

Estate management policy

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Version: 1.0 (published)

Last updated: November 2025

Contents

Contents	1
1. Purpose	2
2. Regulatory standards	2
3. Responsibilities	2
3.1. Our responsibilities	2
3.2. Responsibilities of tenants	3
4. Definitions	3
5. Policy statement.....	4
5.1 Estates team	4
6. Partnership working	5
7. Communal areas	5
8. Fire safety/ Fire risk.....	6
9. Grounds maintenance	6
10. Communal cleaning.....	6
11. Play areas.....	6
12. Waste management – refuse, recycling, bin stores and fly tipping	6
13. Vandalism and graffiti	7
14. Vehicles and parking	7
15. Electric charging points	8
16. Satellite dishes	8
17. Signs.....	8
18. Decision making, review, impartiality and conflict of interest	9
19. Complaints	9
20. Compliance, monitoring and assurance	9

21. Equality, diversity and inclusion	10
22. Communications and accessible information.....	11
22.1. At sign-up and ongoing engagement.....	11
22.2. Accessible formats	11
22.3. Language and interpretation.....	11
22.4. Delegated authority and consent	11
22.5. Digital exclusion and offline access	11
23. Data protection	12

1. Purpose

As the largest provider of social housing in Luton, we recognise that estate management is an integral part of our landlord role through the provision of safe, secure, and well-maintained neighbourhoods.

Through this policy we aim to provide high quality services, create sustainable communities, and promote pride in our neighbourhoods, demonstrating our commitment to keeping neighbourhoods and communal areas clean and safe.

This policy sets out:

- our pro-active approach to the management of our estates and communal housing areas
- the commitment to ensuring the grounds and communal facilities we own and manage around the homes we manage are well maintained, and where this work may be issued to third party providers
- how we ensure the safety and security of the communal areas of housing we are responsible for
- what we expect of tenants in ensuring a safe, secure and well-maintained neighbourhood

2. Regulatory standards

The Regulator of Social Housing sets out its expectations of registered providers (RPs) through the regulatory standards and consumer code of practice. The tenancy standard sets out specific expectations for landlord in the operation of their services. The [Transparency, influence and accountability standard](#) sets out expectations around information, advice and opportunities for tenants to engage in more meaningful ways on decisions that affect them.

This policy meets the regulatory expectations to:

- treat all tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect
- deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants and, where relevant, prospective tenants
- work co-operatively with tenants, other landlords and relevant organisations to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of shared spaces

3. Responsibilities

3.1. Our responsibilities

- keep neighbourhood estate areas safe, well maintained and attractive places to live in, we will:

- keep communal and external areas clean and safe and in a good state of repair
- carry out regular and scheduled estate inspections and maintain a regular and visible presence on our estates
- carry out health and safety inspections in our over 55's communal areas and in our supported housing schemes, including fire alarm points, fire doors and flushing of low usage of water points
- ensure areas within our ownership/ management are maintained to an agreed standard within the specific contract
- work in partnership with key stakeholders and agencies to promote environmentally friendly practices that ensure our estates are free from antisocial acts that have a negative impact on the environment such as fly tipping
- provide cleaning services in the communal areas we are responsible for
- provide grounds maintenance services to communal grounds within our ownership
- carry out regular cleaning and grounds inspections to ensure quality and compliant services are being delivered
- remove bulk items of rubbish promptly
- carry out fire risk assessments in our blocks of flats to identify and address fire risks
- carry out emergency light testing each month on those blocks designated as a priority one
- carry out a programme of maintenance and checks of shared facilities such as lifts, water tanks, play areas to ensure they are safe and fit for purpose

3.2. Responsibilities of tenants

- keeping the home, garden and driveway maintained and in a good condition in line with their tenancy/lease agreement
- report repairs promptly
- keep all communal areas clean, safe, and free from obstruction
- make sure pets are kept under control and do not defecate in communal areas and are not used in a threatening manner
- to not engage in anti-social behaviour, nuisance or annoyance to neighbours reporting any concerns to tenancy officers
- to dispose of all rubbish and unwanted items responsibly by placing in the correct bin and storage area. This includes disposal of large or bulky items by arranging collection or by taking it to the household waste facility

4. Definitions

Emergency light testing: the process of checking emergency lighting systems to ensure they are functioning correctly and will operate in the event of a power failure.

Shared facilities: areas or equipment within a building or estate that are used by more than one household, such as lifts, water tanks, and play areas.

Tenancy/lease agreement: the legal contract between a tenant and landlord outlining the rights and responsibilities of each party regarding the occupation and maintenance of the property.

Communal areas: spaces within a building or estate that are accessible to all residents, including hallways, stairwells, gardens, and other shared spaces.

Antisocial behaviour: actions that cause nuisance, annoyance, or distress to others, including but not limited to noise disturbances, vandalism, or threatening conduct.

Bulky items: large household items such as furniture or appliances that cannot be disposed of in standard refuse bins and require special collection or delivery to a waste facility.

Estates team: the group of staff responsible for the maintenance and oversight of neighbourhoods, including regular inspections and addressing issues within the community.

5. Policy statement

5.1 Estates team

Our estates team will complete regular visits to our neighbourhoods as part of their work in the community so that we can ensure local neighbourhoods are being looked after and to also identify any problems that need to be addressed.

How often these visits take place will depend on the needs of the neighbourhood and be based on factors such as:

- reports of anti-social behaviour
- type and cost of services delivered
- levels of complaints and reported repairs
- size and condition of communal facilities, including any reports of damage and poor decorative quality
- poorly kept gardens
- types of properties

Our estates team will coordinate with other teams in the council to ensure visibility and accessibility in our neighbourhoods, building relationships with our tenants and ensuring estates issues are identified and dealt with swiftly.

We'll provide a range of services either directly or through contractors. The cost of these services will be recovered via local service charges or personal charges as appropriate. Services provided directly by our housing estates service include (but are not limited to):

- communal cleaning
- ad hoc window cleaning to some high-rise blocks
- security in high rises
- parking management
- health and safety compliance checks
- play area inspections
- waste management
- graffiti removal

Our sheltered housing team provide:

- scheme risk assessments

Our building and technical services team provide:

- key/access fob management

Our estates team will monitor all contractual work and deal with any issues of non-compliance or poor performance.

Contracts will be reviewed and re-tendered at least every 3 years. Tenants will be invited to be part of the process of re-tendering any contracts, from writing the specification through to selection of contractors.

6. Partnership working

Keeping our neighbourhood estates and communal housing areas safe, clean, and tidy requires joint working with our tenants, other council teams, elected members, other agencies or contractors. To do this we'll:

- ensure a range of opportunities for tenants to be involved in the management of their neighbourhood
- work together with our partners, including elected members, the police, highways, environmental services and tenant groups to make neighbourhoods a safer place to live in
- support local initiatives to improve neighbourhoods
- work with neighbourhood community groups to identify local priorities and improvements
- conduct regular inspections to communal areas and ensure that they are well maintained and comply with safety regulations
- maintain hard and soft landscaped areas owned by us to a high standard
- work closely with local police and other services to help keep our estates free from anti-social behaviour, harassment and hate crime
- conduct fire risk assessments in blocks of flats to identify and address fire risks, promptly removing obstructions in line with the fire safety policy

We expect tenants and leaseholders to act responsibly in their neighbourhoods and to adhere to the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement or lease. We will signpost to required support to resolve an issue or use enforcement measures as a last resort.

7. Communal areas

Tenants and leaseholders 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 tenancy and leasehold conditions.

This means ensuring that no items are left in the communal area, no rubbish or litter is deposited, there is no interference or wilful damage to any door entry system, security, or safety equipment and that there is no smoking in any internal communal area. Door entry systems must be kept shut at all times and entry must only be given to identified visitors.

We will investigate all instances of damage and vandalism and will work with partner agencies to identify those involved and take the appropriate enforcement action. Further information on this is in our antisocial behaviour policy.

We will ensure the good condition of flooring within internal communal areas, replace, and repair where necessary, and recover this cost through the service charge.

8. Fire safety/ Fire risk

To meet our responsibilities under the [Regulatory Reform Order \(fire\) \(2005\)](#) we'll ensure that every communal area is covered by a fire risk assessment, visiting each communal area every 2 weeks to ensure it is free of hazards and that we are complying with the fire risk assessment.

We know that obstructing access or ways of escaping in the event of a fire creates danger for residents of flats - because of this we operate a zero-tolerance approach to items left in a communal area. We will always ask tenants to remove any high-risk items immediately (e.g., mobility scooter, motorcycle, moped or any machinery having a petrol or diesel engine.) and will treat a failure to do so as a breach of tenancy. We reserve the right to remove items of high risk if tenants fail to do so.

Other items (scooters, prams, storage boxes, bikes, shoes, plants etc) will require removal within 7 days and will be removed and disposed of if they are still there after this time. Tenants and leaseholders will not be eligible for compensation for loss of items under this process. Repeated failure to meet responsibilities in this way will be viewed as a breach of tenancy.

We do not permit bonfires, BBQ's and fireworks in / on any communal area owned by us.

9. Grounds maintenance

The grounds maintenance specification and maps showing the hard and soft landscaped areas maintained by us will be made available to tenants and leaseholders on request. The service level will be site specific and may be varied following resident consultation.

10. Communal cleaning

All schemes with internal communal areas will have a cleaning specification clearly defining the standards and frequency of work; this will be available on communal noticeboards and our website and will be reviewed on a regular basis. This work will be carried out either by contractors or directly employed staff and we will manage the performance of cleaning contractors and staff through regular inspections and contract reviews.

11. Play areas

Play equipment provided by us will be regularly inspected and maintained, with any necessary repairs carried out promptly. Play areas will be clearly signed with our contact details.

12. Waste management – refuse, recycling, bin stores and fly tipping

We will work closely with colleagues in waste management to ensure that neighbourhoods have the appropriate facilities for disposing of rubbish and recycling.

Where we own and manage internal communal bin stores, we'll ensure that these are kept clean and tidy as part of the cleaning specification. External bin stores will be maintained under our service level agreement with street services.

Excessive build-up of waste or contamination of recycling will be removed by contractors and re-charged to the scheme or block. Where there are repeated issues with bin stores, we will engage with residents to identify perpetrators and/or look for solutions in partnership with our colleagues in environmental services.

Incidents of fly tipping in our communal spaces will be removed within five working days. The cost of removing fly tipping may be recharged to individuals where they can be identified, or to the scheme or block via a service charge. Large amounts of fly tipping will be investigated to try and identify the source so that action can be taken, such as tenancy breach remedies or requesting an investigation through environmental health.

13. Vandalism and graffiti

We have a zero-tolerance approach to vandalism and graffiti to properties owned by us. We want all tenants, residents and staff to report graffiti and vandalism if noticed. Where there is a health and safety risk, repair works are carried out within 24 hours. We aim to complete all other repairs within five working days.

All graffiti of a directly personal nature, containing discriminatory or offensive language and in breach of Anti-social behaviour policy will be removed within 24 hours of notification. We aim to remove all other graffiti within five days of notification.

All incidents of vandalism and graffiti are recorded. We will investigate and endeavour to identify the perpetrator, prosecuting in partnership with other agencies such as the police where evidence allows.

14. Vehicles and parking

We are unable to respond to specific requests for parking, but in recognition of the challenges for customers living with disabilities we will aim to allocate parking bays for customers who hold a blue badge where it is possible and reasonable.

A blue badge holder may apply for a parking place close to their home, subject to meeting certain criteria, which can only be used by the holder of a blue badge.

In each case, the parking place will be sited as near as possible to the relevant building, but we have to take the following into consideration:

- traffic flow
- the interests of the owners and occupiers of adjoining properties
- access to premises
- road safety
- width of road

To qualify for a disabled parking bay, you must first hold a valid blue badge and:

- demonstrate a genuine need for the bay requested, such as you find it difficult to park near your home for a major portion of the day

- not have access to private parking within or near the premises

We are not able to get involved in disputes regarding parking and charges made by private parking enforcement agencies. Complaints regarding unallocated parking will be excluded from the complaint's procedure, although we will offer mediation as a solution if there is a dispute between neighbours.

We will work with the [Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency \(DVLA\)](#) to identify owners of suspected abandoned vehicles and where this is on our land, arrange for the vehicle to be removed, stored, and disposed of (if the owner does not respond after giving the required notice). Where the owner is identified we may re-charge the costs for the removal, storage and disposal of the vehicle. We will take a similar approach to abandoned trailers, caravans, boats etc.

Parking issues that are on non- housing land or on the public highway will be reported by residents and staff to the police or DVLA so that they can take the appropriate action.

Where a parking space is allocated to a property regard must be given to safety, terms of the tenancy agreement, any planning restrictions should be honoured. We would not consent to customers using their driveways for accommodation purposes or to run any kind of vehicle maintenance company.

15. Electric charging points

The installation of electric vehicle charging points is entirely at our discretion. The organisation is under no obligation to provide electric vehicle charging points purely because tenants or leaseholders choose electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles. Tenants or leaseholders wishing to install an electric charging point in a communal car park or allocated parking space will first need to complete alterations request through our permissions process. We do not currently approve applications for EV charges at blocks of flats due to the inability to connect to the bill payer's supply.

Tenants and leaseholders who have disputes with the neighbours over parking are encouraged to speak to each other. Our approach to neighbour disputes over parking is addressed in the ASB policy.

16. Satellite dishes

All permission requests for satellite dishes must be made in writing to your tenancy officer. We'll generally permit customers living in houses to fix their own satellite dish to their home if it is installed safely in accordance with planning regulations/building control and without damaging or spoiling the condition or appearance of the property.

Permission may be refused where a property is not considered appropriate (e.g., flats where there is a communal ariel or restrictive covenant) or has undergone external refurbishment where we consider that a dish/additional aerial would damage the property. The method of construction of the home may also mean that permission is refused where the fitting of a satellite dish could damage the fabric of the building.

17. Signs

We do not provide signs such as "no ball games" or "residents only" as these are not in-keeping with the vibrant places we want our communities to enjoy. Nor are they enforceable. We believe that children should be allowed to enjoy any green areas where they live.

The only signs that we permit are those which either help direct someone, for example, block names and numbers or are there for a legitimate purpose, for example, to advise of a parking permit scheme or a fire exit which must be kept clear.

18. Decision making, review, impartiality and conflict of interest

Decisions about enforcement of estate issues covered in this policy will be made by employees of the council in accordance with this policy. However, our procedures will ensure all decisions are reviewed or verified by a designated senior officer.

To avoid a conflict of interest our constitution does not allow for these decisions to be overturned by elected members, committees or cabinet.

Where a tenant disagrees with an enforcement decision they can appeal this with the service manager. Any appeal decision will be made by a suitably qualified officer who has not been involved in the original decision to seek possession.

The appeal will be completed and the tenant informed of the outcome before the date for commencement of any enforcement action. In writing, we will advise of the reasons original decision is upheld or overturned.

19. Complaints

Tenants will be informed of their right to make a complaint within 12 months of becoming aware of an issue if they think we or any council employee/representative has:

- done something wrong
- behaved unfairly or not politely
- not carried out a service to an agreed standard; or
- not responded to a request for a service within our stated timescale

Complaints should relate to conduct or timescales, rather than the substance of any decision.

We have a complaints process that is compliant with the [Housing Ombudsman Code of Practice](#) for complaints, full details can be found on our website [Comments, compliments and complaints](#)

Our complaint process allows for further escalation to the Local Government and / or the Housing Ombudsman service if the tenant remains unhappy with the outcome of a stage 2 complaint.

20. Compliance, monitoring and assurance

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by periodic reviews of case records by the relevant team manager. We will provide assurance on the proper implementation of this policy through regular self-assessment, internal audit, performance management, quality assurance of compliance with procedures and our risk monitoring work.

We'll keep this policy under review and may amend or replace it from time to time, for example due to legislative or regulatory changes, but will not change the substantive rules in it more than once in every 5 years (unless required to do so by law).

Prior to finalising and adopting this policy, we consulted with tenants as to its contents via the tenant partnership board.

The policy was approved through the democratic process and adopted by the council at the meeting of the executive 6 October 2025.

21. Equality, diversity and inclusion

We're committed to promoting equality, eliminating discrimination, and advancing opportunity for all tenants, in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#) and our public sector equality duty (PSED).

We'll apply this policy fairly and consistently, ensuring no tenant is disadvantaged, directly or indirectly on the basis of any protected characteristic, including:

- age
- disability
- sex
- gender reassignment
- sexual orientation
- race (including ethnicity, colour, and nationality)
- religion or belief
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage and civil partnership

We'll apply this policy in a way that is fair and consistent to all tenants with all exceptional decisions recorded on the register of exceptional decisions.

This policy has been subject to an equalities impact assessment which determined this policy does not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion/faith, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or any other grounds which are set out in our equality and diversity policy or are a legally protected characteristic.

We'll ensure this policy, and any supporting procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, directly or indirectly through the EIA process.

We'll advise tenants that equalities information will be collected to enable a better understanding of peoples' housing needs and to ensure that no one is discriminated against as a result of the way this policy has been framed, or during the administration of it. Tenants will be informed as to how such data will be used, handled, and stored.

We also recognise the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage, digital exclusion, and intersecting inequalities, and commit to taking a proportionate, trauma-informed approach wherever needed.

To ensure compliance and transparency:

- this policy has been subject to a full equality impact assessment (EIA)
- all exceptions to standard practice will be recorded on the register of exceptional decisions, with a clear rationale
- we'll monitor how this policy is applied and analyse outcomes to ensure no group is unfairly impacted in practice

- equalities data will be collected sensitively and used to tailor services, support monitoring, and improve outcomes

Staff will receive appropriate training to apply this policy in a non-discriminatory, inclusive, and culturally competent way. We will regularly review and update our approach to reflect tenant feedback, changes in legislation, and emerging best practice in housing equality.

22. Communications and accessible information

We are committed to ensuring all tenants can access, understand, and engage with housing services regardless of their language, literacy level, disability, or communication preferences.

22.1. At sign-up and ongoing engagement

All tenants are asked about communication preferences and access needs when they first sign up to a tenancy and at key points during their tenancy lifecycle. These needs are reviewed regularly and at any point the tenant wishes to update them.

22.2. Accessible formats

Where standard communication would place a tenant at a disadvantage, we'll provide information in alternative formats, including but not limited to:

- easy read
- large print
- audio
- braille
- British sign language (BSL) interpreter
- video relay services
- subtitled or translated video content

22.3. Language and interpretation

We will offer translation or interpretation services for tenants whose first language is not English, including telephone-based and in-person interpreters where required. Translated summaries of key documents will be available in the most commonly spoken community languages in Luton.

22.4. Delegated authority and consent

Tenants may nominate a trusted person (with delegated authority) to receive correspondence or manage tenancy communications. We will confirm the nominated person's consent to receive and manage information, in line with data protection and safeguarding guidelines.

22.5. Digital exclusion and offline access

While many services are available online, we acknowledge that not all tenants have reliable internet access or digital confidence. All policies and procedures will be available in non-digital formats, and assistance will be provided to those needing help to complete digital tasks.

- **multiple channels:** information and correspondence may be provided via letter, phone, email, secure messaging, or in person, depending on tenant preference and service availability.

- **feedback and continuous improvement:** tenants are encouraged to provide feedback on the accessibility of our communications, and we regularly review our approach in line with best practice and tenant input.

23. Data protection

We will hold all information about tenants in a secure manner in line with data protection legislation applicable to us.

We are subject to the information disclosure requirements of the [Data Protection Act 2018](#). The administration of this policy will ensure compliance with this legislation. For further information please reference our [Data Protection policy](#).

Tenants will be advised of their right to make a complaint to the office of the information commissioner if they believe we has failed to fulfil its obligations and responsibilities as set out in the [Data Protection Act 1998](#).