

Neighbourhood Management Policy

INFORMATION

Policy Name	Neighbourhood Management Policy
Effective Date(s)	February 2024
Approved By	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Scrutiny Panel – 30 November 2023 • Customer Connect Panel – 12 January 2024 • Risk and Compliance Group – 16 January 2024 • Customer Services Committee – 8 February 2024
Approval Date	Customer Services Committee -
Policy Owner/Dept	Head of Housing, Aaron Hammersley
Policy Author	Head of Housing, Aaron Hammersley
Review Date	February 2026
Version Number	2.0

Version Control

Version	Date	Changes	Approver
2.0	10.11.23	<p>Section 6.2 – Garden Condition</p> <p>Added:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YHG will offer sign-posting support where unacceptable garden condition is due to customer disability or other additional needs / vulnerabilities. <p>Section 6.5 – Grounds Maintenance</p> <p>Added:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedges and shrubs – first cut between March and October, second cut between October and February. • Between cuts, the grounds maintenance team will remove and shrub or hedges vegetation that is causing an obstruction. 	

Your Housing Group Strategic Priorities			
Safe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Viability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landlord	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Growth	<input type="checkbox"/>
People	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>

Relevant National Standards or Regulation	Your Housing Group will comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard through partnership working with our customers and external organisations and our commitment to keeping neighbourhoods and communal areas clean and safe.
--	--

Relevant Legislation	<p>We must operate within the framework created by legislation. This Policy and subsequent Procedures have been written with regard to relevant legislation which includes the following non-exhaustive list:</p> <p>Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and 1987</p> <p>Housing Act 1985, 1988, 1996, 1998 and 2004</p> <p>Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Data Protection Act 2018 and subsequent Regulations</p> <p>Health & Safety at Work Act 1974</p> <p>Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999</p> <p>Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993, (section 121)</p> <p>Housing and Regeneration Act 2008</p> <p>The Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984</p> <p>The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW)</p> <p>The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981</p> <p>Town and Country Planning Act 1990</p> <p>The Environment Protection Act 1990</p> <p>Local Government (Miscellaneous provisions Act) 1976</p> <p>Forestry Act 2014</p> <p>Highways Act 1980</p> <p>The Charter for Social Housing Residents</p> <p>Legislation as detailed in YHG's ASB and Hate Crime Policy</p>
-----------------------------	--

1.0 Purpose of the Policy

1.1 This policy sets out our approach to maintaining and improving neighbourhoods and providing services to customers which enables them to have quiet enjoyment of their homes in a safe and secure environment and neighbourhoods they are proud of.

1.2 The specific objectives of this Neighbourhood Management policy are to:

- Develop a pro-active approach to the management of our properties and neighbourhoods.
- Manage the environment with partner agencies and residents to create sustainable neighbourhoods.
- Ensure that all customers are aware of their respective responsibilities.

2.0 Scope of the Policy

2.1 This policy applies specifically where Your Housing Group (YHG) provides a service to its customers and any additional service users within its accepted remit.

2.2 This policy applies to all paid and voluntary YHG staff and contractors.

3.0 Definitions

- **YHG** - relates to Your Housing Group.
- **Neighbourhoods** – relate to defined estates, groups of homes with shared external or internal areas, or ad hoc pockets of land that YHG owns.
- **Schemes** – relates to any Older Peoples Services accommodation, Retirement Living Scheme, Supported accommodation and Young Persons Scheme (Foyers.)
- **Customer** – relates to residents including tenants, leaseholders and freeholders.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 We aim to put customers at the heart of their neighbourhoods by encouraging customer involvement and consultation on neighbourhood management and we have consulted with customers through our customer engagement framework in the development of this policy.

4.2 Consultation on this policy has also taken place with key internal and external stakeholders including YHG's Housing Management Teams, Asset Management Team, Ground Maintenance Team and YHG solicitors.

This policy is linked to the Neighbourhood and Community Standard.

5.0 Background and Context

5.1 The Neighbourhood and Community Standard states that “registered providers shall consult with tenants in developing a published policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes.”

5.2 To improve and maintain high standards in the areas YHG operate we consider neighbourhood management as a partnership between YHG, customers and other partners working or operating in our neighbourhoods.

5.3 Effective engagement is fundamental to a positive relationship with our customers. YHG's Landlord Strategy and Customer Connect Framework sets out how we will work with our customers, colleagues and external stakeholders to:

- Deliver services in the right way, tailored to customer need and preference
- Listen to customers' views and feedback
- Connect and empower customers through meaningful engagement

5.4 Customers will be offered a range of opportunities to become involved in decision making about service delivery improvements and their own tenancy. They will be consulted and provided with regular communication and feedback through newsletters, leaflets, letters and personal contact. Customer engagement and involvement in accordance with this policy will lead to more sustained improvements in services, schemes and the local neighbourhood environment.

6.0 Policy Detail

6.1 The areas covered within this policy, and supported by relevant procedural documents are:

- **Neighbourhood management**
- **Communal inspections**
- **Environmental Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), including fly-tipping**
- **Grounds maintenance**
- **Communal cleaning (including window cleaning)**
- **Playgrounds**
- **Tree management**
- **Snow clearance and gritting**
- **Waste Management**

6.2 Neighbourhood Management

Our approach to dealing with neighbourhood management issues includes but is not limited to:

Abandoned vehicles

All vehicles on communal or other land owned by YHG, aside from individual properties with off road parking, must be taxed and in a road worthy condition or registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) as off road through the Statutory Off Road Notice (SORN).

YHG considers 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 YHG procedures.

Graffiti Removal

Graffiti impacts negatively on the aesthetic appeal and appearance of our neighbourhoods. Graffiti reported and identified will be removed in line with YHG's Tenancy and Neighbourhood Management Service Standards, along with the reporting of criminal damage to the police where applicable.

Garden Condition

Untidy and overgrown gardens can negatively impact upon the appeal of neighbourhoods and can also be an indicator to poor property condition. Following identification of this breach of tenancy, should the customer fail to rectify the issue, action may be taken in conjunction with YHG's Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy.

YHG will offer sign-posting support where unacceptable garden condition is due to customer disability or other additional needs / vulnerabilities.

Garage sites and parking areas

All garage sites and parking areas, not including driveways to individual properties, will be maintained by YHG as required.

The purpose of garage sites and parking areas is for the storage of motor vehicles. Garage sites and parking areas must not be used for the repairing or fixing of vehicles without prior permission from YHG. No trailer, caravan or boat should be stored in parking areas or on garage sites.

All customers and garage licensees must adhere to the obligations set down in their respective agreements relating to driveways, garage sites and parking areas. Where a tenant, leaseholder or licensee fails to meet any of these obligations, appropriate action will be taken to encourage them to adhere to the conditions of their agreement. Continual failure to meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of the agreement and all avenues will be explored to resolve the breach including the use of legal remedies.

Where parking areas are provided, we will work with customers to ensure that they are considerably used.

6.3 Communal areas and communal inspections

Customers who pass through an internal communal area to access their home or have use of an external communal area shall be responsible for ensuring that they, their visitors and household members abide by their Agreement conditions.

Customers must ensure that no items are left in the communal area and that no rubbish or litter is deposited. Customers and their visitors must also not interfere with or cause damage to any door entry system, security or safety equipment. Furthermore, customers must ensure that no damage or vandalism occurs to any features of communal areas.

Due to potential dangers of obstructing access or means of escape in the event of a fire, we will operate a zero-tolerance approach to items left in a communal area. If any high-risk items (e.g. mobility scooter, motorcycle, moped or any machinery having a petrol or diesel engine) are found, the customer who owns the items will be contacted and asked to remove the item immediately. Failure to do so would be a breach of Agreement and would be treated as a serious risk to other customers. All breaches will be investigated in conjunction with other relevant YHG Policies and Procedures.

YHG retains the right to remove items left or placed in communal areas, including personal objects such as pot plants and ornaments on window ledges.

All YHG employees have a duty in the course of their day to day work to note any repairs or maintenance requirements identified both within a communal area, scheme or neighbourhood, particularly those which pose a threat to health and safety and report these promptly.

A programme of robust neighbourhood, scheme and communal inspections will be undertaken by YHG staff to ensure that they are safe, clean and well maintained.

6.4 **Environmental ASB**

Environmental ASB affects YHG's ability to maintain and improve our neighbourhoods. We aim to minimise the incidents of environmental ASB and respond promptly when incidents are identified. Environmental ASB covers a variety of acts such as:-

- Vandalism
- Graffiti
- Fly tipping
- Fly posting
- Littering

YHG will investigate all instances of environmental ASB and work with partner agencies to identify the offender and take the appropriate enforcement action in conjunction with YHG's Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy. YHG will encourage customers who witness environmental ASB to report it to ourselves and any other relevant organisation such as the Police or Environmental Health.

YHG will undertake any appropriate task to rectify the result of environmental ASB, which is not the responsibility of a customer.

Customers are responsible for making good or paying for damage caused by deliberate acts of vandalism or any results caused by environmental ASB by themselves, any member of their household or visitors.

6.5 **Grounds Maintenance**

YHG will ensure that our communal grounds look clean and tidy, hedges/shrubs cut back and grass maintained. This will include:

- Cutting the grass and mulching the cuttings (minimum of 13 visits between April and October)
- Grass edging
- Trimming and shaping shrubs and hedges (generally twice per year, but species dependant) first cut between March and October and second cut between October and February.
- Clearing litter
- Herbicide Application to Hardstanding and Beds
- Leaf Clearance

YHG will not maintain grass, shrubs or hedges in adopted, private or individual gardens. This will be the responsibility of the customer as detailed in their tenancy/licence/leasehold agreement (where applicable). YHG will provide support via signposting to local agencies for those customers who are unable to maintain their gardens. Between cuts, the grounds maintenance team will remove and shrub or hedges vegetation that is causing an obstruction.

6.6 Communal cleaning (including window cleaning)

YHG will ensure that internal communal areas are cleaned on a frequency and standard based upon the management requirements for each site.

YHG will ensure that customers are consulted over the cleaning services provided and included in their service charge.

Customers are required to keep communal areas free of personal items and nothing should be stored in communal areas, including cupboards with shared access. These items can cause fire hazards, restrict escape routes and impede our staff and contractors delivering this service.

Window Cleaning:

YHG will ensure that communal windows are cleaned on a frequency based upon the management requirements for each site.

YHG will only clean windows of individual customers properties where there is a contractual obligation to do so. Otherwise this will be the responsibility of the customer as detailed in their tenancy/licence/leasehold agreement (where applicable).

YHG will ensure that customers are consulted over the window cleaning services provided and included in their service charge.

6.7 Playgrounds

YHG will ensure that playgrounds are managed and maintained as safe places for customers within our neighbourhoods and for the benefit of all users.

YHG will inspect these as per recommended guidance legislation, and on a frequency based upon the management requirements for each site.

6.8 Tree management

YHG will ensure that all trees and woodlands on YHG owned communal areas and estates are managed and maintained through a proactive and risk-based approach.

YHG will survey all tree stock using an asset management approach in line with The National Tree Safety Group's Guidance and develop and maintain a geodatabase of these assets.

YHG will ensure that all arboricultural works will be carried out, in accordance with good arboricultural practice.

YHG will maintain our trees and woodlands in a safe and sustainable way, whilst developing and increasing biodiversity and seasonal character in our trees for the benefit of wildlife, customers and visitors.

YHG will not maintain trees in private or individual gardens. This will be the responsibility of the customer as detailed in their tenancy/licence/leasehold agreement (where applicable).

YHG will not maintain or fell trees to:

- Deter birds roosting
- Prevent wind-blown pollen, blossoms, petals, seeds or leaves
- Abate falling fruit, berries, nuts or sap
- Improve access to natural daylight or for aesthetic views
- Remove arboreal insects
- Improve television reception to non-communal systems.

6.9 Snow clearance and gritting

YHG will clear snow and spread grit to designated footpaths on some prioritised schemes, for example, Older Persons Schemes, and on a frequency based upon the management requirements for each site.

YHG will provide, and replenish, grit bins to prioritised schemes where a high proportion of customers are affected, or are likely to be affected, by impaired mobility and vulnerability.

YHG cannot guarantee that every footpath, or designated footpaths, will be ice-free at all times, even in priority schemes. It is the responsibility of all customers, their visitors and staff to take appropriate care in poor weather conditions.

YHG will not clear snow and spread grit to roadways, parking areas, footpaths to dwellings or spread grit as a precautionary measure.

6.10 Waste Management

YHG are responsible for addressing litter and fly-tipping within the boundaries of the land that we own and will arrange clearance accordingly. We will maintain communal bin stores and chutes.

Customers will be notified at the start of their Agreement of arrangements for the removal and recycling of refuse and bulk items.

Customers are expected to take all reasonable care to ensure that their household rubbish is properly stored and disposed of appropriately. Refuse must be adequately bagged and stored until collection in bin stores or other designated areas. Customers are also responsible for making arrangements for the disposal of large items such as household furniture and must comply with the local arrangements for the collection of refuse.

YHG will work in partnership with our Local Authority partners to encourage our residents to recycle their household waste. YHG will, where possible, provide locations for the positioning of recycling facilities. Where a customer is unable to manage their household waste, we will work with the Local Authority to provide the necessary support and assistance.

7.0 Partnerships

YHG are aware that we own homes in neighbourhoods where there is a mix of social housing and private owners. We will work closely with Local Authorities and other landowners to ensure that identified issues are addressed quickly and appropriately by the party who is responsible for them. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The maintenance and improvement of footpaths and roads
- The maintenance of lighting
- The maintenance of open spaces
- Refuse collection and recycling arrangements

In addition to the work we undertake, we will also work collaboratively with other organisations, agencies and stakeholders, to ensure that services delivered outside of YHG's remit positively contribute to maintaining our neighbourhoods.

8.0 Reviewing and Monitoring

8.1 The relevant standard for this operational area is the Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community standard. YHG seeks to fully comply with all the elements set out in the standards and report on annual basis.

Regular scheme and estate inspections are completed by YHG staff to ensure adherence with policy.

9.0 Responsibilities under this Policy

9.1 Responsibility for the execution of this policy rests with all colleagues and contractors working on behalf of YHG, whether that work is paid or voluntary. This includes:

- Your Housing Group employees
 - Agency Staff
 - Managing Agents
 - Contract Staff – when working under contract to the group e.g. contractors working in Your Housing Group owned or managed homes
 - Volunteers – when working by agreement for or on behalf of the group
 - Third parties who are engaged in providing a service at the request of YHG
- (This list is not exhaustive)

9.2 Failure to comply with these obligations **may result in disciplinary action** in accordance with the Your Housing Group Disciplinary Procedures.

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 YHG's Business Plan reflects that maintenance of communal open space owned by YHG is a key landlord responsibility. YHG will seek to mitigate against business risk through managing estate services to internal and external communal areas in an efficient, effective and economic manner.
- 10.2 Risk here is not just risk to the business – the first and most crucial risk is that to the safety of residents and the general public.

11.0 Data Protection, Record Storage and Retention

- 11.1 YHG recognises that confidentiality is important to customers and will treat all information relevant to each customer in the strictest confidence, as will all contractors, under the Data Protection Act 2018, including the GDPR provisions. YHG's Data Protection Policy will also be adhered to in following this policy.

11.0 Equality and Diversity

- 11.1 This policy meets the requirements of the equality impact assessment and is compliant with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

This means that we will not discriminate against customers on the grounds of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

12.0 Communication

This policy will be available to all YHG employees on our internal intranet and will be communicated to all teams involved in the provision of Neighbourhood Management services.

The policy will also be made available on our external website for easy access for customers and our partners.

13.0 Learning and Development

- 13.1 YHG is committed to putting arrangements in place that ensure effective training of all staff.
- 13.2 This policy and the procedures that support it will be the subject of a mixed platform of training across YHG and include all stakeholders. This training will be bespoke to the individual stakeholders and include:
- Team Briefings, for those who need to be aware of it but not actively involved in the delivery
 - On the job training, for those who need to use the procedures in their daily roles
 - Regular Tool Box refreshers, for those using the procedures.

14.0 Performance Management of this Policy

- 14.1 We will use the following non-exhaustive list to measure and monitor our performance:

- Compliments, feedback and complaints we receive.
- Our internal Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Regular Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Satisfaction measures as defined in The Charter for Social Housing Residents

15.0 Review of this Policy

15.1 YHG will review this policy every 2 years, or earlier if required by statutory, regulatory, legislative or best practice requirements or the need to update this policy following reviews of other Group wide policies or improvements identified by service reviews, scrutiny or feedback from customers.

15.2 This Policy will be reviewed by the Head of Housing.

Related Documents

Document Type	Name
Connected Policies and Procedures	Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy Tree Policy Scooter Policy Service Charge Policy Shared Ownership and Leasehold Management Policy Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Communal Areas Policy Clear Landings and Communal Spaces Procedure
Forms and Letters	The Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) Playground Inspection Forms. YHG Communal Compliance Inspection Form
Leaflets/Publicity Material	Service Standard – Tenancy and Neighbourhood Management
Training Materials Available	
Intranet/ Website Page	Youggle YHG Website

Checklist

(To be completed by the Research and Policy Manager)

Policy Name: Neighbourhood Management Policy	
Version No: Version 2	Effective Date: February 2024
Status: Existing Policy Review	
Previous Policy Name (where appropriate) n/a	
<p>Summary of Changes</p> <p>Section 6.2 – Garden Condition</p> <p>Added:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YHG will offer sign-posting support where unacceptable garden condition is due to customer disability or other additional needs / vulnerabilities. <p>Section 6.5 – Grounds Maintenance</p> <p>Added:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedges and shrubs – first cut between March and October, second cut between October and February. • Between cuts, the grounds maintenance team will remove and shrub or hedges vegetation that is causing an obstruction. 	
<p>Internal Consultation Group:</p> <p>Housing Operational Teams Tenancy Support and Safeguarding Teams Asset Management Team Older Persons Team Supported Housing Commercial Housing Team Risk & Compliance Group</p>	<p>Customer Consultation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>Date of Customer Consultation:</p> <p>30th November 2023 and 12th January 2024</p>
	<p>Schedule for customer consultation:</p> <p>Customer Scrutiny – 30 November 2023 Customer Connect Panel – 12 January 2024</p>
Link to Consultation Document(s): -	
<p>Date Initial Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken: November 2023</p>	<p>Equality Impact Assessors:</p> <p>Dave Lovatt, Sharon Wheeler & Carly Anne Greenall</p>
<p>Reason for Decision: Impact on People with disabilities and additional needs / vulnerabilities. Minor recommendations made during the development of this policy were incorporated from the equality impact assessment.</p>	

Date Full Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken:				
Brief Outline of any Changes Recommended from EIA:				
Section 6.2 – Garden Condition				
Recommendation:-				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YHG will offer sign-posting support where unacceptable garden condition is due to customer disability or other additional needs / vulnerabilities. 				
Data Protection/ GDPR Implications: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Brief Outline of Data Protection/GDPR Implications: YHG recognises that confidentiality is important to customers and will treat all information relevant to each customer in the strictest confidence, as will all contractors, under the Data Protection Act 2018, including the GDPR provisions. YHG's Data Protection Policy will also be adhered to in following this policy.				
Legal Implications: <input type="checkbox"/>		Legal Panel Consulted: <input type="checkbox"/>		Date:
Risk Implications: <input type="checkbox"/>		Risk Logged on Datix: <input type="checkbox"/>		Date:
Resource Implications	People: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Finance: <input type="checkbox"/>	Asset: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other: <input type="checkbox"/>
Brief Summary of how Resource Implications have been addressed:				
There is no expected impact on resources and training of the policy can be scheduled in such a way that operational services will be unaffected.				
How will communication on this Policy take place:				
Intranet/ YHG Website/ Email/ Face to Face Training				
Policy Owner: (Department) Housing & Customer Services			Policy Author: Aaron Hammersley, Head of Housing	
Policy Signed Off by: (service manager or sponsor):				Date: 30/11/24
Policy Quality Checked by Research and Policy Manager:				Date:
Policy Approved by Risk and Compliance Group:				Date: 16/01/24
Policy Approved by Customer Services Committee:				Date: 08/02/24