Communal Areas Policy	

Adopted:	7th March 2019
Contact Officer:	Deborah Tempest, Head of Housing
Last Amended/Reviewed:	First version of policy
Version/Reviewed by:	V1 – 1st version 7th March 2019 by CMT
Next Formal Policy Review:	3 years from adopted date
Formal Review of Policy by:	Corporate Management Team or Board
Policy Links:	Health and Safety Fire Safety Repairs and Maintenance Risk Management Mobility Scooter Equality & Diversity

Brief Policy Summary:
To ensure that all communal areas are monitored regularly and maintained to the highest possible standards.

Contents

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP) policy in respect of Communal Areas is to ensure that all are maintained to the highest possible standards.

1.2 The Neighbourhood and Community Standard within the Regulator of Social Housing's regulatory framework states that registered providers '....*shall keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so.'*

1.3 LHP recognises that unattended, neglected and vandalised areas and property are not only an eyesore but they also:

- mean a poor public image
- create unnecessary costs
- contribute to the decline of an area and in turn can lead to properties in the area becoming difficult to let
- are a source of risk to people's health and safety
- undermine commitment to other issues such as tenancy condition enforcement
- can lead to residents and officers becoming discouraged from making an effort

1.4 The following legal requirements affect this policy:

- **Occupiers Liability Act 1957 & 1984** – This Act imposes a "duty of care" on the occupier of a property. When a visitor/trespasser 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.
- **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.
- **The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** – 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.
- **Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977** – defines what responsibilities we have in removing a tenant's property and setting out how and when to dispose of it.

2. Objectives

2.1 The service will be provided in an efficient and effective manner, being able to react flexibly and responsively to the varying demands placed upon it.

The service will encourage "ownership" of the service by all concerned ensuring tenants, officers, contractors and the Company accept their responsibilities and play their role in the upkeep and maintenance of the Company's properties, the tenants homes and the amenities provided.

2.2   Best Value will be achieved by careful selection and best use of contractors and local labour wherever possible to carry out necessary works.

2.3   Regular inspections will be undertaken to monitor effectiveness and maintain standards to meet the requirements of ensuring the Health, Safety and wellbeing of all persons using these areas.

3.   Scope

3.1   This policy covers the various aspects of communal area maintenance which together achieve the aims of the policy.

3.2   It will cover:

- All common staircases including lobby, hall access and landing areas to Company and Leasehold properties.
- Party structures, e.g. communal buildings and fabric to units containing two or more dwellings.
- Communal areas and fittings such as perimeter fencing, drying areas, courtyards, squares, access routes and paths, and all other areas not contained within the curtilage boundary designated to a particular dwelling.
- Sheltered Housing Schemes, Supported Housing and Shared Housing communal areas, shared bathrooms, corridors, toilets, lounge, entrance areas, boiler rooms etc.
- Company land e.g. all areas associated with LHP and garages etc. to include grassed and open plan areas, estate fences, housing paths (non-adopted), sewers, drains, garage and parking sites etc.

4.   Method

4.1   It will be expected that a culture of ownership will extend throughout LHP and that daily vigilance by all tenants, caretakers/handyperson, Housing Officers, Wardens, other staff, contractors and leaseholders to note, report and avoid any breaches of requirements, will be the primary method by which communal areas are maintained.

4.2   All detection and alarm systems for Sheltered Housing, Supported Housing and Shared accommodation will be maintained and tested according to BS5839.

4.3   Emergency Lighting within Sheltered Housing, Supported Housing and Shared accommodation will be maintained and tested according to BS5266.

4.4   Due to the nature of Sheltered and Supported Housing for locations in the South, members of staff are on site on a daily basis throughout the working week, which

means that regular visual inspections of communal parts are undertaken. Defects and non-compliance with tenancy/licence conditions are to be logged and reported to ensure that corrections are made. For Shared Accommodation and Sheltered Housing located in the North staff will visit at least once a week to undertake a fire alarm test and will undertake a visual inspection at the same time.

4.5 For all other types of accommodation Housing Officers will undertake monthly inspections, in accordance with a set programme, of all estates and communal areas. A record detailing their findings will be kept, noting not only defects but standards and compliance with tenancy and contract requirements. Appropriate corrections will be made.

4.6 The type of issues to be considered when assessing good condition are:

- safe electrical installations providing adequate working lighting, fire alarms, emergency lighting etc.
- entrance/exit doors fully operational
- all communal areas are kept clear e.g. no carpets, prams, bikes or mobility scooters
- no flammable or combustible items are to be kept in communal cupboards or areas
- no personal items in electricity meter cupboards
- decorations satisfactory
- signs clear and not damaged
- cleanliness e.g. litter, dirt etc. on stairways and around blocks
- all steps, treads, handrails, guarding, nosing, floor coverings and glazing are safe
- grassed areas, vegetation beds etc. are maintained to the standards and frequencies required in the Grounds Maintenance Contract
- garage sites and parking areas are free from any accumulation of rubbish
- estate boundary fencing is sound
- street lighting is in good order.

4.7 Periodic spot checks will be undertaken by Managers and/or the Health and Safety Team to ensure that procedures are being followed.

5. Monitoring

5.1 As with all LHP activity it is expected that this service will be provided in a way which conforms to all Policies and Standing Orders of the Company, with particular regard to Equal Opportunities and Repair and Maintenance policies.

5.2 The Head of Housing will have responsibility for monitoring progress and will undertake reviews to monitor:

- performance against targets
- the effectiveness of procedures
- progress in the implementation of programs

5.3   Information will be reported to The Board of Management via the report on Health & Safety.

5.4   The primary data used to test compliance with performance requirements will be:

- number and frequency of scheduled inspections
- tenant satisfaction/complaints
- levels of conformity with Grounds Maintenance Schedules

7.   Policy Review

7.1   This policy will be reviewed every three years, or as and when required e.g. if repurposing of existing units, new build properties or legislation changes, trigger a review.

LHP	Equality Impact Assessment Initial Screening

Name of policy / strategy / project (the "initiative"):

Policy Communal Areas Policy

Provide a brief summary of the aims and main activities of the initiative:

To ensure that Communal Areas are kept to a good standard and are monitored regularly

Completed by: **Mark Louch**	**Date: 28 February 2019**

STAGE 1: SCREENING
This stage establishes whether a proposed initiative will have an impact from an equality perspective on any particular group of people or community – i.e. on the grounds of race, religion/faith/belief, gender (including transgender), sexual orientation, age, disability, or whether it is "equality neutral" (i.e. have no effect either positive or negative).

Q 1. Who will benefit from this initiative? Is there likely to be a positive impact on specific groups/communities (whether or not they are the intended beneficiaries), and if so, how? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality 'neutral' i.e. will have no particular effect on any group? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

All of our tenants living in every type of accommodation. Due to the design of the policy it is unlikely that there will be either a positive or negative impact on specific groups or communities. We believe that this policy is likely to be equality neutral.

Q 2. Is there likely to be an adverse impact on one or more minority/under-represented or community group as a result of this initiative? If so, who may be affected and why: Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality 'neutral'? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

It is unlikely that there will be an adverse impact.

Q 3. Is there sufficient data on the target beneficiary groups/communities? Are any of these groups under or over represented? Do they have access to the same resources? What are your sources of data and are there any gaps? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

They are all represented.

Q 4. Outsourced services – if the initiative is partly or wholly provided by external organisations / agencies, please list any arrangements you plan to ensure that they promote equality and diversity. *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

This policy is delivered by LHP staff; however, we use external contractors to undertake cleaning of communal areas. We can verify that they promote equality & diversity through the contract approval process by asking for copies of specific documents under safe systems in Procurement.

Q 5. Is the impact of the initiative (whether positive or negative) significant enough to warrant a full impact assessment – see guidance? If not, will there be monitoring and review to assess the level of impact over a period of time? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

We don't perceive any negative impacts that would warrant a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Q 6. To be completed at six monthly review Detail actions taken to assess the level of impact over a period of time, or to address any gaps in data. *Please consider all aspect of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Beilief, Sexuality*

Guidelines: Things to consider

- Where a negative (i.e. adverse) impact is identified, it may be appropriate to make a full EIA (see Stage 2), or, as important, take early action to redress this - e.g. by abandoning or modifying the initiative. **NB If the initiative contravenes equality legislation it must be abandoned or modified**.
- Where an initiative has a positive impact on groups/community relations, the EIA should make this explicit, to enable the outcomes to be monitored over its lifespan.
- Where there is a positive impact on particular groups, does this mean there could be an adverse impact on others, and if so can this be justified? - e.g. Are there other existing or planned initiatives which redress this?
- It may not be possible to provide detailed answers to some of these questions at the start of the initiative. The EIA may identify a lack of relevant data, and that data-gathering is a specific action required to inform the initiative as it develops, and also to form part of a continuing evaluation and review process.
- It is envisaged that it will be rare for full impact assessments to be required. Usually, where there are particular problems identified in the screening stage, it is envisaged that changing the approach at this stage, and/or setting up a monitoring/evaluation system to review a policy's impact over time will tackle the problem.