

**BURY COUNCILS
HOUSING SERVICES
NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT
POLICY**

Author: Kimberley Partridge

Date Approved	
Review Date	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) [Neighbourhood and Community Standard](#) requires all registered providers to publish a policy setting out how, in consultation with their customers, they will maintain and improve the neighbourhoods associated with their homes. The policy must also set out how they will work in partnership with other organisations to do this and what role they will play in managing the neighbourhood.

This policy sets out our approach to neighbourhood management on the Council's housing estates, recognising the clear relationship between the quality of the local environment and people's life chances. It also sets out the responsibilities of our customers, along with details on how we will work collaboratively with partners to raise standards in our neighbourhoods and improve outcomes for our customers. This includes how we will tackle poverty, prevent anti-social behaviour and support customers who are at risk of losing their home.

This policy complements Bury's "Let's Do It" strategy and applies to all officers and teams in the council involved in the management of communal areas and the provision of services on our estates. Where we are not responsible for a particular neighbourhood issue, we will report our concerns to the relevant organisation and ask them to take action. We will also work with other landlords / managing agents to inform and improve services in the neighbourhood.

We have used customer feedback and insights to inform our approach. This ensures we meet their needs and focus resources where they are most needed. Where additional support or interventions are required, we will undertake more regular monitoring and address any adverse impacts we find. We will also provide additional support to customers who are struggling to maintain their tenancy and those living in our sheltered housing and extra care schemes so they can continue to live independently for as long as possible.

Further details on our approach can be found in our local offers which set out the services our customers can expect to receive from us.

The effectiveness of our approach will be monitored through the RSH's recently launched Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), other local performance measures and data held by the Council and partners. This information will also help us develop multi-agency responses to tackle inequalities and improve outcomes for customers in specific neighbourhoods through Bury's People and Community Plans.

2. AIMS OF THE POLICY

This policy sets out how we will:

- Work collaboratively with partners and customers to keep the Council housing estates and communal areas clean, safe, well maintained and attractive places to live.
- Respond to reports of problems and where necessary enforce the terms of the tenancy agreement.

- Drive out duplication, streamline processes and improve value for money.
- Ensure customers feel empowered and able to make a positive contribution in their neighbourhood.
- Listen to our customers, act on their concerns and ensure the services we provide are relevant, responsive, inclusive and sensitive to their needs.
- Ensure that equalities and tackling inequality is a part of everything we do.

3. REGULATORY STANDARDS

This policy will be operated and published in compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community Standard, which requires registered providers of social housing in consultation with their customers, to publish a policy for maintaining, managing, and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes.

We will report our performance against the TSMs on our website and through the Annual Report to customers.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all our customers, staff and contractors.

For the purposes of this policy, the term customer refers to customers living in a Council owned property and leaseholders.

5. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Our relationship with our customers is a two-way partnership and one that is based on trust and accountability.

Our responsibilities as a landlord include:

- Providing quality services that keep communal and external areas in a good state of repair, clean, safe, and free from hazards.
- Ensuring that there are no health and safety risks in our neighbourhoods.
- Providing customers with a range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the delivery of neighbourhood management services and monitoring how they are being delivered.
- Listening and acting on concerns raised by customers about their neighbourhood and having a clear, simple, and accessible approach to complaints to ensure they are resolved promptly.
- Work in partnership with other interested agencies to deal effectively with ASB and other neighbourhood issues.

Our customer responsibilities include:

- Looking after their home and garden.
- Adhering to the terms of their tenancy or leaseholder agreement.
- Reporting repairs we are responsible for promptly.
- Keeping communal areas clean, tidy, safe, and free from obstruction.
- Being a good neighbour, do not engage in ASB and report concerns to us.

Full details on roles and responsibilities are set out in the tenancy agreement and lease agreement.

6. OUR OFFER

6.1 Supporting our customers

We provide a range of services designed to help customers maintain their tenancies. These services are available to all our customers regardless of the status of their tenancy.

This includes offering:

- Debt and money advice services in partnership with Citizens' Advice Bureau, Bury,
- Help, advice and information to customers who suffer anti-social behaviour.
- Help with claiming welfare benefits, accessing grants and hardship funds.
- Help with accessing employment and training support.
- Energy efficiency advice and information.
- Furnished tenancy packages.
- Advice and support with aids and adaptations.
- Help to develop digital skills and access equipment.
- Support and funding for customers and community groups.

Our Customers and Communities Team provides specific, tailored support for customers who need additional support to maintain their tenancy or where there is a risk of tenancy breakdown or homelessness.

- Settling into their new home and integrating into their community.
- Budgeting, finances and applying for benefits.
- Setting up utilities and sorting out other household issues.
- Booking and attending appointments.
- Completing forms and dealing with correspondence.
- Building links in their community and preventing social isolation.
- Improving health and wellbeing.
- Assessing specialist services they may need.

The team offer practical support, guidance and advice on tenancy sustainment matters. A Housing Officer will work alongside new and existing customers whose tenancies are deemed at risk and will draw up a support plan to help them to live independently, with referrals made to partner agencies to ensure services are wrapped around the customer.

The team offer customers support with:

- Settling into their new home and integrating into their community.
- Budgeting, finances and applying for benefits.
- Setting up utilities and sorting out other household issues.
- Booking and attending appointments.
- Completing forms and dealing with correspondence.
- Building links in their community and preventing social isolation.
- Improving health and wellbeing.
- Assessing specialist services they may need.

6.2 Neighbourhood plans

Our neighbourhood teams are aligned to Bury's five neighbourhoods and play an active role in the Public Sector Leadership Teams.

We proactively collect data and report on a range of indicators in order to analyse the performance of our neighbourhoods. This includes information about the condition of the stock, customer demographics and satisfaction levels. This information helps inform our investment plans and ensure resources are focused where they are most needed.

We will co-produce neighbourhood plans in partnership with our customers and ensure they are aligned with Bury's wider ambitions as set out in the LETs strategy and through the People and Community Plans. Every neighbourhood plan will incorporate the profile of our assets and customer demographics, the activities planned across the neighbourhood for the coming 12 months and local priorities identified. Progress will be monitored and regular updates provided to our customers and partners through the Public Sector Leadership Teams.

6.3 Neighbourhood Improvements

We will undertake improvements to communal areas as part of our planned investment programme. We will do this in consultation with our customers and after taking into account any health and safety or other issues that affect the neighbourhood. Any investment we plan to make will be built into our neighbourhood plans.

6.4 Estate inspections

Our staff are regularly out and about in our neighbourhoods and are responsible for ensuring they are kept clean and safe. They do this in partnership with customers and other organisations who are expected to take an 'eyes wide open' approach to any issues identified.

All of our neighbourhoods are formally inspected at least once a year and will be graded against our estate standards. We will do more frequent walkabouts where serious or persistent issues are identified which compromise the safety of our customers or the appearance of the estate.

Customers, Ward Councillors and partner agencies are welcome to attend these estate inspections.

We will advertise our programme of estate inspections on our website, social media channels and through local community groups.

Our staff will seek to resolve any issues that are identified during an inspection or whilst carrying out their day-to-day duties. This includes reporting concerns that are not our responsibility to the relevant Council department or other partners, including issues with:

- Bins and waste management
- Road conditions
- Street lighting
- Pest control
- Criminal activity

We will give a copy of the action plan that is developed to customers, Ward Councillors and partners who attend the estate inspection. We will also post a copy on our website.

Where a multi-agency response is required, we will report matters through to the relevant Public Sector Leadership Team so that a joined-up response can be taken.

6.5 Communal areas cleaning

We will clean the communal areas of blocks of flats we manage every 6 weeks. Details on our cleaning schedule can be found in the communal entrance of each scheme. We will inspect the block at the same time as we do the cleaning to ensure it is safe, well maintained and free of any obstacles. Any repairs that are identified will be reported.

Communal areas in sheltered housing and extra care schemes will be cleaned daily. We provide a window cleaning service for the communal windows in some buildings which is paid for through customers' service charges.

6.6 Anti-social behaviour

We expect our customers to adhere to the conditions of their agreement, to look after your home and be a good neighbour. We also expect our customers to resolve general disputes they may have with their neighbours themselves. If it is not safe to do so or there is a risk that the situation could escalate, it should be reported to us.

We will not tolerate Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and acknowledge the significant impact it can have on neighbourhoods and individuals. We will prevent and tackle ASB

at an early stage and take a victim focused and risk of harm approach, as set out in our ASB policy. This includes providing an independent mediation service, funding diversionary activities and using our powers where necessary.

We will hold customers responsible for ASB caused by members of their household, pets, and their visitors.

We will ensure customers are made aware of their responsibilities and rights in relation to ASB when they sign their tenancy agreement.

We will work with partner agencies such as the Police, other Council departments and partners to investigate, manage and resolve cases of ASB.

6.7 Maintenance of open planned areas

Open planned areas are managed by the Council's Grounds Maintenance Team who are responsible for maintaining grassed communal areas, flower beds and trees.

Trees on land owned by us are inspected and pruned as part of the Council's tree pruning programme. Customers should report any concerns they have about trees on communal land or in gardens to us. Trees will only be removed if they are dead, diseased or dying and represent a health and safety hazard.

We will monitor the grounds maintenance contract and meet with the Grounds Maintenance four times a year to review standards and review customer satisfaction and complaints.

Our caretaking team is responsible for litter picking, weed spraying and removing dropped leaves on footpaths and communal land which is managed by Housing Services.

6.8 Customers' gardens

It is a tenant's responsibility to keep their garden clean and well maintained. They must also ensure their garden does not endanger the health and safety of others or cause damage to any property.

Overgrown and untidy gardens can have a detrimental impact on our neighbourhoods and can often indicate that there are issues with property condition or that our customers may need some additional support in their tenancy.

We will act promptly once a garden condition issue is identified, offer support and take appropriate tenancy action if required. All avenues for resolving tenancy breaches will be utilised including the powers of other agencies, recharging customers for works not carried out and legal remedies.

We will help customers access support or seek help from their local community. Tenancy enforcement will only be used as a last resort.

Gardens in empty properties we own will be brought up to the defined clean and safe standard before being let.

6.9 Refuse and Recycling

Customers are responsible for ensuring their household rubbish is disposed of appropriately, including recyclable items. They must also ensure bins are put for collection on the correct date and making arrangements for the disposal of large items such as household furniture themselves.

We will notify customers of their responsibility at the start of their tenancy and periodically through awareness campaigns, community events and at meetings.

We will work in partnership with the Council's Waste Management Team to promote recycling opportunities and ensure communal blocks in our neighbourhoods have the appropriate facilities for disposing of rubbish and recycling.

Where new refuse and recycling facilities are required or existing facilities need upgrading, we will consider these as part of planned investment programme.

Where a customer is unable take out their bin, we will work with the Council's Waste Management team to arrange an assisted bin collection.

We rely on our customers and other residents to provide us with information about people who dump rubbish on land we manage. Where appropriate, we will investigate and take action against those responsible where possible.

Our Caretaking team is responsible for addressing litter and fly tipping on communal land we manage.

6.10 Play areas

We will ensure play equipment we own is safe to use, properly inspected and fit for purpose. All play areas and equipment are subject to an independent annual audit by a RoSPA accredited inspector.

6.11 Vehicles and Parking

Abandoned vehicles and inconsiderate parking can impact on the appearance of a neighbourhood, create health and safety issues and encourage ASB.

We will work with residents and partner agencies such as the Police to reduce irresponsible parking, parking related disputes and resolve access problems for emergency and service vehicles. We will also work with the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to identify owners of suspected abandoned vehicles and arrange for the vehicle to be removed, stored and disposed of if the owner does not respond after being given the required notice. Where the owner is identified, we may re-charge the costs for the removal, storage and disposal of the vehicle or take legal action.

6.12 Graffiti

Graffiti negatively impacts the appearance of a neighbourhood. Where the graffiti is offensive, we will arrange to either remove or paint over within one working day of been notified and all other graffiti within seven working days.

6.13 Fencing

We will deal with request for new or replacement fencing in line with our fencing guidelines.

7. REPORTING, MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or in line with business needs or any regulatory changes.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Document owner Kimberley Partridge		Head of Housing and Neighbourhoods
Senior Leadership Team		Date November 2023
Tenant Voice		Date December 2023
Housing Advisory Board meeting – Chair of Board		Date N/A Board was not functioning at this time.
Review frequency		This policy will be reviewed every three years unless there are changes to legislation, regulation, best practice, or a business need
File path: High level documents e.g. Policies and Strategies need to be added to Natural HR under company documents.		
Status: [Live]		