

## Estate Services Policy

<b>1.</b>	<b>Policy objective</b>
1.1	Watford Community Housing (“WCH”) works with tenants to deliver the homes, services and neighbourhoods we, and our local communities, want. Having a clean, safe and well maintained environment in which to live is clearly important to our tenants 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 therefore aim to make our homes and surrounding areas as attractive and well maintained as possible.
1.2	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. The service will be delivered in accordance with the WCH Service Standards.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Legislative &amp; Regulatory requirements</b>
2.1	<p><b>Regulatory</b></p> <p>Regulator of Social Housing Regulatory Framework:</p> <p>(i) Neighbourhood and Community Standard (<u>April 2012</u>) – specific expectations 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered providers shall keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so.</li> <li>• Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties.</li> <li>• Registered providers shall consult with tenants in developing a published policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes. This applies where the registered provider has a responsibility (either exclusively or in part) for the condition of that neighbourhood. The Policy shall include any communal areas associated with the registered provider’s homes.</li> <li>• Registered providers, having taken account of their presence and impact within the areas where they own properties, shall:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identify and publish the roles they are able to play within the areas where they have properties;</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

2.2	<p>b) co-operate with local partnership arrangements and strategic housing functions of local authorities where they are able to assist them in achieving their objectives.</p> <p>(ii) Home Standard (April 2012) – 1.2(b):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered providers shall meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes (see section 2.2 below),</li> </ul> <p><b>Legislative</b></p> <p>The Health &amp; 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.</p>
<b>3. Scope and definitions</b>	
3.1.	WCH as a social landlord must provide good quality housing services for residents and prospective residents.
3.2	While the appearance of individual homes can enhance or detract from the general environment, repairs, property standards and planned maintenance are covered under WCH's separate Responsive Repairs, Property Standards and Planned Works policies and procedures.
3.3	Under their Tenancy Agreement tenants are required to maintain their gardens and ensure there are no obstructions in communal areas. Communal gardens are maintained by WCH, however gardens (including pre-existing trees, shrubs, hedges or furniture) are required to be maintained by tenants. Additional help is available to vulnerable tenants who are unable to do this under the Vulnerable Tenants Policy.
3.4	We define <b>Estates</b> as localities where we own and manage a significant number of properties.
3.5	We define <b>Communal Areas</b> as areas of land (pavements, parking bays, grounds, etc.) or internal hallways, landings and stairwells, bin stores, etc. in blocks of flats, owned or managed by WCH and which are for the shared use of our tenants.
3.6	<b>Neighbourhoods</b> are the immediate surroundings and environment of the area where our tenants live.
<b>4. Policy statement</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
4.1.1	<p>The key objectives of this Policy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>play a key role in keeping our Estates and Communal Areas clean, safe and well maintained and attractive places to live;</li> <li>work in partnership with our tenants and other providers and public bodies, where it is effective to do so;</li> <li>set out clear Service Standards for the maintenance of Estates and Communal Areas;</li> <li>acknowledge that our tenants have a right to their chosen lifestyle providing this doesn't breach their Tenancy Agreement or negatively impact the quality of life of other residents or the local environment;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enforce our Tenancy Agreement rights in order to manage the land we own;</li> <li>• respond promptly to all reports of problems on our Estates and Communal Areas (see paras 4.2 - 4.11 for details of Service Standards);</li> <li>• work in partnership with other agencies such as Highways, Environmental Health and the Police to help maintain our Communal Areas;</li> <li>• involve our residents in the management of our Estates and Communal Areas where appropriate and effective to do so and treat all residents in a fair and non-discriminatory way, in accordance with our Equality and Diversity Policy; and</li> <li>• fully comply with all relevant health &amp; safety legislation.</li> </ul>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Service Standards</b>
4.2.1	We will publicise on the block notice boards the relevant Service Standard covering block cleaning.
4.2.2	We will publicise the Service Standards covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grounds maintenance</li> <li>• communal repairs</li> <li>• abandoned vehicles</li> <li>• estate inspections</li> </ul>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Response times</b>
4.3.1	We will aim to respond to any emergency in our Communal Areas (for example if a substance is spilt on an internal hallway making it slippery) within <b>two working hours</b> of receiving a report.
4.3.2	We will respond to all other non-urgent enquiries and reports of problems on our Estates and Communal Areas within <b>5 working days</b> of receiving them.
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Estate Inspections</b>
4.4.1	We will publicise the quarterly estate inspection programme each year and encourage residents to be involved. We will provide feedback to our residents following each inspection with updates placed on our website.
4.4.2	Neighbourhood Officers will visit and formally inspect all estates and external communal areas at least every 3 months to review the quality and standard of the estate. We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor our estate service contracts (grounds maintenance)</li> <li>• Report repairs to the Gateway Repairs Team, or other external agencies</li> <li>• Be proactive with enforcement of the terms of our Tenancy Agreements</li> <li>• Improve residents' access to our staff and visibly be present on estates</li> <li>• Identify projects for our estate improvement/better communities schemes</li> <li>• Invite residents to Estate Inspections and encourage attendees to become resident inspectors through additional training</li> <li>• Encourage partnership working</li> <li>• Check for any health &amp; safety issues that we need to address</li> </ul>
4.4.3	(Note – our staff will also use their regular visits to our residents and estates to

	identify issues and problems).
4.4.4	We will carry out Fire Risk Assessment checks of communal areas as part of our formal bi-monthly inspections; an annual Fire Risk Assessment will be carried out by a specialist contractor. See also the Fire Safety Policy and Procedure.
4.4.5	Where household items are being stored in internal communal areas during Fire Risk Assessments, we will serve notices on residents giving them 5 working days to remove the risks.
4.4.6	If these items are high-risk health and safety concerns, we aim to remove these items from the block within 24 hours.
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Communal Cleaning and Caretaking</b>
4.5.1	We will provide an efficient and cost effective cleaning service to all our designated internal Communal Areas.
4.5.2	We will provide an efficient and cost-effective mobile caretaking service through our Mobile Estates Officers to all our designated internal and external Communal Areas on larger estates. This service includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Litter picking</li> <li>• Reporting fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles and repairs to Communal Areas &amp; arranging their removal</li> <li>• Health and Safety checks, including landing checks</li> <li>• Bin area maintenance</li> <li>• Monitoring of estate service contracts</li> <li>• Minor repairs and communal lighting</li> </ul>
4.5.3	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. The Service Standards for this are part of the relevant service contract and are published in the block notice boards.
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Communal Grounds Maintenance</b>
4.6.1	We will provide an efficient and cost effective Grounds Maintenance service to all of our communal grounds areas.
4.6.2	Our contractors will cut grass up to <b>15 times</b> a year to an agreed standard, maintain flower beds and other shrub areas, weed our Communal Areas and collect litter accordingly. Our contractors will maintain all shrub beds and hedges on communal land 3 times a year. The Service Standards for this are part of the relevant service contract and are published on our website.
4.6.3	<b>Trees</b>  Trees on our land will be surveyed at least every five <b>years</b> (and more frequently as part of routine inspections of our Estates). We will arrange for remedial works to any trees that are identified as dangerous or causing structural damage. We will aim to ensure that any works needed to those trees identified as a danger is completed within <b>14 days</b> . Non-urgent works will be prioritised from estate inspections and programmed surveys.

4.6.4	Trees growing within tenants' individual gardens are their responsibility to maintain. If a tenant informs WCH that a tree in their garden is dead, dying, dangerous, or potentially causing structural damage, we will initiate an inspection to assess if works need to be carried out. If works are required, WCH will organise contractors to carry out the necessary works which can then be recharged to the tenant.
<b>4.7</b>	<b>Playgrounds</b>
4.7.1	We will carry out ROSPA (Royal Society of the Prevention of Accidents) checks and inspections of equipment in our playgrounds on a <b>fortnightly basis</b> . We will address any maintenance and safety issue identified in a timely manner. If during the inspection failings are identified i.e. removing a faulty swing in an open play area, the playground would be locked and taken out of service. As part of this service the area is litter picked, swept where necessary and bins emptied on a weekly basis.
<b>4.8</b>	<b>Roads and Paths</b>
4.8.1	We will keep any roads or paths which are our responsibility (i.e. not adopted) clean and tidy, free from weeds and well- maintained. Our Estates have a large number of trees which produce at 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.
4.8.2	Trip hazards will be identified and reported as part of the regular Estate Inspections and site visits.
4.8.3	We will report any problems on roads or paths owned and maintained by the Local Authority (adopted) to the relevant Highways Section.
4.8.4	We will work in partnership with Local Authorities to address issues with recycling areas located on our land.
<b>4.9</b>	<b>Abandoned Vehicles</b>
4.9.1	We will respond to a report of an abandoned vehicle on WCH owned land within <b>5 working days</b> . Watford Borough Council's Enforcement Officer will organise an investigation into the reported abandoned vehicle. Tenants are able to report directly to Watford Borough Council at <a href="mailto:enquiries@watford.gov.uk">enquiries@watford.gov.uk</a> .
4.9.2	We will inspect Estates and Communal Areas for abandoned vehicles at least every <b>three months</b> during Estate inspections (although these are usually identified sooner through routine regular inspections).
4.9.3	We are unable to control the time taken to remove vehicles but we will work with Local Authorities to check ownership and arrange for the removal of abandoned vehicles as quickly as possible.
<b>4.10</b>	<b>Illegal Dumping of Rubbish</b>
4.10.1	We will work with Local Authorities to investigate all incidents of illegal dumping of bulky items and remove them within <b>7 working days</b> . If there is a significant risk to health and safety of residents, we will remove the rubbish within <b>24 hours</b> of it being reported.
4.10.2	We will publish a list of Local Authority and other useful phone numbers for

	residents to use in dealing with rubbish collection and other matters on the Estate
4.10.3	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.
4.10.4	We will work in partnership with Local Authorities to address issues of misuse of recycling areas on our land.
4.11	<b>Vandalism</b>
4.11.1	We will investigate all reports of vandalism to our Communal Areas.
4.11.2	We will take a positive approach to working with other agencies and groups to discourage acts of vandalism.
4.11..3	We will aim to remove graffiti within <b>7 working days</b> following it being reported / identified. If any such graffiti is of a sexual, racial or offensive nature we will remove it within 1 working day and report it to the police as appropriate.
4.11..4	We will take a positive approach to working with other agencies and groups to try to identify perpetrators who vandalise our Communal Areas or other WCH property; 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.
4.12	<b>Estate Improvements</b>
4.12.1	We will have schemes that can provide funding for improvements within our Local Community Areas that benefit as many of our residents as possible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical enhancement projects - Community Development Fund</li> <li>• Resident groups can also apply to WCH Community Development Fund</li> <li>• Projects can be identified by anyone living in the Community. Ideas can be developed through working with staff of the Community Development Team, raised with local residents groups or submitted online at: <a href="https://www.wcht.org.uk/community-developments">https://www.wcht.org.uk/community-developments</a></li> </ul>
4.12.2	We will publicise these schemes and encourage our residents to make requests for improvements by using local residents groups, or by contacting us directly.
4.13	<b>Resident Involvement</b>
4.13.1	We will consult with and involve our residents about the services we provide to our Estates and Communal Areas so that we meet the needs of our residents. We will encourage our residents to have a key role by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting any problems, complaints or service failures</li> <li>• Being involved in estate inspections to include grounds maintenance monitoring</li> <li>• Having their say about their local community area through residents' groups, surveys and any other means available to them</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing feedback when consulted about specific issues</li> <li>• Suggesting estate improvements</li> <li>• Developing service standards</li> <li>• Capturing customer satisfaction</li> <li>• Being part of contractor core groups</li> </ul>
4.13.2	We will keep residents informed locally by regularly updating notice-boards.
4.13.3	We will measure resident satisfaction with our cleaning and grounds maintenance service, by carrying out <b>monthly</b> surveys.
4.14	<b>Residents' Responsibilities</b>
4.14.1	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 taking action to enforce the terms of Tenancy Agreements.
4.14.2	<p><u>Communal Areas</u> – we will remind residents to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep all internal communal areas clean and tidy</li> <li>• In accordance with Fire Safety Regulations not to store items such as mobility scooters, bicycles or prams etc. in communal areas, including stairwells and communal entrance ways (other than in designated areas)</li> <li>• Not cause any other obstruction or nuisance in a shared area</li> <li>• Not dump, or allow to be dumped, items of rubbish, which could include general household rubbish, furniture, white goods or any other such items on Estates and any Communal Areas, both internally and externally.</li> </ul>
4.14.3	<p><u>Parking</u> – we will remind our residents to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park considerately in parking and garage areas on our estates</li> <li>• Not run any car repair or sales business from our parking areas, garage areas or green areas on our Estates</li> </ul>
4.14.4	<p><u>Pets</u> – we will remind our residents to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep their pets under control</li> <li>• Not allow their pets to foul in, or damage any Communal Areas.</li> </ul>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Equality and Diversity Considerations</b>
5.1	The contract for Estate cleaning and grounds maintenance was tendered in 2013/14 and residents influenced the specification of works covered by the contract.
5.2	We will act fairly and consistently in the application of this Policy and will not discriminate against any person on the grounds of their age, race, ethnicity/nationality, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Monitoring &amp; Adoption Criteria</b>
6.1	Residents express satisfaction with cleaning and grounds maintenance by completing satisfaction surveys sent by the Customer Relations Team.
6.2	The Estates & Neighbourhood Teams will complete monthly monitoring of the cleaning and grounds maintenance.
6.3	Monitoring of the contracts is detailed under the terms of the contract at monthly contract monitoring meetings.

6.4	Performance Indicators are reported to EMT, GMT and to the Board in accordance with our standard reporting schedule.
6.5	The successful application and adoption of this Policy shall be assessed using the Adoption Criteria at Appendix B. The aim is to ensure that we uphold this Policy and our related Estates Service Standards and meet the aims of this Policy.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Persons responsible</b>
7.1	Senior Estate and Contracts Officer – Cleaning & grounds maintenance contract management. Collecting and recording the estate inspections, and block inspections.
7.2	Customer Relations Team – Responsible for collecting customer satisfaction data and providing feedback to residents on behalf of the organisation.
7.3	Neighbourhood Services Team Leader – Performance and quality monitoring of the services delivered.
<b>8.</b>	<b>Related documents</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grounds Maintenance Contract</li> <li>• Cleaning Contract</li> <li>• Planned Works Policy &amp; Procedure</li> <li>• Responsive Repairs</li> <li>• Property Standards Policy</li> <li>• Service Standards</li> <li>• Fire Safety Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Community Development Strategy</li> <li>• Vulnerable Tenants Policy</li> <li>• ASB Policy &amp; Procedure</li> <li>• Equality &amp; Diversity Policy</li> </ul>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	Appendix A – list of Estate Service Contractors and Contact Details Appendix B – Adoption Criteria
<b>10.</b>	<b>Approval</b>
Approved by:	EMT and GMT
Date of approval:	May 2017
Review date:	May 2020
Policy 'owner':	Neighbourhood Services Manager



## Appendix A List of Estate Service Contractors and Contact Details



### Grounds Maintenance Contractors

Glendale Managed Services Limited  
The Coach House  
Duxbury Hall Road  
Duxbury Park  
Chorley  
PR7 4AT

Tel: 01257 460461  
Email: [info@glendale-services.co.uk](mailto:info@glendale-services.co.uk)

### Cleaning Contractor

New Green Services Limited  
The Weltech Business Centre  
The Rideway  
Welwyn Garden City  
Herts. AL7 2AA

Tel: 01707 871516  
Email: [admin@newgreen.co.uk](mailto:admin@newgreen.co.uk)

## Appendix B Testing & Adoption Criteria

	Area Being Tested	Policy	Who	How Tested
1	<b>Fire Risk Assessments (FRA)</b>	Carry out Fire Risk Assessment checks of Communal Areas as part of our formal bi-monthly inspections (4.4.4)	Neighbourhood Officers	Up to date completed copies of FRA form available in N:\ESTATE SERVICES INFO AND LOGS\2018 FRA clean GM block check sheets
2	<b>Estate Inspections</b>	Our staff will visit and formally inspect all Estates and Communal Areas at least every 3 months to check that the work is up to standard and to resolve any issues (4.4.2)	Neighbourhood Officers	Up to date copies of the completed estate inspection available N:\ESTATE SERVICES INFO AND LOGS\2018 Completed estates inspections all areas
3	<b>ROSPA playground equipment checks</b>	We will carry out ROSPA checks and inspections of equipment in our playgrounds on a fortnightly basis We will address any maintenance and safety issue identified in a timely manner. (4.7.1)	Senior Estates & Contracts Officer	Up to date copies of the playground inspections with details of timely actions taken to address issues available in N:\ESTATE SERVICES INFO AND LOGS\2018 Rospa checks play areas
4	<b>Service Standards</b>	We will publicise on the block notice boards the relevant Service Standard covering block cleaning. (4.2.1)	Senior Estates & Contracts Officer	A copy of the current Service Standards is saved in N:\ESTATE SERVICES INFO AND LOGS\2018 service standard posters for blocks cleaning & GM