address fire risks, promptly removing obstructions in line with the fire safety policy.

We expect customers to act responsibly in their neighbourhoods and to adhere to the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement or lease. We will signpost to required support to resolve an issue or use enforcement measures as a last resort.

#### **3.2 Communal areas**

Customers who pass through an internal communal area to access their home or have use of an external communal area shall be responsible for ensuring that they, their visitors, and household members abide by their tenancy and leasehold conditions.

Customers must ensure that no items are left in the communal area and that no rubbish or litter is deposited. Smoking is not allowed in any internal communal area. Customers must also not interfere or cause damage to any door entry system, security, or safety equipment.

Everyone living in a building with a controlled door entry system are expected to use the system correctly by keeping the entrance door shut at all times and only allowing access to identified visitors to their home. Furthermore, customers must ensure that no damage or vandalism occurs to any features of communal areas.

We will investigate all instances of damage and vandalism and will work with partner agencies to identify the offender and take the appropriate enforcement action, please refer to the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. We will visit each communal area as part of our health and safety compliance schedule to inspect communal areas for items and damage.

We will ensure the good condition of flooring within internal communal areas, replace, and repair where necessary, and recover this cost through the service charge.

### **3.3 Fire Safety / Fire Risk**

The Regulatory Reform Order (fire) (2005) requires every block of flats to undergo a fire safety risk assessment. This applies to common parts and is an obligation on the landlord. We will ensure that every communal area is covered by a fire risk assessment. We will visit each communal area every two weeks to ensure it is free of hazards and that we are complying with the fire risk assessment please see the Fire Safety Operational Procedures for further information.

Due to potential dangers of obstructing access or means of escape in the event of a fire, we will operate a zero-tolerance approach to items left in a communal area. If any high-risk items (e.g., mobility scooter, motorcycle, moped or any machinery having a petrol or diesel engine.) are found, the customer who owns the items will be contacted and asked to remove the item immediately. Failure to do so would be seen as a breach of tenancy and would be treated as a serious risk to other customers, and the item may be removed by LiveWest immediately.

Other items will be carded and/or a sticker placed on them requesting removal within 7 days and will be removed and disposed of if they are still there after this time, and customers will not be eligible for compensation for loss of items under this process. Repeated failure of a customer to meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of their agreement with us and dealt with by the Neighbourhood teams. All avenues for resolving matters will be utilised including tenancy support and legal remedies. Reasonable adjustments will be considered where there are extenuating circumstances.

Bonfires, BBQ's and Fireworks are not permitted in/on any communal area owned by LiveWest. Use of bonfires, BBQ's and fireworks for individual homes must be carried out and used in accordance with the Local Authorities protocol; information can be found on their website.

### **3.4 Neighbourhood Team Actions**

Our Neighbourhoods team will complete regular visits to our neighbourhoods as part of their work in the community so that we can ensure local neighbourhoods are being looked after and to also identify any problems that need to be addressed.

The frequency of these visits will be determined on an individual basis and based on the regular assessment of a range of factors, including:

- Reports of anti-social behaviour
- The level and cost of services delivered.

- The level of complaints and reported repairs.
- The extent and condition of communal facilities, including any reports of damage and poor aesthetic quality.
- Poorly kept gardens
- Type of properties including number of high-rise blocks

Our Community Investment and Tenancy Sustainment Team will work alongside the Neighbourhoods and Estates Teams to ensure LiveWest visibility in our communities, building relationships with our customers and ensuring neighbourhood issues are identified and dealt with swiftly.

### **3.5 Neighbourhood improvements**

Neighbourhood improvements are planned works to the communal areas which are intended to enhance the local environment.

Neighbourhood improvements will be prioritised based on several factors such as (but not limited to):

- Available budget
- Customer need/consultation
- Feedback from customers and/or community groups
- Impact on the neighbourhood
- Impact on issues such as ASB/fly tipping/fire safety

We have dedicated Community Connectors whose role is to empower our customers to become active within their communities linking up with groups and other providers to focus on their priorities for the neighbourhood.

We offer a range of grants to groups for neighbourhood improvements through our Community Investment and Tenancy Sustainment Team and use staff volunteer days to carry out activities to enhance the neighbourhood. Our contractors also offer to deliver improvements as part of their commitments to social value.

We welcome suggestions from residents regarding biodiversity improvements such as tree planting, bird boxes and meadow creation and will work with communities to implement these where they can be accomplished without significant cost to residents. Where costs are likely to be incurred, we will fully consult residents before proceeding.

We will also consider requests from residents' groups to use areas of land for small-scale gardening projects and may provide support for such projects.

Decisions on priorities for neighbourhood improvements are discussed monthly.

### **3.6 Other Agencies Responsibilities**

Where issues are identified or reported on estates that are not the responsibility of LiveWest, customers will be advised to report the issue directly to the relevant organisation. For example, to the Police, Environmental Health, managing agents or the local authority highways.

### **3.7 Estate Services**

We will provide a range of services either directly or through contractors. The cost of these services will be recovered via local service charges or personal charges as appropriate. Services provided include (but are not limited to):

- Grounds Maintenance
- Tree management
- Communal cleaning & window cleaning
- Parking management
- Key/Access fob management.
- Health and Safety compliance checks
- Scheme Risk Assessments
- Play area inspections.
- Waste management.
- Graffiti removal.
- Winter Gritting

All contracts and instructed work will be robustly monitored by the Estate Services Team, with any issues of underperformance investigated and remedied.

Contracts will be reviewed and re-tendered at least every 5 years. When procuring new contracts, we will review specifications with customers and involve customers in the procurement process.

Our network of Estate Champions will help us to monitor the delivery of the services and provide local feedback.

#### **3.7.1 Grounds Maintenance**

The grounds maintenance specification and maps showing the hard and soft landscaped areas maintained by LiveWest will be made available to customers on request. The service level will be site specific and may be varied following resident consultation.

#### **3.7.2 Tree Management**

All trees on land owned by LiveWest will be assessed at least once every five years by suitably qualified staff or contractors. We will carry out a programme of works to manage the risks posed by trees to an acceptable level, balancing this against the many benefits that trees provide.

When considering requests to undertake works to trees we will consider:

- The risks posed by the tree.
- The level of any inconvenience being caused.
- Legal constraints and obligations
- The wider benefits the tree has to the environment.
- The resources available

More information can be found in our Tree Management Plan.

### **3.7.3 Communal Cleaning & Window Cleaning**

All schemes with internal communal areas and communal windows will have a cleaning specification clearly defining the standards and frequency of work; this will be available to all interested parties and reviewed on a regular basis. This work will be carried out either by contractors or directly employed staff.

We will manage the performance of cleaning contractors and staff through regular inspections and contract reviews.

### **3.7.4 Play areas**

Play equipment provided by LiveWest will be regularly inspected and maintained, with any necessary repairs carried out promptly. Play areas will be clearly signed with our contact details.

### **3.7.5 Waste Management - Refuse, Recycling, Bin Stores and Fly Tipping**

We will work closely with local authorities to ensure that neighbourhoods have the appropriate facilities for disposing of rubbish and recycling. Where LiveWest own and manage communal bin stores we will ensure that these are kept clean and tidy as part of the cleaning specification.

Excessive build-up of waste or contamination of recycling will be removed by contractors and re-charged to the scheme or block. Where there are repeated issues with bin stores, we will engage with residents to identify perpetrators and/or look for solutions in partnership with the Local Authority

Fly tipping is the illegal dumping of rubbish, and we treat this problem very seriously as it is visually unpleasant and can cause safety risks. Where fly tipping is on our land, we will remove it within five working days. The cost of removing fly tipping may be recharged to individuals where they can be identified, or to the scheme or block via a service charge. Large amounts of fly tipping will be investigated by the Housing Officer to try and identify the source so that action can be taken, such as tenancy breach remedies or requesting an investigation through Environmental Health.

Where fly tipping is on other land, we will report it to the local authority or relevant landowner where appropriate.

### **3.7.6 Vandalism and graffiti**

Vandalism and graffiti to LiveWest owned property are not acceptable. We want all customers and staff to report graffiti and vandalism if noticed. Where there is a Health and Safety risk, repair works are carried out within 24 hours. We aim to complete all other repairs within five working days.

All graffiti of a directly personal nature and in breach of Anti-social behaviour policy will be removed within 24 hours of notification. We aim to remove all other graffiti within five days of notification.

All incidents of vandalism and graffiti are recorded. We will investigate and endeavour to identify the perpetrator, prosecuting in partnership with other agencies such as the police where evidence allows.

### **3.7.7 Winter Gritting**

We will provide a gritting service or stock of grit (rock salt) at a select number of sites identified by managers as posing a higher risk. The list of sites will be made available on request. Full detail of our approach to Winter Gritting in residential areas is described in the Winter Gritting Operational Procedure for Residential Areas and Part C Section 19 of the Health & Safety Policy.

## **3.8 Vehicles and Parking**

We do not hold waiting lists or charge for parking. We operate a consistent 'first come, first served' approach to parking in LiveWest owned parking areas where spaces are not allocated.

We are unable to respond to specific requests for parking but in recognition of the challenges for customers living with disabilities. We will aim to allocate 5% of parking bays for customers who hold a blue badge.

We may appoint a reputable company to operate a parking scheme, or parking maintenance, in our neighbourhoods to ensure the effective management/control of parking spaces, facilities, gates or barriers. This is the solution we will seek where parking has become challenge; we are not able to get involved in disputes regarding parking and charges between the customer and the contractor. The performance and review of these contractors are reviewed on a cyclical basis by our Estates Team. Complaints regarding unallocated parking will be excluded from the complaint's procedure, although we will offer mediation as a solution if there is a dispute between neighbours.

We will work with the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to identify owners of suspected abandoned vehicles and where this is on our land, arrange for the vehicle to be removed, stored, and disposed of (if the owner does not respond after giving the required notice). Where the owner is identified we may re-charge the costs for the removal, storage and disposal of the vehicle. We will take a similar approach to abandoned trailers, caravans, boats etc.



Parking issues that are on local authority land or on the public highway will be reported by customers and staff to the Police or Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) so that they can take the appropriate action.

Where a parking space is allocated to a property regard must be given to safety, terms of the tenancy agreement, any planning restrictions should be honoured. We would not consent to customers using their driveways for accommodation purposes. Our service offer will extend to advice and mediation where there is a dispute connected to a shared driveway, where there is inappropriate parking, blocking of vehicles and damage to vehicles.

The installation of electric vehicle charging points is entirely at the discretion of LiveWest. The organisation is under no obligation to provide electric vehicle charging points purely because customers choose electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles. The locations where electric vehicle charging points are installed are based upon safety and practicality. Customers wishing to install an electric charging point in a communal car park or allocated parking space will first need to complete alterations request through our permissions process.

Customers who have disputes with the neighbours over parking are encouraged to speak to each other. Our approach to customer disputes over parking is addressed the ASB Policy.

### **3.9 Satellite dishes**

All permission requests for satellite dishes must be made in writing through our Customer Improvements Procedure.

We will generally permit customers living in houses to fix their own satellite dish to their home if it is installed safely in accordance with planning regulations/building control and without damaging or spoiling the condition or appearance of the property.

Permission may be refused where a property is not considered appropriate (e.g., flats where there is a communal aerial or restrictive covenant) or has undergone external refurbishment where we consider that a dish/additional aerial would damage the property. The method of construction of the home may also mean that permission is refused where the fitting of a satellite dish could damage the fabric of the building.

### **3.10 CCTV**

CCTV installed by companies, housing associations and local authorities is covered by the General Data Protection Regulations. Security systems installed by private householders, including cameras, are not covered by this legislation but the inappropriate use of privately installed CCTV may be a breach of civil law, could be considered a breach of the 2003 Sexual Offences Act (aimed at preventing voyeurism) or might be grounds for a complaint of harassment.

In conjunction with customers, we will consider proposals to install CCTV where customers themselves together with the police consider that this could improve the safety and security of an estate or area. The installation and running costs will be met through an addition to the service charge (subject to proper consultation with all affected customers). Any such installation will meet the requirements of the Code of Practice on the installation and use of CCTV published by the Office of the Information Commissioner. We do not offer a monitoring service where CCTV is installed.

We will give customers permission to install their own CCTV equipment where they can show that it will meet a need for increased security on the following conditions:

- It is a camera sited at or near the front entrance, covering that entrance or its approach only.
- The camera does not focus on neighbouring private homes, their gardens and other areas of private property.

We do not regard CCTV installation as an improvement and will not make payments under the compensation for improvements scheme.

Where customers have installed ring doorbells or similar devices at their own properties, we will advise them to ensure that they are aware of the legal implications, and that they do not invade the privacy of other. These systems are not within LiveWest's control.

Our service offer extends to mediation and advice where there is a dispute regarding CCTV cameras.

### **3.11 Pest Infestations**

Customers have a responsibility to report all issues regarding vermin, pest or insect infestations to us. When a customer reports the presence of vermin, pests or insects within their house or garden, they will be advised to contact the local authority or a pest control company. Where infestations can be directly attributed to a customer's living conditions or habits, we will advise the customer on how best to address the problem to ensure it does not reoccur.

The customer will be responsible for any remedial work required to bring the property or garden up to standard to resolve and prevent infestations. Where a customer fails to meet any of the obligations to rectify any infestation, appropriate action will be taken to encourage and support the customer to adhere to the conditions of their tenancy. Support and advice will be offered when required where support needs and or vulnerabilities are identified. Continual failure of the customer to meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of the tenancy agreement. All avenues for resolving tenancy breaches will be utilised including the powers of external agencies, recharging customers for works not carried out and legal remedies.

Where required we will work with the local authority to assist with any statutory nuisance arising from infestation. If an infestation occurs at a location that is identified as a common area and not part of a customers' home, we will take steps to eradicate the infestation and prevent it from reoccurring. This may involve working with customers and other residents to eliminate nearby food sources.

The response time for responding to infestations will depend on the type of infestations and the severity, however we will respond to all reports within 10 working days. Where a statutory nuisance exists, we will respond within 24 hours. We will ensure that all empty properties are free from infestations before being let which includes all external areas. Please refer to the Lettings Policy and Void Property Standard.

#### **4 Service standards, monitoring and review**

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We have a full commitment to this policy and will ensure appropriate training will be given to all staff.

The policy will be made widely available to customers and stakeholders via an appropriate range of online and printed communication platforms.

We will review customer feedback and identify areas for service improvement on a continuous basis so that we improve the value for money of services being delivered.

The policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier where there are changes in legislation or regulations.

#### **5 Legal considerations**

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- Social Housing Act 2023
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978
- The Removal, Storage and Disposal of Vehicles (Prescribed Sums and Charges) Regulations 2008
- Law of Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977
- Public Health Act 1936.
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Neighbourhood & Community Standard (HCA, 2015)
- Occupiers Liability Acts 1957/1984
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

## 6 Linked / associated policies and other references

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Below is a list of linked or associated LiveWest documents and to which our employees, contractors and other individuals are required to comply, as appropriate:

### Policies

- Anti-social behaviour & Hate Crime
- Tenancy management
- Compliments, complaints and feedback
- Unacceptable Behaviour
- Health & Safety
- Fire Risk
- Vulnerability

### Procedures and Guidelines

- Anti-Social Behaviour & Hate Crime
- Abandoned, unroadworthy and untaxed vehicles.
- Estate and scheme inspections
- Hoarding
- CCTV management
- Sensitive Customer Information (customer flagging)
- Tree Management Plan
- Pets Procedure
- Customer improvements
- Unacceptable Behaviour
- Winter Gritting – Residential Areas
- Grounds Maintenance specification
- ESO Procedure for waste removal in communal areas

### Version Control

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Version number	Date	By Whom?	Summary of change
2	August 2024	Head of Neighbourhoods	Included further reference to consumer standards, TSMs and vulnerability policy