



City of London Corporation
Department of Community & Children's Services
Housing Service

Estate Management Policy

Approved by:	<i>Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee</i>
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1. Introduction

The City of London Corporation is committed to providing quality estate services and ensuring that our estates are cleaned and maintained to a high standard.

Estate management primarily concerns communal or shared areas of estates and private spaces such as balconies, gardens and frontages which contribute visually to the estate. We are not responsible for areas on or near our estates which are privately or externally owned or managed.

Residents are at the heart of our service delivery and are given the opportunity to be involved in the upkeep of their estate, to agree standards, monitor performance against these standards and hold the City of London to account.

2. Aims of this Policy

- To ensure that residents enjoy a safe, clean and tidy environment
- To involve residents in the management and upkeep of their estate
- To monitor and publish performance against clear service standards
- To carry out regular inspections of all estates
- To publicise estate inspections and encourage resident involvement

3. Scope

The scope of the estate services function consists of:

- Cleaning communal areas (including window cleaning)
- Maintaining communal areas
- Grounds maintenance (grass, trees, shrubs and flowerbeds)
- **Raising communal repairs**
- **Delivering minor improvement works**
- Managing parking restrictions
- Removing abandoned vehicles
- Removing drug litter
- Removing graffiti
- Ensuring communal areas are safe
- Conducting estate inspections
- Monitoring and reporting on performance against standards

This policy applies to housing estates managed by the City's Housing Service as part of the Housing Revenue Account, including any areas adjacent to commercial premises. It also applies to the City of London and Gresham Almshouses, which we manage on behalf of the respective trusts. "Commercial tenant" applies to all commercial users, including lessees, tenants and licensees.

4. Estate Services

4.1 Cleaning Standards

Pictorial cleaning standards will be introduced for use on our estates. These will consist of four photographs per task, each of which indicates a standard. **These are graded A (excellent) to E (unacceptable) and carry a score of 5 (A standard) down to 0 (unacceptable).** This will then inform the final estate score.

The cleaning standards also provide staff and residents with the tasks and areas, setting out the scope of the cleaning service.

Where we provide a cleaning service we expect that residents and commercial tenants will assist us to maintain cleanliness on estates, by minimising mess and disposing of rubbish and litter appropriately.

4.2 Estate Inspections

The standard of cleaning will be assessed through consistent and regular inspections, appraising the quality of all communal areas and services. We will manage a planned programme of inspections, with the frequency of each inspection based on the size of the estate, services provided, repair history, current issues, and resident involvement and satisfaction. Inspections may therefore vary in frequency depending on the location.

All caretaking and cleaning issues identified through estate inspections will be recorded and updated prior to the next inspection. The results of our estate inspections will be published, along with a total score for the estate against the published standards.

Issues identified outside of estate inspections, from residents, estate officers or other staff, will be recorded and dealt with by estate staff.

Residents can join estate staff on Walkabouts, a walk around the estate where any areas of concern can be pointed out and discussed. Upcoming walkabouts will be advertised on our website, estate/office notice boards and newsletters. We will encourage residents to attend and participate in these, inspecting their estate.

4.3 Resident engagement

We will involve and engage residents in decision-making around estate management where appropriate. Resident involvement ensures we understand our residents' expectations, so we deliver the service according to their needs and priorities. We will work with residents to help shape how services are provided and to what standard. We will also work with residents to ensure they are able to hold us to account by regularly sharing with them our estate services standards and how we are performing against these.

4.4 Estate Standards - Communications

We will publish information on our performance on estate notice boards. Specifically, they will:

- set out future inspection dates
- update actions following inspections
- publicise the results of inspections
- record the latest cleaning activity
- identify fire and safety issues
- list staff or team contacts
- promote community events

Performance data relating to estate inspections will also be published online.

4.5 Disposal of Refuse and Fly-Tipping

Residents and commercial tenants are responsible for ensuring that their refuse and recycling is disposed of safely, tidily and as directed by estate staff. Refuse collection is the responsibility of the local authority. We will work with the local authority to ensure that appropriate facilities and arrangements are available for the disposal, storage and collection of refuse.

Dumping unwanted bulk items or rubbish anywhere other than designated locations is fly-tipping, as is use of these facilities by non-residents. We will take prompt action to remove hazardous material.

Fly-tipping will be dealt with in accordance with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

4.6 Signage

We will ensure that signage on our estates is clear, necessary, appropriate and well maintained. We will ensure that health and safety and other mandatory signage is present where required, such as 'no smoking' signs in internal communal areas.

We will avoid unnecessary signage and will remove outdated and obsolete signage.

4.7 Parking

Many of our estates feature parking for residents and visitors. We have controlled parking schemes in operation on our estates to deter unauthorised vehicles.

Please refer to the *Estate Parking & Storage Sheds Policy* for more details.

4.8 Abandoned or Unsafe Vehicles

We will deal promptly with any abandoned vehicles on our estates and will act to secure their removal. If the owner can be identified, we will charge any costs back to them.

Vehicles which are not abandoned but which are in an unsafe or unroadworthy condition will be dealt with in accordance with our *Estate Parking & Storage Sheds Policy*.

4.8 Lighting

We will maintain the lighting we are responsible for on our estates and will replace bulbs and fixtures as necessary. Lighting will be inspected regularly as part of the standard estate inspection.

5. Health and Safety

We will ensure that cleaning materials are environmentally friendly, safe and non-corrosive. We will take appropriate precautions with the control of substances hazardous to health and will provide comprehensive training to staff who are responsible for using them.

Staff will adhere to the City of London's Corporate *Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy*, as well as other relevant policies and local procedures relating to safe working practices.

6. Communal Areas

6.1 Use of shared or common areas

Communal areas are those parts of the estate not included in tenancies, leases or licences and for which we are responsible as a landlord. This includes:

- Staircases and stairwells
- Communal landings, walkways and balconies
- Shared paths, gardens and yards
- Roadways and parking areas
- Playgrounds and play equipment

There is no general right for residents or commercial users to store, display, place or keep anything in communal areas. This may only be done with our permission. We have a duty to actively manage communal areas and remove any items posing a hazard, causing an obstruction, or any item left there without our permission.

We will remove items without notice if they pose a risk or cause an obstruction. In other cases, we will give reasonable notice for the item to be removed.

Items commonly kept outside, such as bikes, push-chairs or mobility equipment, must be kept in areas designated or approved for this purpose, or in the resident's home or a storage facility.

Any items removed from communal areas will be dealt with in accordance with our *Disposal of Personal Property Policy*.

6.2 Managed Use Policy

We operate a 'managed use' policy for most communal areas under our management. This means that residents may keep some items in communal areas provided they have permission from us and the items meet the conditions outlined in our *Fire Safety Protocol (Communal Areas in Residential Buildings)*.

We may consider adopting a 'sterile' policy for some communal areas. This may be implemented where the 'managed use' policy cannot be maintained within the requirements of the *Fire Safety Protocol* (for instance due to the nature of the building's layout), or where residents or commercial users have persisted in breaching the *Fire Safety Protocol*, the terms of their tenancies or leases, or any other estate management policy relating to safe use of communal areas. Reasonable notice will be given of any change in local policy.

Differences in building layouts and dimensions may result in different rules being enforced between locations.

6.3 Activities in Communal Areas

Communal spaces, such as gardens, are intended for the peaceful enjoyment of all residents. Some activities in these spaces are prohibited or subject to permission from the estate office:

- **Fireworks** may not be used anywhere on our estates
- **Barbecues** may not be used anywhere on our estates unless prior permission is granted by the relevant estate office. Permission will generally only be given for barbecues held in a communal outside space as part of an estate event and conditions will be attached to the permission

7. Items Left in Communal or Public Areas

Our staff, agents or contractors may move items in communal areas as part of their routine cleaning and maintenance duties, or to allow non-routine cleaning or works to take place.

Any items of personal property left in communal areas on City of London estates are left entirely at the depositor's risk. We accept no liability for any damage, theft or other interference with any item left on our estates.

8. Cold Weather Actions

We will have a procedure in place for responding to snow and ice on our estates. We will take reasonable care to ensure that our communal areas are safe during ice or snow.

Where possible, we will grit communal pathways when ice is expected, or apparent on inspection.

We will clear snow from priority areas first (thoroughfares and pedestrian routes to properties occupied by vulnerable residents). Due to resource limitations, we cannot guarantee that all pathways will be cleared of snow.

If ice or snow occurs outside normal working hours, we will begin clearance or treatment as soon as we can on the next working day.

9. Policy Exceptions

In exceptional circumstances, we may consider a variation to this policy. This will depend on the individual circumstances of the case. The decision and its reasoning can be provided in writing to the parties on request.

10. Monitoring and Performance

We will monitor our use of this Policy and the way in which it is implemented, ensuring that any relevant information is reported in a timely way to appropriate bodies. We will do this through:

- Estate inspections. These will be graded, recorded and monitored as part of the City of London's key performance indicators
- Complaints, compliments and comments
- Satisfaction surveys

This information will be used by staff and tenants and the outcomes used to improve the service.

11. Training

We will provide all staff responsible for implementing this policy with comprehensive training as required.

12. Equality and Diversity

This Policy has been subject to a full Equalities Analysis and will be implemented in accordance with our responsibilities and duties under relevant legislation, including the Equalities Act 2010. We may consider making an exception in accordance with section 9 to ensure that those with a protected characteristic are not discriminated against.

13. Accessibility

We will ensure that residents' needs are considered when implementing this Policy to ensure that they are treated fairly. We will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that residents with distinct communication needs are not unreasonably and disproportionately affected. This could involve providing communications in alternative languages or formats or providing interpretation or transcription as appropriate.

14. Data Protection and Information Exchange

We will comply with our obligations under relevant data protection legislation and regulations. We will process and store personal information securely.

There are some circumstances in which we are required by law to disclose information given to us.

13. Policy Review

We will review this Policy at least every three years, or following relevant changes to legislation, regulation or policy.

14. Legislation & Regulation

This Policy is informed by the following regulation and statute:

Legislation

- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Occupiers' Liability Act 1957

Regulation

Homes & Communities Agency Standards:

- Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard
- Value for Money Standard


15. Related documents

This Policy is implemented by the following procedures:

- Estate Services Procedure

This Policy is supported by the following policies:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Disposal of Personal Property Policy
- Estate Parking & Storage Sheds Policy
- Fire Safety Protocol (Communal Areas in Residential Buildings)

<p>Department of Community & Children’s Services</p> <p>Housing Service</p>	
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