



# Neighbourhood & Community Policy

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy outlines our approach to managing our neighbourhoods, strengthening communities and improving places. This includes (but is not limited to) the planning, monitoring, and delivery of our services in these areas. This Policy aims to deliver our strategic plan, working together with our residents to build communities where people can thrive. It shows how we meet the regulatory requirements of the [Neighbourhood & Community Standard](#).
- 1.2 'Neighbourhoods' can be a number of homes within local areas - villages, towns, and cities. They may vary in size and many other characteristics, and include some shared communal space, either internal or external. This includes blocks of flats and estates.
- 1.3 This Policy does not apply to:
- Care homes
  - Student accommodation
  - Keyworker accommodation
  - Triathlon Homes.
- 1.4 We have many homes in blocks and estates we don't directly manage. We'll use our strategic influence to work with and seek cooperation from our partners to deliver outcomes in accordance with this Policy. Relevant factors include:
- Our contractual relationship with the freeholder or managing agent
  - The size of the estate/block
  - The number of homes we own.
- 1.5 This Policy doesn't cover, as we have specific policies for these areas:
- [Anti-social behaviour](#)
  - [Domestic abuse](#)
  - [CCTV](#)
  - Garages and parking bays
  - Play area safety
  - Tree management
  - Winter gritting
  - Home improvements.

- 1.6 This Policy applies to all residents and non-residents using our communal areas (e.g. using a communal garden, parking a car on our land, or using a path we own).
- 1.7 When we use 'you' and 'your' we mean our residents. The terms 'we', 'our', and 'us' mean Southern Housing.
- 1.8 Where a tenancy agreement, licence agreement, or lease contradicts this Policy, we'll follow the relevant agreement or lease.

## **2.0 Resident responsibilities**

- 2.1 You should:

- Maintain your home, garden, and any boundaries you're responsible for, including keeping them free from rubbish
- Keep communal areas clear of personal belongings and rubbish
- Report communal repairs quickly
- Follow the parking rules in place, and park considerately and only in designated parking areas
- Not leave unroadworthy or unsuitable vehicles on our land
- Not vape or smoke in internal communal areas, or in outdoor spaces where smoking is banned
- Be considerate when smoking outside e.g. away from your neighbours and dispose of your cigarette ends responsibly
- Report incidents such as fly tipping, graffiti, and dog fouling, appropriately. This may be to the police, the local authority, or us.
- Where we've given consent for pets, be a responsible pet owner and follow the terms of your pet agreement.

## **3.0 What we do**

- 3.1 We assign every area a 'Local Link' - a colleague who has operational oversight and responsibility to:
  - Coordinate our services for the block, estate, neighbourhood, or area
  - Act as a contact for local resident groups, councillors, and other community partners
  - Oversee:
    - environmental standards
    - communal repairs and major works planned
    - local budgets and service charges
    - neighbourhood issues.
- 3.2 Each area's Local Link (usually an Area Housing Manager, Team Manager, or Property Manager) is responsible for pulling together resources from other departments such as Estate Care, Responsive Repairs, and Fire Safety, ensuring we:
  - Conduct inspections of our neighbourhoods

- Conduct internal and external inspections of our blocks of flats including bicycle stores and bin areas
- Conduct fire risk assessments in our blocks of flats
- Cut communal grassed areas, shrubbery, and hedges, and maintain flowerbeds
- Maintain areas of hardstanding, including our paths and parking areas
- Work with local police, other services, and partner agencies to help keep our neighbourhoods free from ASB, litter, fly-tipping, and abandoned vehicles
- Check and maintain shared facilities
- Manage our contractors
- Take appropriate actions following inspections
- Support residents who have suggestions for improving their area.

3.3 You'll continue to get in touch and report issues to us via our central contact centre; details are on our website at [www.southernhousing.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.southernhousing.org.uk/contact-us).

#### **4.0 Neighbourhood inspections**

4.1 We regularly inspect our neighbourhoods to:

- Monitor our cleaning and grounds maintenance services
- Identify and deal with health and safety and fire risks.

4.2 How often we'll inspect an area will depend on a variety of factors, including (but not limited to):

- The number of homes in the area
- The number of services we monitor
- In response to concerns raised.

#### **5.0 Selected neighbourhoods**

5.1 Selected neighbourhoods are those where we and/or you have seen the need to improve an area.

5.2 We'll work with you to identify selected neighbourhoods. We'll also look at:

- Information we gather from our inspections
- Complaints
- Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) surveys
- High volumes of repairs
- Reports of anti-social behaviour.

5.3 Once we've identified a selected neighbourhood, we'll co-create action plans with you and other stakeholders to identify and tackle the needs. We'll prioritise and invest additional resources in these neighbourhoods.

5.4 In line with [Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985](#) as amended by [Section 151 of the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002](#), we'll consult with all residents before we begin any works that will cost any individual household more

than £250. If we're proposing more than one set of works that will cost any household more than £250, we'll consult you for each distinct set of works.

- 5.5 On neighbourhoods managed by multiple landlords (known as consortia estates), we'll seek to obtain an agreement setting out the responsibilities of each landlord. We'll discuss any proposed improvements with the other landlords to help us reach agreement with them and all the residents affected before we begin. The costs of improvements may be divided between landlords, in accordance with any consortia management agreements.
- 5.6 We'll draw together resources from inside and outside our business to develop and deliver improvements in line with our [Social Impact Statement](#).

## 6.0 Communal areas

- 6.1 We maintain unadopted roads<sup>1</sup> on our land.
- 6.2 For the safety of all residents, and visitors, you must not leave or charge **any** items in communal areas or escape routes. This includes (but is not limited to) mobility vehicles, bicycles/scooters (including electric powered), and pushchairs.

Our approach may differ in some of our Independent Living schemes.

- 6.2.1 Residents using electric bicycles (e-bikes) and mobility vehicles must store them in a cool, safe place away from flammable materials.
- 6.2.2 We understand options for mobility scooter storage are limited. Where you're not able to store or charge your scooter inside your property, we'll help you to consider other options.
- 6.2.3 Residents using e-bikes in external communal spaces must do so responsibly, safely, and in line with the law.
- 6.3 We'll remove any items we find in indoor and outdoor communal areas.
- 6.4 We'll only give permission for you to alter or improve an external communal area (such as a garden) in exceptional circumstances. You must gain our permission before making any improvements to a communal area.

We won't give permission for improvements to any internal communal areas (such as lobby areas within a block of flats).

## 7.0 Protecting the environment

- 7.1 We hold SHIFT<sup>2</sup> Gold status and ensure we adopt sustainable practices, underpinned by our policies.

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<sup>1</sup> Roads that aren't maintained by a highway authority under the [Highways Act 1980](#)

<sup>2</sup> SHIFT measures and benchmarks the sustainability of social housing providers

- 7.2 We work with local authorities to ensure neighbourhoods have the appropriate refuse and recycling facilities, with suitable access for refuse vehicles to service these facilities.
- 7.3 We'll work with other agencies to tackle fly-tipping. We'll take enforcement action when we're able to, and when it's proportionate. We'll also use our partnerships with local authorities to recharge any offenders where we can.
- 7.4 Where open spaces and grass verges are present in our neighbourhoods, we'll seek to manage these in an environmentally responsible manner. We'll aim to preserve biodiversity and maintain green areas for the community to use.
- 7.5 Where we have ponds and watercourses in our neighbourhoods, we'll aim to keep them pollution-free to maintain the biodiversity of waterborne species where this falls under our responsibility. We may remove ponds if they pose a health and safety risk.
- 7.6 To promote sustainable travel and reduce carbon, we'll seek to provide communal facilities for secure cycle storage and electric vehicle charging for new homes, where appropriate.
- 7.7 In external communal areas, we'll seek to install low-energy lighting through an energy improvement programme.

## **8.0 Vehicles and parking**

- 8.1 Vehicles parked on our communal land must be taxed, insured, and roadworthy. We only allow vehicles with a Statutory Off-Road Notification (SORN) on a driveway attached to a home or a parking bay allocated to a specific home, provided it's not a nuisance vehicle.
- 8.2 We'll take action to remove abandoned, untaxed, and/or unroadworthy vehicles from our land.
  - 8.2.1 Initially, we'll try to locate the owner and work with them to remove, or tax and insure the vehicle.
  - 8.2.2 If the owner doesn't engage with us, we'll arrange for our external contractor to remove the vehicle and we'll recharge the owner the cost of removal. Vehicles may be sold or destroyed after removal.
  - 8.2.3 Removal of vehicles will be subject to compliance with all applicable legal requirements, including service of notice and confirmation of abandonment.
- 8.3 We may appoint a company to operate a parking system to ensure effective management of parking. We'll usually consult with residents in areas we're considering this and will only do so where there are specific issues.
  - 8.3.1 The parking contractor is responsible for dealing with all queries about fines and notices. You should contact them directly with any queries.

- 8.4 You must ensure you, members of your household, and your visitors:
- Park vehicles in the parking areas only
  - Follow the parking scheme rules displayed (where a parking system is in operation) including parking in your allocated bay
  - Do not park where vehicles could block emergency access or exit points, or where they could cause inconvenience, nuisance, or a potential danger.
- 8.5 You must ask us for permission to park (or allow members of your household to park) the following types of vehicles on access roads, car parks, landscaped areas, your driveway, or garden:
- Business or trade vehicles
  - Trailers
  - Caravans
  - Motor homes
  - Boats
  - Other inappropriate vehicles.
- 8.6 If you're a tenant you must not sell, rent, or give away any parking space or garage we provide for you.

## 9.0 Review

- 9.1 We'll review this Policy within two years from the date of approval, or sooner to address legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues.

<b>Policy controls</b>
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