

Paragon Asra Housing Limited

PA Housing

Neighbourhood Management Policy

April 2025

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| Department | Neighbourhoods |
| Approved by | EMT |
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Paragon Asra Housing Limited (PA Housing) is committed to equality and diversity. This policy has considered the Equality Act 2010 and its protected characteristics which are: race, gender, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, marriage, civil marriage and partnership, and pregnancy and maternity explicitly.

We will make sure that all of our communication is fully accessible and to achieve this if a policy or document needs to be available in other formats we will provide them.

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1. Introduction

PA Housing aims to ensure that its communal areas and neighbourhoods are well maintained, and residents feel safe and secure. Neighbourhood Management is a critical part of housing management, and we will work with our residents and other partners working or operating in our neighbourhoods to improve and maintain high standards.

Our Neighbourhood Management Policy sets out our approach to effectively managing our neighbourhoods and areas that surround resident homes. This includes:

- Communal grounds maintenance
- Communal area cleaning
- Removal of graffiti
- Bulk refuse clearing on land owned by PA Housing
- Neighbourhood inspections
- Management of communal areas
- Abandoned vehicles
- Pests
- Management of garages, sheds and parking spaces
- On site offices e.g. offices in independent living schemes
- Trees on land owned or managed by PA Housing

We recognise that if a neighbourhood is badly maintained and unclean, it can lead to the fear of crime and general unhappiness for our residents. Our approach supports the delivery of our commitments in our corporate plan 2024-2029 “Putting People First” to ensure we create safe, balanced and sustainable communities where residents want to live, and more importantly choose to stay.

2. Objectives

The aim of the Neighbourhood Management Policy is to provide a safe and secure neighbourhood where residents are proud of where they live. It also ensures that our standards on how we manage and maintain areas are clear, transparent and focused on providing a service that provides value for money and accountability.

We will;

- Have a proactive approach to the management of our homes, and the neighbourhoods they are in
- Ensure residents are aware of their tenancy responsibilities
- Set and maintain appropriate Neighbourhood Management Standards, measuring and reporting performance and tenant satisfaction
- Deliver a proactive, responsive and accountable service which residents tell us is value for money

3. Neighbourhood Inspections

We carry out regular inspections of neighbourhoods to ensure they are clean, safe and in good condition.

The frequency of the inspections is as follows:

| Property Type | Frequency of Inspection |
|--|-------------------------|
| Blocks over 6 floors | Weekly |
| Extra care | Monthly |
| Leasehold schemes for 55+ | Monthly |
| Flats in communal blocks | Quarterly |
| Independent Living scheme | Quarterly |
| Supported Agency Services | Quarterly |
| Temporary Accommodation | Quarterly |
| Homes with their own private access eg. houses | Twice yearly |

Where the management responsibility is provided by a managing agent, in line with the managing agent's individual policy or managing agreement or the service level agreement.

Inspections are carried out by Neighbourhood Co-ordinators who consider all areas within a block or specified inspection area. The inspection is completed based on a set of questions to assess the condition of the internal or external areas and is graded in line with the Neighbourhood Management Standards in Appendix 1. All inspection information is made available on the relevant Neighbourhood website pages on our website for residents to view. Residents can join inspections with their neighbourhood co-ordinator to give feedback on how improvements can be made.

These inspections cover, but are not limited to, the following aspects:

- Health and safety issues
- Tenancy or lease concerns, such as untidy gardens
- Condition of hard landscaping, including fencing, walls, and pavements
- Condition of soft landscaping, such as grass, trees, and shrubs
- Litter and fly-tipping
- Garages
- Car parks
- Vandalism
- Graffiti
- Anti-social behaviour
- Illegally parked vehicles
- Abandoned vehicles
- Lighting

4. Grading

We use a gold, silver and bronze scoring system so that we can effectively monitor which

homes are well maintained and identify areas needing improvement, allowing for the implementation of action plans.

The below table outlines what the grading scores mean:

| Rating | Standard | Standard Breakdown |
|--------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Gold | Is to the required standard | <p>Standards are to the required level.</p> <p>Examples are but not exclusively to cleaning and grounds maintenance has been attended to and is in a good condition, a few visible markings on walls which would be expected, no health and safety concerns identified, communal door entry systems in good working condition, all fixtures and fittings either working or identified as to how they should look, no bulk rubbish, no items left in communal areas, cupboards free of items.</p> |
| Silver | Satisfactory condition | <p>Some actions are required to bring it to a Gold standard.</p> <p>Examples of this but not exclusively to are some signs of litter, cleaning or grounds maintenance has taken place but might require further cleaning or work, small visible markings on walls, isolated non offensive graffiti, small stains on carpets.</p> |
| Bronze | Unsatisfactory and in poor condition | <p>Identification which has a serious negative impact on the surrounding environment</p> <p>Example of this but not exclusively to having items in communal areas, no evidence of cleaning or grounds maintenance being attended, identifiable damage to communal area fixtures and fittings, door entry systems not working, lifts not working, health and safety hazards such as needles, broken glass, leaks, offensive graffiti, extensive graffiti, trip hazards, fixtures and fittings not working such as bin chutes, alarm systems and doors.</p> <p>If an area is identified as Bronze, the responsible party will rectify the action within a reasonable and proportionate timeframe.</p> |

5. Managing Agents

PA housing may have properties where there is a managing agent who is responsible for certain functions. This can vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood depending on the freeholder, managing agent agreement and service level agreement.

Where a concern for performance, condition or value for money is reported, we work with the managing agent to inform them of the concerns and ask for an action plan on how and when it will be rectified.

We take legal action against a managing agent where repeat performance concerns are evidenced.

6. Noticeboards

In communal areas managed by PA Housing there are noticeboards for residents to access current updates and information in relation to PA Housing or their neighbourhood.

Noticeboards are regularly updated and reviewed as part of the inspection. All noticeboards are securely attached to an appropriate surface and notify who the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator is which can also be found by a resident on the PA Housing website.

7. Bulk and Personal Items

We want our neighbourhoods to be safe and items left or stored within communal areas increase the risk of fire hazards and restrict escape routes in the event of a fire. Communal areas, including cupboards, must therefore be kept free of items and unless permission has been given, or we have created a designated area. Items should also not be left, or fly tipped in shared spaces such as gardens, or PA Housing land. There may be times where the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator may conduct door knocks, send messages, call or send letters to identify an owner of any belongings.

In accordance with the TORTS (Interference with Goods) Act 1977 before removing any item(s) we will apply a TORTS notice detailing the time frame in which we will arrange for removal of the item(s). We will then remove and dispose of any personal items that are stored in shared areas in accordance with the Act. PA Housing will not be responsible for the loss of items.

8. Fire Safety

PA Housing carries out fire risk assessments (FRAs) by a fire risk assessor. These assessments take place where there are communal areas and shared facilities within blocks or sheltered/specialist accommodation.

For items that are identified the responsible team will have a set time to resolve the action depending on the risk. Risk is identified as high, medium or low depending on what has been identified such as signage replacement, items in communal areas, items in cupboards, fly tipping, bulk rubbish.

Our Residents are required to:

- Ensure they do not obstruct all exits by storing refuse, mobility scooters, bicycles, including electric bicycles and scooters or other possessions in communal areas unless permission has been given in designated areas
- Ensure fire doors are not opened, tampered with or obstructed
- Ensure no gas cannisters, electric bicycles and scooters, petrol, barbecues, quad bikes, motor bikes, or flammable liquids are stored in communal areas, in the premises or on balconies

We have two approaches to managing shared areas which are 'managed use' and 'zero tolerance'.

Managed use are certain low risk items which are allowed in shared areas with permission or where signposted as a designated area, providing that the items do not prevent safe escape from the building, or the items do not create a fire risk. This includes:

- Walls- Noticeboards and framed photos which are the property of PA Housing and have been applied by PA Housing
- Floors- Small doormats
- Designated shared storage areas- Buggies, prams or mobility scooters are only permitted in designated and clearly signposted areas and must not be plugged in or charged under any circumstances. Pushbikes which are not electric or not powered and scooters which are not electric or not powered are only permitted in designated and signposted areas

Zero tolerance is where no belongings are allowed within the communal areas under any circumstances.

Shared managed area may be escalated to zero tolerance for the following reasons:

- Consistent and persistent issues where unpermitted items are left in shared areas
- A serious incident or issues take place
- A request is made by our Fire Safety, Health and Safety or Compliance teams
- A request is made by an authoritative body such as Police or Fire Service

It will be the responsibility of the Head of Building Safety to review and decide when or if a building can return to a managed use approach.

PA Housing have identified a list of properties which are 6+ floors, over 18 meters or where fire remediation work is required which are defined as *high-rise high-risk* properties. Any property listed as *high-rise high-risk* will have a zero-tolerance approach and no belongings are allowed within the communal areas under any circumstances.

In all other areas, PA Housing will review on a case-by-case basis to managing the use of the shared areas and residents to carry out their responsibilities outlined in our policies and their contractual tenancy agreement to keep their areas safe and clean. Shared areas adjacent to a resident's property are not an extension of their property and therefore should not be used for personal effects or storage of any kind. Where shared areas are not being kept safe and clean then we may escalate the management approach in these areas to a zero-tolerance approach.

Where a resident is identified as inappropriately misusing or storing items in shared areas, we may be required to take enforcement actions. This may be sending warning letters for a breach

of tenancy where a resident has been identified as the owner of items or if a resident is unable to be identified, a block letter and communication will be sent to all residents.

PA Housing may use other forms of enforcement action depending on the breach of tenancy such as:

- Injunctions
- Extension of a starter tenancy
- Eviction

9. Resident Responsibilities

Residents have a responsibility to ensure that their individual responsibilities are maintained which are outlined in their tenancy agreement or lease.

For any concerns that have been identified by a PA Housing member of staff or stakeholder an investigation will follow which may result in action being taken against the resident's tenancy or lease agreement. If there is evidence to identify the offending party a resident may be charged for any actions PA Housing have had to take.

PA Housing reserves the right to charge resident (s) involved for any cost associated with the removals or enforcement actions at any stage including if items are removed and the owners are identified after removal.

10. Gardens and Grounds Maintenance

We ensure that all communal grounds are maintained to a good standard through regular work as follows:

Grass Cutting: Communal grass will be cut every 14 days from March to October and as required outside these dates. Standards and frequency are detailed on our website and noticeboards.

Shrub Maintenance: All communal shrubs will be cut back and cleared of litter. Visits will be between March and October. Major cutbacks will be carried out over the winter to ensure shrubs and hedges are manageable over the summer.

Weed Spraying: Weed spraying will be completed three times a year, depending on weather and growing conditions. It should not be done in wet weather conditions.

Tree Maintenance: Tree maintenance will be conducted as needed, outside of bird nesting periods, and only when trees pose a health and safety concern, are dead, dying, diseased, or need cutting back to prevent risk to life or property.

Fallen Trees: Trees that fall on our land will be investigated, and recommendations will be provided by a chosen contractor to resolve the issue.

The Shared Garden Areas provide outdoor space for residents to enjoy. We balance health and safety with community involvement when setting restrictions which include:

- No barbecues or fireworks.
- Large items such as trampolines and swings should be returned to the resident's property after use.
- No paddling pools, swimming pools, jacuzzis or bouncy castles due to health and safety risks.
- Using communal gardens for personal planting without permission.
- Changing locks to gates or restrict access to other residents.

Tenant self-contained gardens: Tenants are responsible for maintenance of the self-contained gardens within their home. Work will only be conducted if there is a risk to life or property, or if regulatory action has been served or threatened. The Neighbourhood Coordinator will review and decide on a case-by-case basis for any concerns regarding trees or hedges that are raised by a resident or member of the public.

11. Play Areas

Playgrounds that are managed by PA Housing will be inspected Monthly by a contractor to ensure that the playgrounds are fit for purpose and safe.

We also carry out an annual RoSPA (Royal Society of Prevention Accidents) inspection for each of our playgrounds.

12. Refuse Disposal and Litter

Residents are responsible for ensuring that their refuse and recyclable materials are disposed of safely and appropriately in the correct bins.

13. Fly Tipping

Fly tipping is a criminal offence, and it has a direct impact on the community. We work with our residents and stakeholders to identify, reduce and resolve concerns for fly tipping. Fly tipping is defined as the illegal dumping of waste in areas which are not designated for rubbish collection. Examples of fly tipping that are often reported is broken household items and furniture, building materials, tyres, mattresses, rubbish bags. Fly tipping poses an environmental health risk and fire safety risk and PA Housing will not tolerate fly tipping on land owned by us or in areas that we own or manage.

We share information with external stakeholders and will take tenancy or lease enforcement against those where evidence is provided and can be proven.

We support the Police or environmental services with any prosecution where it relates to a resident or on property directly managed by PA Housing.

14. Removal of Abandoned Vehicles

We only investigate a vehicle as being abandoned on PA Housing land. If a vehicle is not known to have an owner, we will issue a TORTS notice for removal. If a vehicle is road legal, and the owner tells PA Housing that it is not abandoned we do not have the power to move the vehicle.

15. Car Parks

Car parks are for residents and their visitors use only. There may be times when PA staff or contractors working on behalf of PA Housing must park in a residential car park to carry out their duties.

Visitors can only park in the visitor spaces and if they comply with the sign posted parking requirements. All vehicles have to be taxed and in a roadworthy condition. Some car parks will be managed by PCM car parking management company to minimise non-resident parking and ensure residents park in the designated bays or areas.

All vehicles are parked at the owner's risk. PA Housing will not accept any responsibility for damage caused to vehicles or incidents involving vehicles.

16. Garages

Garages on PA Housing owned land or which are managed by us will be inspected as part of the neighbourhood inspection. We will investigate concerns for garage misuse or its condition.

17. CCTV

PA Housing may have properties where CCTV cameras are installed. We ensure that where CCTV cameras are present the appropriate signage is clearly displayed. CCTV cameras are an essential security measure to protect residents and be able to identify concerns or conduct reasonable lines of enquiry.

CCTV controlled by PA Housing is reviewed when incidents are reported with a reasonable line of enquiry to pursue an investigation. Where there is no reasonable time frame or location provided by the reporting party, PA Housing reserve the right to close any investigation. Where Police require footage for an investigation PA Housing will support this and provide the footage as soon as reasonably practicable.

PA Housing will not consider requests to view CCTV or to provide CCTV footage to residents. We will inform residents when CCTV is to be installed but consultation may not be required where we need to implement temporary measures for example installing temporary cameras to assist with a PA Housing investigation.

18. Security and Crime Prevention

We ensure that security features such as entry systems, main door locks and lights are checked during neighbourhood inspections and any defects raised for repair.

19. Data Protection, Information Sharing and Confidentiality

In accordance with data protection laws, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, we are committed to ensuring that resident personal data is handled with the utmost care and confidentiality.

Information sharing will only occur when it is necessary for the provision of services, safeguarding, or where required by law.

We will ensure that any data shared with third parties is done so securely and only with resident appropriate consent or legal basis.

Confidentiality is paramount, and all our colleagues are trained to handle personal information responsibly, ensuring that it is used solely for the purposes for which it was collected.

Regular audits and reviews will be conducted to ensure compliance with legal requirements and best practices in data protection.

20. Partnership Working

We own a significant number of homes in neighbourhoods where there is a mix of different social housing and private owners. Residents and staff will identify local neighbourhood issues that are not our responsibility, including highways, footpaths, trees, alleyways, street lighting, and other properties. We will work closely with local authorities and landowners to ensure that identified local issues are addressed quickly and appropriately.

We will also work collaboratively with other organisations, registered providers, government agencies and stakeholders to influence those neighborhood services delivered outside of our direct control, to ensure they positively contribute to maintain neighbourhoods that are clean and safe such as local authorities, contractors, managing agents and relevant bodies.

We will work internally with our residents with joint inspections and with our resident assembly members to continuously improve our service provision.

21. Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

PA Housing recognises the diverse needs of our residents and always acts within the scope of its own Equity, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy, to ensure that all tenants and

prospective tenants are treated fairly and equally in making decisions under this policy. PA Housing will record, analyse, and monitor information on ethnicity, vulnerability, and disability alongside other characteristics as appropriate to support the fair application of this policy.

22. Training

All forms will be regularly updated and implemented through training and toolkit sessions. Managers are responsible for ensuring appropriate forms are implemented and staff utilising this policy are trained in all associated procedures.

23. Guidance

This should include all contractual, legislative and regulatory requirements based on the policy for example:

24. Contractual

- Tenancy agreement
- Lease
- License to Occupy

25. Legislative

- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Social Regulation Act 2023
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (The Fire Safety Order)
- TORTS Interference With Goods Act 1977
- Building Regulations 2010
- Social Regulation Act 2023

26. Related Policies

- Fire Safety Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Abandoned Vehicles Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

27. Regulatory

- Regulator of Social Housing Regulatory Standard
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard

28. Appendix 1 – Neighbourhood Management Standards