



## **Estate and Neighbourhood Management Policy**

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### **Policy Statement**

SYHA works with customers to deliver homes, services and neighbourhoods our local communities want.

Having a clean, safe and well-maintained environment in which to live is important to our customers and we recognise that the appearance of an estate or group of homes enhances well-being and a positive environment in which to live.

We aim to make our homes and surrounding areas as attractive and well maintained as possible. This Policy outlines the services we will provide as well as the roles and responsibilities of residents in helping us to achieve these goals together.

### **Regulation and legislation**

Regulatory Social Housing (Regulation) Act: Consumer Standard.

- The Safety and Quality Standard requires landlords to provide safe and good quality homes and landlord services to tenants.
- The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard – requires landlords to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints when necessary, influence decision-making and hold their landlord to account.

- The Neighbourhood and Community Standard – requires landlords to engage with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes.
- The Health & Safety Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) requires landlords to carry out fire risk assessments in the common areas of HMOs, flats, maisonettes and sheltered accommodation.

## **Scope**

This Policy applies to all SYHA estates and communal areas.

Communal landscaping is maintained by SYHA, however individual gardens (including pre-existing trees, shrubs or hedges) are required to be maintained by tenants. Additional help is available to vulnerable customers who are unable to do this, and will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

We define **Estates** as localities where SYHA own and manage a significant number of properties and can have the maximum impact e.g Auckley.

We define external **Communal Areas** as areas of land adjacent to our properties including walkways, parking bays and shared grounds. Internal communal areas include hallways, landings and stairwells and internal storages in blocks of flats, and which are for the shared use of our customers.

**Neighbourhoods** are the immediate surroundings where our customers live, where SYHA may have less control over the external environment.

## **Objectives**

The key objectives of this Policy is to:

- play a key role in keeping our Estates and Communal Areas clean, safe and well maintained and attractive places to live;
- work in partnership with our customers, other providers and public bodies, where it is effective to do so.
- set out clear Service Standards for the maintenance of communal areas.
- enforce our Tenancy Agreement rights in order to manage the land and buildings we own.
- respond promptly to all reports of problems on our Estates and Communal Areas
- work in partnership with other agencies such as Highways and Environmental Health
- involve our customers in the management of our Estates and Communal Areas
- fully comply with all relevant health & safety legislation.

## **Service Standards**

We will publicise the relevant Service Standards covering estates services. We will publicise the Service Standards covering grounds maintenance and cleaning.

## **Estate and communal area inspections**

We will carry out estate inspections and walkabouts at a frequency which is appropriate to each individual Estate, communal area or Neighbourhood where customers pay a service charge. During the inspection we will log any issues of concern and order any necessary remedial works required.

We will publicise the frequency of our estate inspection programme each year and encourage residents to be involved.

Estate Management Officers (EMO) will formally inspect all estates and communal areas in line with service charge schedules. Frequency will be determined locally, but the majority will be quarterly or six monthly with the aim of:

- monitoring our estate service contracts (grounds maintenance).
- Identifying and reporting repairs to SYHA property services, or other external agencies
- being proactive with enforcement of the terms of our tenancy agreements
- being a visible presence
- identifying projects for our Neighbourhood Improvement Budget
- Involve customers with Estate Inspections (e.g neighbourhood enhancements/scheduled communal works)
- Check for any health & safety issues that we need to address

Our Neighbourhood Officers will also use their regular visits to our customers and Estates/Neighbourhoods to identify issues and problems.

Where applicable an annual Fire Risk Assessment will be carried out by a specialist assessor and a summary of the outcome provided to residents.

## **Communal Cleaning**

We will provide an efficient and cost effective cleaning service to all our designated internal Communal Areas. We will regularly clean our communal hallways, entrance areas to flats, stairs and landings to make sure that all surfaces are clean and free from dirt, dust and grime.

## **Spills and environmental hazards**

We will aim to respond to any emergency in our Communal Areas (for example if a hazardous substance is spilt on an internal hallway making it slippery) within **48**

**hours** of receiving a report. We will respond to all other non-urgent enquiries and reports within 5 working days of receiving them.

### **Communal Grounds Maintenance**

We will provide an efficient and cost effective Grounds Maintenance service to all of our communal grounds. Contractors will maintain our communal areas of grass and shrubbery throughout the year. Tenants and residents will normally pay for this via a service charge.

We will weed and collect litter before scheduled work is undertaken. It is anticipated during the growing season (April to October) a minimum of **fortnightly** grass cuts will be achieved. We will maintain all shrub beds and hedges on communal land and cut back **twice a year**. All waste will be removed from site.

Where there will be work to more than one tree on an Estate and when considered necessary, we will consult with all residents affected. This will be an opportunity to have your say and for SYHA to explain the rationale that sits behind any proposed works.

### **Trees**

Trees on our communal land will be surveyed as part of our routine inspections. We will also aim to inspect any tree which is considered dangerous within **1 working day**.

We will arrange for remedial works to any trees that are identified as **dangerous, dying or diseased** or where there is a danger to human life or causing structural damage. We will inform any residents affected by the decision to remove a tree.

We will aim to ensure that any works needed to those trees identified as a danger is completed within the contractor surveyors timescales. Non-urgent works will be prioritised from estate inspections and programmed surveys.

Trees growing within customers individual gardens are their responsibility to maintain. If a customer informs SYHA that a tree in their garden is dead, dying or dangerous, we will initiate an inspection to decipher if works need to be carried out. If works are required, SYHA will discuss options with the customer and if necessary contractors will be instructed to carry out the works which may then be recharged to the customer. If the customer has a vulnerability that prevents them from maintaining their garden we will consider carrying out any tree works where the tree is determined to fit the above criteria. We will look at these on a case by case basis and we may recharge for these works.

The following tree works are not completed by SYHA because they are deemed unnecessary work that would otherwise be detrimental to the tree itself;

- Trees blocking natural light (unless there is structural damage)
- Leaves falling from trees
- Bird droppings
- Falling Fruit, berries and nuts
- Satellite, television and other communications reception blocked by trees.

All bat species and birds at nest are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes disturbance of either class of species an offence. Bats and nesting birds often use trees for nesting or roosting. We have a duty to abide by this legislation.

### **Roads and Paths**

We will keep any roads or paths which are our responsibility (i.e. not adopted) clean and tidy.

On estates which have a large number of trees and produce a lot of leaf-fall; this is regarded as a natural occurrence and not something we can control or seek to keep pathways free from at all times.

Trip hazards will be identified and reported as part of the regular Estate Inspections and site visits. We will report any problems on roads or paths owned and maintained by the Local Authority (Adopted) to the relevant Highways Section.

### **Gritting of pathways and communal walkways**

In poor weather conditions we will make efforts to grit communal paths and walkways on our land in particular in areas where we are aware there may be elderly people or customers with mobility issues concentrated in that area.

### **Illegal Dumping of Rubbish**

We will work with Local Authorities to investigate all incidents of illegal dumping of bulky items and look to remove them within **5 working days**. If there is a significant risk to health and safety of residents, we will aim to remove the rubbish within **48 Hours** of it being reported.

If we are able to identify the perpetrator of any fly tipping we will work with the Local Authority to fine or prosecute the perpetrator. In cases where we are unable to identify the perpetrator of any fly tipping, the cost of removing illegally dumped items will be included in the service charge of every resident entitled to use the area. We will work in partnership with Local Authorities to address issues of misuse of recycling areas on our land.

## **Vandalism**

We will investigate all reports of vandalism to our Communal Areas. We will aim to remove graffiti within **5 working days** following it being reported / identified. If any graffiti is of a sexual, racial or offensive nature we will aim to remove it within **1 working day**.

We will take a positive approach to working with other agencies and groups to try to identify perpetrators who vandalise our Communal Areas; we will take appropriate action against all identified perpetrators. Where possible we will also recharge perpetrators for the full cost of any works we have to carry out to make good any damage caused.

## **Neighbourhood Improvement Budget (NIB)**

The NIB can provide funding for improvements to our estates that benefit as many of our residents as possible. Projects can be identified by anyone living in the Community. Ideas can be developed through working with staff. We will encourage our residents to make requests for improvements Via our enquiries inbox.

## **Parking**

To make sure our Estates look the best they can we will remind our residents to:

- Park considerately in parking and garage areas on our estates.
- Not run any car repair or sales business from our parking areas, garage areas or green areas on our estates
- Where customers have a dedicated parking space this will be their allocated parking space and they will be expected to park in this spot.

## **Pets**

To make sure our estates are clean and tidy and safe places to be, we will remind our customers to:

- Keep their pets under control and dogs kept on leads at all times in communal areas.
- Not allow their pets to foul in or damage any communal areas.

## **CCTV including communal spaces**

You are permitted to use CCTV or video doorbells to keep yourself and your property safe from crime or antisocial behaviour.

If you are installing CCTV around your home then SYHA will need to give you permission to do this, however you don't need to ask our permission to put a video doorbell camera up.

It is important to consider other people's privacy when installing CCTV or a video doorbell. Think about:

- Where you can position the CCTV to minimise intrusion on others
- Will the range of the camera include other neighbours' gardens or pavements.
- If it does, consider using systems that have privacy filters or change the range and scope of the cameras so it only looks over what it needs to.

Ensure that you are really clear to those around you when installing your CCTV system. You can do this by:

- informing your neighbour(s) about your system
- putting up a notice informing people that recording is taking place
- make sure that the information is not used for any other purpose than protecting your property
- be aware of individuals' data protection rights and make sure you take steps to allow the people you record to exercise these rights (for example, you will need to respond appropriately to any subject access requests you receive from the people you record).

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) regulates and enforces the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

If your CCTV system or doorbell captures images of people outside the boundary of your private domestic property – for example, from neighbours' homes or gardens, shared spaces such as corridors, or from public areas – then the GDPR and the DPA will apply to you.

You will need to ensure your use of CCTV complies with these laws. If you do not, you may be subject to appropriate regulatory action by the ICO. You must be aware of your responsibilities around the sharing of information. If you require more detail on this you can find this at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

SYHA will direct our customers towards the ICO where we feel there are GDPR/DPA breaches.

We will only take action where people are using their CCTV to **intentionally** harass and intimidate others and this will be investigated under our ASB and Harassment Policy. Examples of this would include someone saying things such as 'I was watching you on my cameras last night' or they are posting images in public forums from their CCTV. You should also report this to the police. We want everyone to feel safe in their homes without fear of harassment or intimidation.

[Guidance on the use of domestic CCTV - GOV.UK](#)

### **Residents' Responsibilities**

We will encourage our residents to help keep our Estates and Communal Areas clean and well maintained by reminding them of their responsibilities, and where necessary take action to enforce the terms of tenancy/lease agreements.

We will remind residents that in our general needs flats with communal areas that we have a zero tolerance approach to storing items in communal areas. This minimises the risk of fire and enables quick and easy access for customers to escape in the event of a fire. It also helps to ensure that the fire service can access the building unhindered by obstructions. Residents will have **14 days** to remove items or SYHA will remove. We will store high value items for 3 months.

We also ask:

- All internal communal areas are kept clean and tidy.
- Not to dump, or allow to be dumped, items of rubbish, which could include general household rubbish, furniture, white goods or any other such items in communal areas.
- Do not wedge open any internal doors or communal entrance doors

### **Management Companies**

On some estates and blocks external management companies are responsible for cleaning and maintenance of the communal areas. If this is the case you will see this on your service charge statement, as management company costs. We will monitor the performance of these management companies on your behalf.