



# Estate Management Policy

## 1.0 Purpose and scope

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This policy sets out the Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) approach to estate management and the associated services provided to our residents. This policy also covers our approach to health and safety within common parts.

This policy applies to estates within General Needs, Care & Support and Home Ownership.

This policy does not apply to areas for which the provision of services does not fall within NHG's remit.

## 2.0 Definitions

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**Common parts** – all parts of the property or estate which are not exclusively demised to any resident and which are designated by the landlord as available for use in common by the residents of the building, the landlord and those properly authorised or permitted by them to do so. These areas include, but are not limited to, hallways, stairways, landings, communal lounges, communal toilets, electrical cupboards, riser cupboards, communal front door entrances, communal car parks, playgrounds, pathways and communal gardens. It does not include any areas that are part of a resident's flat or house.

**Estate** – An area in which NHG is responsible for providing services related to the maintenance and upkeep of common parts. These include mixed tenure developments, sheltered and support services where we have a housing management responsibility.

**Estate Action Plans** - Local Officers are encouraged to produce action plans for estates they manage. The Action Plan should seek to address simple problems or concerns on an estate/sheltered scheme both physical and social, e.g. groups loitering. These issues could include those that are causing nuisance to either NHG or the residents. They should provide realistic solutions in a short to medium time frame, whilst also capturing longer term plans (which may include the involvement of outside agencies/bodies).

**Local Officer** – The member of staff directly responsible for managing patches of properties that may include several estates or schemes. Typically, this will be a Housing Officer, Property Management Officer or Supported Housing Officer.

**Resident Monitor** – An informal role in which a resident has expressed an interest in the management of cleaning and grounds services to their estate or scheme. They will report any issues with contractor performance to NHG and may occasionally take part in estate inspections with Local Officers.

## **3.0 Estate Services**

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NHG is responsible for ensuring that cleaning and grounds maintenance are undertaken regularly to common parts in accordance with agreed levels for that scheme, estate or block.

Where services are provided, we ensure the common parts are inspected, kept clean, safe and secure and are regularly maintained and promptly repaired.

### **3.1 Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance**

We employ several different cleaning and grounds contractors across our portfolio. To ensure a consistent service across all NHG estates, we monitor the contracts, ensuring that individual contract specifications include as a minimum:

- Cleaning of all common parts
- Hard surface maintenance
- Grass cutting
- Weeding
- Removal of litter
- Plant and shrub maintenance
- Leaf clearance.

### **3.2 Inspections**

#### **General Needs and Care & Support**

Where services are contracted, we carry out inspections on a regular basis to ensure cleaning and grounds maintenance standards. We will aim to carry out inspections within a reasonable time after cleaning or gardening has taken place.

#### **Home Ownership**

We seek to carry out inspections as soon as practically possible after cleaning has been carried out.

### **3.3 Contractor Performance Complaints**

#### **General Needs and Care & Support**

Where an issue is raised which is the result of neglect by the responsible contractor, for example lack of cleanliness or dissatisfactory care of gardens, we will raise the matter with the responsible contractor and request they correct the failing within a specified period.

We will work proactively with residents and contractors to resolve issues and concerns as quickly as possible and will monitor progress to ensure that the issue is resolved. If a resident makes a request for the issue to be escalated as a formal complaint, NHG will fully support their right to do this.

Where there are major concerns or frequently raised issues, we will serve penalties upon the contractor in accordance with measures stated in the contract document. If necessary, we will take further action against non-performing contractors in accordance with the contract document.

### **3.4 Service Charges**

The costs of estate services are usually recovered through a service charge which is paid by the residents.

## **4.0 Neighbourhood and Community Involvement**

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We recognise the important contribution residents can make by providing scrutiny and feedback on our services. This is particularly true when considering estates and effective resident engagement should form key part of their management.

Due to the unique nature of estates, compared to individual or street properties, there are substantial opportunities for the empowerment of residents to have a tangible impact on their neighbourhoods. In order to achieve this, we will employ the following means:

- Supporting the creation and continued engagement of Resident Associations
- Create and implement Estate Action Plans
- Appoint Resident Monitors
- Carry out joint inspections with our residents
- Help organise community events e.g. street parties.

### **4.1 Estate Improvements**

Each financial year, General Needs allocates a specific amount of money to spend regionally for works aimed at improving estates.

We will work with residents and, subject to appropriate consultation with other stakeholders, consider and propose improvements to their estates as part of Estates Action Planning. Additionally, residents are also able to propose their own improvements separately.

Purely Home Ownership schemes are not eligible for Estate Improvements.

### **4.2 Resident Monitors**

We will work closely with Resident Monitors to encourage full involvement in the estate inspection process. Resident Monitors are ideally placed to monitor the quality and frequency of contractor services. This feedback is vital in ensuring good value for money for cleaning and gardening services and helps to raise standards and enhance environments across all sites.

We encourage Resident Monitors to submit monthly inspections to feedback satisfaction ratings on both cleaning and gardening services.

We invite Resident Monitors to participate in the quarterly Resident Monitor meetings and all will receive a copy of the Resident Monitor Newsletter each quarter.

We invite Resident Monitors to submit a bid for minor improvement works to their estate each year. Progress on these bids should be recorded on the Estates Action Plan.

We encourage residents to take an active role in contract monitoring. This forms part of our commitment to meaningful resident involvement.

## 5.0 Partnership Working

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In some instances, e.g. refuse collections and illegal parking on highways, we may not be directly responsible, or able, to resolve some of the issues occurring on our estates. Where this is the case we work closely with the relevant authorities or organisations that can assist.

Any criminal activity should be reported to the police or dealt with as detailed in the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure.

## 6.0 Common Parts and Equipment

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Either as part of their tenancy agreements, lease agreements, or estate agreements, residents are required to keep common parts of the property:

- Clean and tidy
- Free from obstruction
- Not used for personal storage or business purposes.

The exception being at some sheltered and extra care schemes where 'managed use' applies.

A list of items provided by NHG should be kept on file for insurance, maintenance and fire safety purposes. Any items found in the common parts not on this list will be dealt with in line with the 'Communal areas storage policy'.

Further to these conditions, the health and safety of all occupants is a priority of estate management. In line with the relevant agreements, residents are not allowed to undertake any actions in their property or in common parts which may cause nuisance or harm to other residents. In the event of residents falling short of meeting their safety obligations, we will issue a contravention notice.

In both General Needs and Care & Support estates residents must first seek our permission if they wish to use common parts for personal purposes, e.g., garden parties.

### 6.1 Playgrounds and play equipment

Where we own play equipment on estates, we ensure that it is safe to use, properly inspected and fit for purpose.

We will ensure that our contractors carry out regular weekly inspections of the play equipment and areas. An annual full safety inspection of all areas and equipment will be carried out by an independent play area specialist (ROSPA) and all faults rated mid-range medium to high risk will be reported for repair upon receipt of the report.

Where this is part of our contract with a grounds contractor, we will expect them to perform assessments to this standard.

### 6.2 Specialised equipment

Several NHG estates have specialised equipment for communal use. All staff and contractors visiting these areas have a duty to report any obvious risks or repairs immediately.

Examples of specialised equipment are as follows:

- Communal bathrooms with hoists
- Hairdressing facilities and their equipment
- Lifts and door entry systems.

## 7.0 Health and safety

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We have due regard to Health and Safety considerations. We are responsible for ensuring there are no Health and Safety risks to residents and visitors to our estates.

Health and Safety risks may include:

- Spills or floors left wet after cleaning (or other slip hazards)
- Lack of cleanliness
- Items blocking of access routes and fire exit routes
- Bulk refuse
- Outstanding repairs and maintenance
- Abandoned vehicles
- Playgrounds and play equipment
- Lighting issues
- Fire compartmentation and other fire associated risks
- Any trip hazards.

## 8.0 Our approach

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In writing this policy we have carried out assessments to ensure that we are considering:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Privacy & Data Protection

We also carry out consultation with our staff, customers and the wider community. If you'd like more information about this work, please get in touch as [policy@nhg.org.uk](mailto:policy@nhg.org.uk)

## 9.0 Reference

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List key legislation, regulation or external links

- Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Occupiers Liability Act 1957
- Regulatory Standard for Social Housing in England from April 2012 – Neighbourhood & Community Standard
- Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977
- Building Safety Act 2022

### Document control

Author	Iona McHugh, Policy Officer
Approval date	20/05/2020
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Approved by	Policy Group
Policy owner	Estate Service Manager
Accountable Director	Director of Housing, Director of Leasehold, Assistant Director Extra Care Housing, Head of Supported Housing

### Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version
20 May 2020	New policy	1.0
22 June 2023	Updated the policy to align with the Building Safety Act 2022 in relation to contravention notices.	1.1