



Lancaster City Council

Housing and Property: Council Housing

Neighbourhood Management Policy

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Approved by	JW
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1. Introduction and Policy Objectives

- 1.1. This policy outlines our commitment to ensuring that neighbourhoods and communal areas are clean, safe and attractive. We aim to provide excellent services to communities, and we want your neighbourhoods to be places where current and future residents want to live. We know that the way we manage neighbourhoods directly affects the quality of life and environment enjoyed by you.
- 1.2. We will work in partnership with tenants and residents, stakeholders, and other agencies where it is effective to do so to help improve neighbourhoods. We actively encourage tenants and residents to contact us and make us aware of any issues they are experiencing.
- 1.3. We aim to put residents at the heart of their neighbourhood by encouraging meaningful customer involvement and consultation on a range of neighbourhood management activities.
- 1.4. We promote and enable tenancy sustainment and create neighbourhoods people want to live in. We do this in a range of ways, including:
 - Carrying out a Tenancy Health Check for all new tenants to identify any issues or risks of tenancy failure at the earliest possible stage
 - Providing income maximisation and affordability assessments to support tenants and residents with their finances
 - Developing Community Plans and carrying out Estate Walkabouts to identify and respond to neighbourhood specific issues
 - Supporting a range of community engagement opportunities to encourage meaningful input into the services we deliver
 - Delivering community safety services through our dedicated team

2. Scope

- 2.1. This Policy applies to:
 - General Needs rented properties
 - Independent Living Schemes
 - Leasehold properties
 - Temporary Accommodation
 - Communal Areas
 - Buildings and neighbourhoods under the management of Lancaster City Council.
 - Mellishaw Park Gypsy Romany Traveller Site

3. Links to Lancaster City Council's objectives and policy framework

- 3.1. This Policy outlines delivery of neighbourhood management services in support of the Council's agreed objectives:
 - A Sustainable District
 - An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy
 - Healthy and Happy Communities
 - A Co-operative, Kind and Responsible Council

3.2. This policy links to the following Council Housing Policies and strategies:

- Service Improvement Plan
- Tenant Voice Strategy
- Building Safety Engagement Strategy
- ASB Policy
- Hate Crime Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Noise nuisance policy
- Vulnerability policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Accessibility Policy

4. Regulation and Legislation

4.1. The Community Housing Manager will ensure this policy has regard to all legislation, regulation and best practice. This policy helps to fulfil the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing, in particular the Neighbourhood and Community Standard within the Consumer Standards.

4.2. The Council does not operate in isolation and this Policy has been written to take account of obligations imposed by national legislation and other strategies. In particular:

- Housing Acts 1985, 1988, 1996 & 2004
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001
- ASB Act 2003
- ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Mobile Homes Act 1983

5. Policy Statement

5.1. Lancaster City Council is passionate about ensuring that the neighbourhoods we manage are places where people feel safe, choose to live, and want to visit. We believe that everyone should be able to live in a well maintained, safe and clean environment which they can be proud of. The way in which we manage neighbourhoods directly affects the quality of life and environment enjoyed by tenants and their visitors.

5.2. We will work with all relevant partners, stakeholders, and organisations to ensure that the homes we are responsible for managing and the neighbourhoods in which we work, are managed and maintained to the highest standard.

- 5.3. We have clear procedures which set out how we will manage the neighbourhoods in which we work and the standard to which these will be maintained. These will be developed and regularly reviewed with our customers.

6. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- 6.1. ASB can have a significant impact in our neighbourhoods. We are committed to delivering services through a non-judgemental, balanced approach. All cases of ASB will be treated fairly, taking into account the needs of all individuals involved, including complainants, witnesses, and alleged perpetrators. LCC adopts a harm centred approach to dealing with ASB.
- 6.2. We will work with partner agencies such as the Police, other Council services, and other agencies and support services, for example Social Services, Education, Health, and Lancashire Fire Service to investigate, manage and resolve cases within neighbourhoods.
- 6.3. Please refer to our ASB Policy, Hate Crime Policy, and Domestic Abuse Policy for more details.

7. Neighbours and Building a Community

- 7.1. We support tenants and residents to build positive relationships with their neighbours and other members of the community, recognising that they are best placed to make a positive impact in their neighbourhood. Our role is to support the community to do this.
- 7.2. Where problems or disagreements occur our Community Safety and Neighbourhoods Teams encourage residents to try to resolve matters themselves. Involving us before talking to neighbours may lead to hostile feelings and make matters worse. Where neighbours are unwilling or unable to resolve matters themselves we will support them or take appropriate action when needed.
- 7.3. Resident groups or involvement in other forms of community engagement can be a very successful way to build positive communities. Full details of our approach and commitment to this can be found in the Tenant Voice Strategy.
- 7.4. For further information on community engagement or to get more involved in influencing how we deliver housing services please contact our Community Engagement team via 01524 582929, at councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk, or visit www.lancaster.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/get-involved.

8. Noise

- 8.1. Noise is a normal part of our daily lives, but excessive noise is not. It can be annoying for many people and a serious problem for some. Noise is the biggest single problem that tenants and residents report to us. Please refer to our Noise Nuisance Policy for full details of how we

handle complaints of noise nuisance.

- 8.2. A noise nuisance is noise that an average person would find unreasonable taking into account where it's coming from, how loud it is, when it's happening, and the length of time it is happening. What may be acceptable at midday may be entirely unacceptable at midnight.
- 8.3. As part of everyday living, and the fact that no home is totally soundproof, we all must expect some noise from the people living around us. Common everyday living noise includes TVs and stereos, DIY, dogs barking, intruder, or car alarms, slamming doors or simply walking around the property. There must be an unreasonable element, in the activity causing the noise, for it to be classed as noise nuisance.
- 8.4. As a landlord we will:
 - Assess and handle complaints of noise nuisance in line with our Noise Nuisance Policy, supporting tenants and residents to resolve issues amicably where possible, but taking action as appropriate.
 - Seek opportunities through the empty homes and planned maintenance programmes to mitigate known or potential noise nuisance issues through targeted maintenance measures.
 - Ensure carpets are not removed from empty homes unless they are in poor condition. They will be gifted to the incoming resident
 - Ensure that flooring is removed in empty properties when there have been reports of noise linked to the property
 - Ensure empty properties are fitted with adequate insulation from transference noise
 - Install anti-vibration mats in the washing machine space during the empty homes process where a problem has been identified.
 - Enforce the Tenancy Agreement which forbids hard surface flooring in flats above ground floor.

9. Keeping Pets

- 9.1. We will allow tenants to keep pets under certain conditions. These are detailed in the tenancy agreement. When signing up new tenants, details of pets to be kept within the property will be recorded on a Pet Owning Contract.
- 9.2. Details of pets will also be recorded during property inspections. Tenants will also be encouraged to notify us when they are keeping pets. This allows us to respond appropriately to pet owners should a problem occur.
- 9.3. Where tenants allow their pets to cause a nuisance, we will enforce the conditions of the tenancy as required. Issues that we may feel it appropriate to take action against the tenant include but not limited to;
 - Persistently not clearing dog fouling.
 - Aggressive animals
 - Pets causing damage to the property
 - Pets causing a hazard to health

9.4. Where there is an ongoing problem with a dog, we will work with the council's Animal Welfare Officers and request their assistance. In circumstances where an animal is causing ongoing breaches of tenancy, the tenant may be asked to rehome their pet, or if the problem persists we may take legal action.

10. Property, Neighbourhood and Block Inspections.

10.1. Housing Officers carry out a variety of inspections of properties, blocks, and estates. All tenants will receive two visits prior to them becoming a secure tenant. Tenancy checks are also carried out periodically during the life of the tenancy.

10.2. Tenancy checks are carried out to ensure tenants are able to manage their home and tenancy generally, and to check and action issues including (but not limited to):

- The legal tenant is living at the property
- The household composition has not altered
- Any overcrowding or under-occupation
- The tenant is happy with the quality of service they are receiving
- To ensure that tenants are complying with their tenancy agreements
- Any issues with property condition
- Whether any repairs need reporting
- Whether the household is experiencing any issues with damp, mould, condensation, or any other health and safety related maintenance issues
- Any safeguarding, vulnerability or support needs in the household
- Any debt or other financial issues where the housing team may be able to support
- To provide information on the services we provide
- To ensure best and legal use of council homes

10.3. Details of checks and visits are recorded by Officers and details saved against the tenant's file. If no concerns are raised the case will be closed. If breaches of tenancy are highlighted or safeguarding concerns raised the Housing Officer will carry out appropriate actions in line with the relevant procedure.

10.4. Neighbourhood walkabouts are completed annually on all major estates by the Housing Officers with the support of the Income Management Officer, Community Safety Officer and other officers working in Council Housing. Invitations are also sent to the local councillors, Repairs Inspectors, Public Realm, Environmental Services, the Police officer/PCSO for the area and representatives from the community centres (where applicable).

10.5. The walkabout will consider the following on the estate:

- Paving and pathways
- Communal Grounds
- Street Lighting
- Gardens
- Fences and walls

- Alleyways
- Vehicles and parking
- Garage sites
- Bin stores and rubbish chutes
- Communal stairways
- Passageways and lifts
- Security doors
- CCTV
- Play areas
- General appearance of the estate

10.6. All council housing staff and contractors have a duty of care in the course of their day-to-day work to note any repairs or items stored within a communal area or a neighbourhood, particularly those which pose a threat to health and safety and report these. Where an entire communal block is in poor condition, all residents will be contacted to discuss and remedy this.

10.7. Blocks are maintained through the Planned Maintenance program and are also inspected by the Housing Officers regularly whenever they are visiting the estates and issues identified are reported to customer services.

10.8. The communal areas of the Mainway blocks of flats are inspected daily by the Estate Steward which includes all floor levels, staircases, internal communal areas and the external curtilage of the building. Any issues found during inspections are reported to the relevant housing team for resolution. Where issues are raised in relation to cleaning these are sent to the Cleaning Supervisor who will raise the issue with the Cleaning Contractor.

10.9. All other blocks are regularly inspected by the Cleaning Supervisor and any issues identified are raised with the contractor. There are also regular contractor meetings to discuss issues and ensure compliance with the Contract terms.

11. Garden and Property Condition

11.1. Untidy and overgrown gardens can negatively impact upon the kerbside appeal of neighbourhoods and can often be an indicator to poor property condition. Following identification of this breach of tenancy appropriate support and advice will be given to the tenant to allow them to rectify the situation. If the tenant fails to do so action may be taken for the breach of tenancy.

12. Disposing of Household Waste

12.1. For those customers who have been issued with bins the following applies:

- Wheelie bins should be presented by 7.00am on your collection day
- All waste should be placed in the designated bin with the lid closed.
- Orange bags under the assisted collection scheme should be presented by 7.00am on your collection day

12.2. For more details on bin collection visit: <https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/bins-recycling>

12.3. For residents living in blocks there will be either a bin chute or communal bins for everyone to use. Correct usage and restrictions on use of these facilities should be followed.

13. Bulk Collection

13.1. Customers wishing to dispose of bulk items (such as beds, cookers, and sofas) should contact Lancaster City Council on 01524 582491. There is a charge for this service. However, council housing tenants will receive one free collection of up to 4 items each financial year 1 April – 31 March. You can also take unwanted items to the recycling centres yourself.

Recycling centres:

Salt Ayre Lane Lancaster LA1 5JS Open 7 days per week 9.00am – 5.00pm Closed Christmas day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day	Scotland Road Carnforth LA5 9RQ Open Thursday to Monday 9.00am-5.00pm Closed Christmas day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day
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14. Grounds Maintenance

14.1. The Council’s Grounds Maintenance service ensures that borders and shrub areas are looked after according to the plant species and grassed areas are cut as appropriate during the different seasons.

14.2. All work shall consequently be carried out and timed in such a way as to leave each site in a well-maintained and tidy condition. The work mainly comprises the management and maintenance of land and facilities including but not limited to:

- Grass cutting
- Shrub beds
- Hedges
- Clearance and disposal of rubbish, litter, moss, dead weeds, etc.
- Spraying of hard standing areas to remove and keep down weeds / moss

14.3. Where we identify that a tree is dead, diseased, dying, or dangerous, we will carry out work to ensure that it poses no risk to the general public or property. We aim to maintain a healthy tree population so we will not carry out work for aesthetic or light restriction reasons only. On occasions we may have to remove an established tree, but we will not do this unnecessarily.



14.4. We may inspect and undertake works to trees in tenant's gardens where they pose a possible health and safety risk or are damaging the property. Generally, the maintenance of trees in tenants' gardens is the responsibility of the tenant and this is usually specified in the tenancy agreement.

14.5. To view the grounds maintenance schedule for your area or estate visit:
www.lancaster.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/raising-repairs/estate-and-scheme-grounds-maintenance-schedule

15. Cleaning

15.1. We will ensure the communal areas of blocks are clean and safe. We also expect tenants, leaseholders, and other residents to play their part in keeping their neighbourhoods clean by disposing of unwanted items responsibly. Cleaning can be described as keeping internal and external communal areas swept, mopped and free from litter and graffiti.

15.2. Communal blocks will be cleaned either weekly or monthly depending on their location and requirements. The cleaning is undertaken by our partner contractor. The cleaning standards are applicable to the entire communal areas including stairwells, landings, deck accesses, chute areas, bin areas, entrance halls, and other areas serving the block.

16. Environmental crime, including fly tipping

16.1. We take a robust approach to environmental crime, and we will work in partnership with the Council's enforcement teams, which could include legal action against those committing such crimes on land managed by Lancaster City Council, for example fly tipping. We take such issues seriously and will ensure that these are dealt with.

16.2. We will investigate all instances of fly tipping, and in the event that we establish the identity of tenant or person responsible, a request to remove the items within a reasonable timescale will be given. In the event that the request is not adhered to, we will arrange for the removal of the items and will recharge those concerned for the whole cost of this service.

17. Graffiti removal

17.1. Graffiti impacts negatively on the aesthetic appeal and appearance of a neighbourhood. Graffiti reported or identified will be removed at the earliest opportunity, along with the reporting of criminal damage to the police where appropriate.

18. Parking

18.1. Tenants and residents should park considerately:

- Within the lines of parking bays
- Not blocking drives or dropped kerbs

- Not parking in disabled bays unless you have a disability badge
- Not parking on grassed areas

18.2. It is important to recognise that you don't have the right to park outside your home. Anyone can park on a public road if they adhere to any restrictions imposed by way of signs and markings, and it is not causing an obstruction. We will not get involved with parking disputes.

19. Abandoned Vehicles

19.1. All vehicles on communal or other land managed by the Council, aside from individual tenancies must be taxed and in a road worthy condition or registered with the DVLA as off road through the Statutory Off Road Notice (SORN). We consider any vehicle which does not meet these requirements to be causing a nuisance, and as such action will be taken to remove in accordance with our procedures.

20. Asset Management

20.1. We aim to support healthy and happy communities through planned development and investment programmes and services. We will ensure homes remain safe, fit for purpose, and are legislatively and regulatory compliant, thereby ensuring that neighbourhoods remain safe, well maintained, and attractive places to live.

20.2. We have developed processes to ensure that our contactors gain access to complete gas, electric and other safety checks along with our compliance and repairs teams. If access is not provided legal action such as applying for injunctions will be considered. The legal costs will be met by the tenant/s concerned.

21. Community Engagement and Partnership Working

21.1. We will work with and support residents, partners and other agencies and are committed to ensuring we make a positive contribution to all neighbourhoods across the Lancaster district. Partners could include Police and health colleagues; voluntary or advice organisations; mental health services; public realm colleagues; other housing providers; community centres; and more.

21.2. In all our interactions with tenants and residents:

- We will listen to the views of our residents.
- We will keep residents informed about things that matter to them.
- We will treat residents fairly and with respect.
- We will ensure we are easy for residents to deal with.
- We will ensure residents are aware of how to make to complaint.

22. How the policy will be delivered

- 22.1. This Policy sets out our overall approach to neighbourhood management. The policy is communicated to employees by a range of communications methods and is published on our website.
- 22.2. Internal procedures and performance management and monitoring is in place which supports delivery of neighbourhood management services. Delivery will be measured using existing methods including continued monitoring of:
- Satisfaction with services
 - Customer Complaints and satisfaction with resolution
 - Performance data around specific areas of service delivery

23. Training

- 23.1. Officers are supported to deliver neighbourhood management services with an ongoing programme of training and professional development. This includes both core and role-specific training and the opportunity to access professional training and qualifications. We are committed to staff development to ensure the delivery of high quality and continuously improving services.

24. Review

- 24.1. The policy will be reviewed every three years. Enquiries relating to the policy should be directed to the Community Housing Manager via the Council Housing Customer Services team at 01524 582929, or councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk.