



# Neighbourhood Management Policy

## August 2017

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## **1. Our policy is...**

- 1.1 Ongo Homes (OH) believes that everyone should be able to enjoy living in a well maintained, safe and clean environment which they can be proud of.
- 1.2 OH recognises that effective neighbourhood management is a vital part of our landlord role, the satisfactory delivery of which will assist greatly in promoting safe, secure, sustainable and desirable communities.
- 1.3 We recognise that effective neighbourhood management goes beyond looking after buildings and the physical environment. It is also about providing or arranging necessary information and advice to support tenants and residents. It involves liaising and working with tenants, residents and other agencies to ensure that the environment is safe for others who may visit, use or enter our land or property.

## **2. It applies to...**

- 2.1 This policy applies to the organisation and its employees, committees, partners, tenants and leaseholders, and to any external organisation supported or engaged by OH.
- 2.2 In general the Neighbourhood Management Policy will deal with those aspects of the function that are not covered by other documentation and will define neighbourhood management as a combination of;
  - ✓ Issues relating to the Tenancy Agreement and, in particular, breaches of the Tenancy Agreement;
  - ✓ Management of the properties, the surrounding area and common areas;
  - ✓ Environmental Issues.
- 2.3 The following specific areas of activity, for both employees and customers, are covered:
  - ✓ Providing advice and guidance on the responsibilities of OH and those of customers
  - ✓ Management of environmental contracts
  - ✓ Maintaining communal areas
  - ✓ Estate Walkabouts, Inspections and managing performance
  - ✓ Services provided by the Caretaking and Cleaning Team
  - ✓ Environmental Improvements
  - ✓ Implementation and monitoring

### **3. Because we want to...**

3.1 This policy has been produced to ensure that we provide a service to residents which enables them to have quiet enjoyment of their homes in a safe and secure environment and neighbourhoods they are proud of.

3.2 The specific objectives of the Neighbourhood Management Policy are to:

- ✓ Develop a pro-active approach to the management of our properties and neighbourhoods;
- ✓ Manage the environment around our properties and common areas effectively;
- ✓ Ensure that all residents are aware of their respective responsibilities;
- ✓ Set appropriate standards to measure performance delivery and residents' satisfaction.
- ✓ Have clean and tidy properties and neighbourhoods

### **4. We will...**

#### **4.1.1 Garden Maintenance**

4.1.2 Residents that have exclusive use of a garden, shall be responsible for ensuring that all parts of the garden are maintained to an acceptable standard and are not allowed to become overgrown or untidy. They must ensure that the garden does not endanger the health and safety of others or cause damage to any property.

4.1.3 We will work with residents who do not maintain their garden and provide support and assistance when required. We understand that a number of our tenants will require some additional support to help maintain their garden. We will ensure that those tenants are directed towards our Handyman Service, our Tenancy Support Team or other support networks.

4.1.4 Where a tenant fails to meet any of these obligations appropriate action will be taken to encourage the tenant to adhere to the conditions of their tenancy. Continual failure of the tenant to meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of the tenancy agreement.

4.1.5 All avenues for resolving tenancy breaches will be utilised including the powers of external agencies, recharging tenants for works not carried out and legal remedies.

4.1.6 Although we have no ability to take action against land owners who do not maintain their garden or property, we will, where appropriate, refer matters to the local Authority. Where a property has been purchased under the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire schemes, we will look to enforce any covenants relating to garden maintenance.

4.1.7 All gardens to empty properties will be brought up to the defined clean and safe standard before being let. Please refer to our Lettings Policy and Lettable Quality Standard.

## **4.2 Maintenance of open plan areas**

4.2.1 We will be responsible for maintaining external common areas and open spaces. This includes grassed areas, play areas, boundary fencing, shrub beds, parking bays, roads and footpaths that have not been adopted by North Lincolnshire Council. Some of the costs incurred in meeting these obligations may be incorporated into a service charge for tenants and included as part of the property management account for leaseholders.

4.2.2 We will ensure that we have a grounds maintenance contract in place to maintain all identified open spaces and work in partnership with our approved contractor to ensure;

- ✓ Amenity/Open spaces of grass are regularly cut throughout the growing season, 16 cuts per year, every 14 days – Weather permitting.
- ✓ Shrub beds and Hedges are not allowed to overhang footpaths – Maintained twice a year, Summer prune (siding) and Winter prune (hard).
- ✓ Footpaths, parking bays and roads that have not been adopted by North Lincolnshire Council are regularly sprayed with weedkiller.
- ✓ SLA with NLC to inspect and repair our playparks.
- ✓ Leaf collection is done twice a year during November and January.
- ✓ Grass edging throughout the growing season (Estate Services).

4.2.3 We will periodically meet with our contractor to ensure the services provided are of the highest standard and to discuss customer satisfaction.

4.2.4 We will liaise and work with North Lincolnshire Council to identify any areas that are the responsibility of the Council to ensure they are regularly maintained to an acceptable standard.

## **4.3 Caretaking and Cleaning Service**

4.3.1 OH will provide a caretaking and cleaning service to neighbourhoods and communal areas where required. The frequency and level of the caretaking service will vary and depend on the requirements of the location. However all areas will be inspected at least every three weeks to ensure the area is kept clean and tidy.

We will review where we provide a regular caretaking and cleaning service on an annual basis and consult with residents about any proposed changes. **Appendix 1** details the tasks our caretaking and cleaning team will undertake however this list is not exhaustive and tasks will vary in order to achieve the aims of this policy.

- 4.3.2 We will undertake cleaning tasks to all communal areas of our high rise blocks, retirement and sheltered schemes, flats and maisonettes. The frequency and level of the cleaning will vary and depend on the requirements of the location. Where we carry out the cleaning of common areas the costs incurred will be recharged back to tenants as a service charge and to leaseholders as part of the property management account. Some of our cleaning services may be provided by an external contractor and we will periodically meet with our contractor to ensure the services provided are of the highest standard and to discuss customer satisfaction.

#### **4.4 Winter Weather Services**

- 4.4.1 Ongo Homes will undertake winter weather services to ease the access to homes and around selected neighbourhoods. Services will include the clearance of main walkways around sheltered and retirement schemes, Market Hill and Trent View House high rise flats. We will remove snow and use preventative measures to minimise icy conditions. The locations where winter weather services will be provided will be decided in conjunction with tenants (**see appendix 2**). The ability to provide services will depend on the weather conditions and resources available. Ongo Homes will plan in advance, where possible, for the provision of such services out side of our normal working hours.

#### **4.5 Garage site and parking areas**

- 4.5.1 All garage sites and parking areas, not including driveways to individual properties, will be maintained on a regular basis either by our Estate Services Team.
- 4.5.2 The purpose of garage sites and parking areas is for the storage of motor vehicles.

Garage sites and parking areas must not be used for the repairing or fixing of

vehicles without the prior permission of OH. No trailer, caravan or boat should be stored in parking area or on garage sites

4.5.3 All tenants, leaseholders and garage licensees must adhere to the obligations set down in their respective agreements relating to driveways, garage sites and parking areas. Where a tenant, leaseholder or licensee fails to meet any of these obligations appropriate action will be taken to encourage them to adhere to the conditions of their agreement. Continual failure meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of the agreement and all avenues will be explored to resolve the breach including the use of legal remedies.

4.5.4 Where parking areas are provided, we will work with residents to ensure that the parking areas are considerately used. If a need is identified, we will consider working with residents to implement a parking permit scheme so that only residents can use the parking area. OH will be responsible for the administration of any scheme and work with an external partner to provide the enforcement element. Once a parking permit scheme is in operation, we will ensure that it is effective and operates smoothly.

## **4.6 Environmental crime**

4.6.1 Environmental crime affects our ability to maintain and improve our neighbourhoods. We aim to minimise the incidents of environmental crime and respond promptly when incidents are identified. Environmental crime covers a variety of acts such as:-

- ✓ Vandalism,
- ✓ Dog fouling
- ✓ Graffiti
- ✓ Dropping litter
- ✓ Fly tipping

4.6.2 We will investigate all instances of environmental crime and work with partner agencies to identify the offender and take the appropriate enforcement action, please refer to the Anti Social Behaviour Policy and Pet Policy. We will encourage

residents who witness environmental crime to report it to us and any other relevant organisation such as the Police or Environmental Health.

4.6.3 We will undertake any task to rectify the result of environmental crime which is not the responsibility of a tenant. Please refer to appendix one and the Maintenance Policy for the relevant timescales for remedial work.

4.6.4 Tenants are responsible for making good or paying for damage caused by deliberate acts of vandalism or any results caused by environmental crime by themselves, any member of their household or visitors. Please refer to the Recharge Policy.

4.6.5 Where we witness the result of environmental crime on land or property not owned by OH we will report the matter to the land owner and the Local Authority where appropriate.

#### **4.7 Waste management**

4.7.1 OH are responsible for addressing litter and fly-tipping within the boundaries of the properties and land that we own and will arrange clearance accordingly. Please refer to section 4.4 on the duties of our Caretaking and Cleaning Service.

4.7.2 Tenants will be notified at the start of their tenancy of arrangements and scheduled days for uplift of refuse, bulk items and recyclable material.

4.7.3 All Tenants and leaseholders are expected to take all reasonable care to ensure that their household rubbish is properly stored and disposed of. Refuse must be adequately bagged and stored until collection in bin stores or other designated areas. Tenants and leaseholders are also responsible for making arrangements for the disposal of large items such as household furniture. Residents must comply with the local arrangements for the collection of refuse.

4.7.4 We will work in partnership with the Local Authority to encourage our residents to recycle and re-use their household waste. We will, where possible, provide locations for the positioning of recycling facilities. Furthermore we will work with the Local Authority regarding the provision of litter and dog bins and the disposal of such waste. Where a tenant is unable to manage their household waste, we will work with the Local Authority to provide the necessary support and assistance.

4.7.5 Bins should be stored in the designated areas and regularly cleaned by residents. We will maintain communal bin stores and their surrounding areas.

4.7.6 We will ensure that we have the appropriate Waste Licenses to allow our staff, and partners, to remove waste from properties we manage, or lease. This will ensure that we correctly manage the disposal of waste in accordance with current regulations, and are not liable to legal action as a result of any negative steps we may take.

#### **4.8 Infestations**

4.8.1 Tenants have a responsibility to report all issues with regard to vermin, pest or insect infestation to OH. Representatives of OH will also identify locations where infestations are present.

4.8.2 When a tenant 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 infestation can be directly attributed to a tenant's living conditions, or habits, we will advise the tenant on how best to address the problem to ensure it does not recur. We will visit all tenants who report an infestation with their home or garden.

4.8.3 The tenant will be responsible for any remedial work required to bring the property or garden up to standard in order to resolve and prevent infestations.

4.8.4 Where a tenant fails to meet any of the obligations to rectify an infestation, appropriate action will be taken to encourage the tenant to adhere to the conditions of their tenancy. Support and advice will be offered when required. Continual failure of the tenant to meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of the tenancy agreement.

4.8.5 All avenues for resolving tenancy breaches will be utilised including the powers of external agencies, recharging tenants for works not carried out and legal remedies.

4.8.6 Where required we will work with the Local Authority to assist with any statutory nuisance arising from infestation.

4.8.7 If an infestation occurs at a location that is identified as a common area and not part of a tenants homes, OH will take steps to eradicate the infestation and prevent it from recurring. 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.

4.8.8 We will ensure that all empty properties are free from infestations before being let which includes all external areas. Please refer to our Empty Homes and Lettings Policy and Lettable Quality Standard

#### **4.9 Regeneration and Investment in our neighbourhoods**

4.9.1 It is vital that large scale improvement work to our properties and neighbourhoods is completed to assist with the day to day management of our neighbourhoods. We will plan in advance a variety of improvement work which will compliment the aims of all of our service areas. Where an area is identified as requiring large scale investment to improve its overall appearance or to design out a neighbourhood management problem, we will prioritise improvement work based on financial resources and necessity.

#### **4.10 Partnership working**

4.10.1 OH will work with all relevant Partners, Contractors and local organisations to ensure our properties and neighbourhoods are managed and maintained to the highest possible standards. We will in particular continue to develop and sustain our partnership with Humberside Probation Service so that we maximise the resources available from the Community Payback Scheme. We will assist and support any resident who wishes to take advantage of the Community Payback Scheme to improve their neighbourhood.

#### **4.11 Communal areas**

4.11.1 Tenants and leaseholders 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. Tenants and leaseholders must ensure that no items are left in the communal area and that no rubbish or litter is deposited. Tenants and leaseholders 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 is 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 tenants and leaseholders must ensure that no damage or vandalism occurs to any feature of a communal area.

4.11.2 Due to potential dangers of obstructing access or means of escape in the event of a fire any high risk item (e.g. mobility scooter; motorcycle, moped or any machinery having a petrol or diesel engine.) will have a warning sticker placed upon it advising that items are high risk and will be removed within 24 hours. Other items that pose a potential hazard will be dealt with by a managed approach and labelled with a clear notification sticker giving a date of no longer than 5 working days. All reasonable steps will be taken to attempt contact with the owner of the item (s) to give them opportunity to remove them first. All items removed by OH after the expiry of the notification will be - disposed off and the owner, if identified will be recharged the full costs associated with the disposal. A managed approach will be taken to the entrances and communal rooms of retirement living schemes.

4.11.3 No items can be stored in any meter cupboards opening into an internal communal area. These areas will be inspected regularly to ensure this is being followed.

4.11.4 Failure of the tenant or leaseholder to meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of their agreement with OH. All avenues for resolving matters will be utilised including tenancy support and legal remedies.

4.11.5 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.

4.11.6 We will visit each communal area every two weeks to inspect communal areas for items and damage.

#### **4.12 Fire Safety / Fire Risk**

4.12.1 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. OH will ensure that every communal area is covered by a fire risk assessment and that the assessment is reviewed annually. 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.

#### **4.13 Walkabouts / Inspections**

4.13.1 To ensure OH provides a good neighbourhood management service, we will complete inspections in a variety of ways. We will operate a mystery shopping style approach to formal inspections to ensure we get a realistic and accurate inspection of our neighbourhoods. Furthermore, any resident will be able to request a walkabout of their neighbourhood with their Housing Officer and Estate Caretaker. Upon receiving the request, we will arrange and complete the walkabout within 15 working days. One month after the walkabout, we will provide updates to all attendees on how we have resolved or are working towards resolving all issues highlighted as part of the walkabout. Finally, we will inspect hotspot areas for overgrown and untidy gardens between May to September to ensure that we fulfil the aims of this policy.

4.13.2 The outcomes concluded from all the different inspections formats will drive the focus of our neighbourhood management services.

### **5 Making sure we do what we say...**

5.1 The Board and the Director of Operations are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

5.2 The Head of Housing Management has responsibility for monitoring the service and ensuring that it complies with the requirements of this policy.

5.3 All employees who are involved in the delivery of neighbourhood management services are responsible for ensuring they comply with the requirements of this policy.

5.4 We will monitor customer satisfaction of service delivery through periodic surveys and by analysing trends in complaints, comments and compliments.

5.5 We will set and monitor targets relating to:-

- ✓ %of customers satisfied with our neighbourhood based services
- ✓ % of tree inspections and necessary work completed on time

- ✓ % of caretaking and cleaning tasks completed on time.
- ✓ % of successfully resolved tenancy breaches relating to environmental crime or untidy gardens
- ✓ Undertake quarterly mystery shopping exercises for inspecting our neighbourhoods
- ✓ % of inspection requests arranged and completed in target
- ✓ Regeneration and investment programmes that improve the appearance of our properties and neighbourhoods.
- ✓ Our Grounds maintenance Contractor

We will involve customers in the delivery of neighbourhood management services via the Grounds Maintenance Panel, Tenant Inspectors and other relevant resident involvement structures.

## **6 Other things to bear in mind...**

6.1 This policy also links to our:

- ✓ Anti-social Behaviour Policy
- ✓ Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy
- ✓ Empty Homes and Lettings Policy
- ✓ Tree Policy & Guidance
- ✓ Health and Safety Policy
- ✓ Local Offer – Your Community
- ✓ Recharge Policy
- ✓ Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- ✓ Tenancy Agreement
- ✓ Tenancy Management Policy and Procedures
- ✓ OH Leasehold Management Policy

6.2 The main pieces of legislation and regulation relevant to this policy include:

- ✓ Cleaner and Safer Neighbourhoods Act 2005
- ✓ Environmental Protection Act 1990
- ✓ Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991
- ✓ Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- ✓ Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- ✓ The Planning and Compensation Act 1991
- ✓ The Regulatory Reform Order (Fire) (2005)
- ✓ Equality Act 2010
- ✓ Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

## **7 . We'll look at this again...**

7.1 This policy will be next reviewed in line with the Estate Services service review.

7.2 We will ensure that we consult with residents in the development, monitoring and review of this policy.

## 8. Jargon Buster

Reference	Definition
Neighbourhood Management	In its widest sense, neighbourhood management refers to property management and services to residents and other stakeholders, which aim to enable residents to have quiet enjoyment of their homes and a decent, safe and secure environment. Neighbourhood management is not just about looking after buildings and the physical environment, it also involves providing or arranging necessary advice and support to customers and involves working with other agencies to achieve decent living conditions.
Neighbourhood	Local area where residents relate to each other as part of a wider community
Housing Management Function	Any service delivered by OH relating to the management of tenancies or advice to tenants
Neighbourhood Watch	A groups of volunteer residents who look out for signs of crime in their own neighbourhoods, and share that information with each other, local police and other agencies such as OH.
Leaseholders	A person who leases property or land from OH under a formal Lease agreement

## APPENDIX 1

### Caretaking and Cleaning Team Duties

	Response timescale / Frequency
Cleaning of stairwells / communal area / lifts	5 working days
Dealing with dog fouling	5 working days
Clearing bin areas / chutes	24 hours
Attending neighbourhood inspections	As and when requested by a customer
Litter picking	5 working days
Fly tipping	2 working days
Weed killing and moss removal	10 working days
Maintaining car parks & garage areas	Areas checked every 2 weeks
Removing offensive graffiti	24 hours
Removing non- offensive graffiti	5 working days
Erecting signs	10 working days
Removing Hazardous items e.g. needles and drug paraphernalia	24 hours
Jet washing paved areas	Areas checked every 2 weeks and completed when required
Monitoring grounds maintenance services and reporting problems	Areas checked every 2 weeks and concerns reported within 24 hours
Reporting tenancy/housing management issues and collecting evidence	Completed when required
Reporting Abandoned vehicles	Completed when required
Reporting repairs –neighbourhood and property based	Completed when required
Fire / health and safety checks	Areas checked every 2 weeks and concerns reported immediately
Assisting with the replacement of door entry fobs	24 hours
Inspect trees and undertake minor works	10 working days
Supervise community payback and use them to assist in day to day duties	Completed when required
Winter weather duties such as snow clearance and salt distribution	Completed when required

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Winter Weather Services**

All areas considered to be part of the complexes listed below will received winter weather services supplied by the Caretaking and Cleaning team.

- ✓ Crosby House, Scunthorpe
- ✓ Sutton House, Scunthorpe
- ✓ Princess House, Scunthorpe
- ✓ Trent View House, Scunthorpe
- ✓ Victoria House, Barton
- ✓ Greenfields, Goxhill
- ✓ Chatterton Crescent, Scunthorpe
- ✓ School Close, Epworth
- ✓ Albion grove, Epworth
- ✓ Pryme Road, Scunthorpe
- ✓ Lincoln Court, Scunthorpe
- ✓ Horsefair Paddock, Brigg
- ✓ Keelby Road, Scunthorpe
- ✓ Broadlands House, Bottesford
- ✓ Ancholme gardens, Brigg
- ✓ Wells Court, Broughton
- ✓ Day Close, Keadby
- ✓ Blackmoor Road, Haxey
- ✓ Martins Close, Goxhill
- ✓ Wold Court, wrawby