



North Devon Homes

Upkeep of Common Parts and Communal Areas Policy

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The Policy

1. Policy

This policy sets our approach to managing our open spaces, garage areas and other ancillary areas of estate within our property portfolio.

2. Purpose

We aim to provide an effective service that balances customer expectation with the cost of delivering these services.

The maintenance schedules are designed to ensure all reasonable steps for the safe usage of these areas by customers, contractors; members of staff and the general public.

3. Scope

The policy covers all communal open space, garage areas; shared hallways and corridors with buildings as well as any other ancillary areas of estate owned by North Devon Homes. Specific servicing details are covered in the Cyclical Maintenance policy.

4 Principles

The following principles will apply to this policy:

- It will be open, fair and transparent
- It will be informed by the views of the customers
- It will be realistic, achievable and provide value for money

5 Review

We will review this policy, procedures and every three years or following any relevant change to government policy, regulation or legislation.

This will ensure that it continues to be relevant and meeting reasonable customer expectation.

6 Application

Responsibility for ensuring that this policy is communicated and implemented is with the Head of Neighbourhoods

Our policy statements are set out below:

Policy Statement	Further Detail
We will maintain all communal grassed areas, hedges and shrub beds within our ownership.	1
We will maintain all play areas owned by North Devon Homes	2
We will carry out cleaning of all internal communal areas within blocks of flats and cleaning of communal lounges and public areas within sheltered sites. Cleaning of external areas where necessary	3
We will remove graffiti on estates	5
We will carry out health and safety inspections of footpaths; steps and internal communal areas	6
We will remove fly tipped items on estates and communal land	7
We will report abandoned vehicles	8
We aim to apply this policy consistently across our stock and to ensure that all of our customers receive the level of services to which they are entitled.	9

Summary of service standards to be delivered

1 Grounds Maintenance

Policy Area:

We will maintain all communal grassed areas, hedges and shrub beds within our ownership.

Scope

This will apply to all communal areas as identified on our ownership plans.

Application

Grounds maintenance is delivered by a contractor under a partnership contract with North Devon Council and Torridge District Council. The arrangements for North Devon Homes are as follows:

- All grassed areas are cut 12 times a year
- All shrub beds will be maintained 4 times a year, including mulching during January or February
- All hedges will be cut twice a year, once during January / February and once during September
- Identified paved areas will be sprayed with herbicide as and when necessary to prevent weed growth.

We will monitor completion of these works using the contractors website. Their operatives are required to confirm each time they have completed the respective activity at each site.

Where issues are identified the contractor will highlight them by exception.

The contractor will also operate a “don't walk by” procedure, where any particular hazard or issue identified on NDH ground, whilst undertaking a contract activity, will be reported to us.

2 Play areas

Policy Area:

We will maintain all play areas owned by North Devon Homes

Scope

There are a number of play areas throughout the district within our neighbourhoods. These are listed below:

- Gorwell, Barnstaple
- Forches, Barnstaple
- Lethaby Road, Barnstaple
- Bakery Way, Landkey
- Oakford Villas, North Molton
- Churchill Crescent, South Molton
- Hart Manor, Wrafton

Application

Play areas are inspected and litter picked on either a daily or three-times per week basis, dependent on usage to ensure the areas are safe and the equipment is in working order.

Any play equipment or safety surfacing found, during the inspections, to be defective will either be disabled; removed or the area sealed off. Appropriate remedial work or replacement will then be undertaken.

More in-depth inspection and maintenance of the play equipment is undertaken on a monthly and quarterly maintenance frequency to ensure it is operating satisfactorily and identify any specific equipment showing signs of wear or deterioration.

We also receive an annual inspection for each play area from both our contractor and our insurers. These will be monitored and reviewed by the Head of Housing

We will monitor completion of these works using the contractors' website. Their operatives are required to confirm each time they have completed the respective activity at each site.

Where issues are identified the contractor will highlight them by exception.

3 Communal Cleaning

Policy Area:

We will carry out cleaning of all internal communal areas within blocks of flats and cleaning of communal lounges and public areas within sheltered sites.
Cleaning of external areas were necessary

Scope

Communal cleaning is carried out by a contractor on behalf of our North Devon Homes and covers communal stairways or hallway/communal lounge and public areas within the company's ownership.

Application

Specifications for different sites vary dependent upon levels of usage but is recorded on a cleaning schedule.

The majority of shared hallways and stairways are cleaned either once or twice per week. Areas where the public have access are cleaned daily, between Monday & Friday to ensure an appropriate level of cleanliness is maintained.

The contract is monitored both by the contractor & NDH, with monthly inspection reports being provided to the Neighbourhoods team. These reports cover compliance against the cleaning schedule along with reports of any complaints or issues arising during this period.

Annual inspections are independently carried out by a Customer Inspectors and the results are reported back to the Customer groups.

4 Removal of graffiti

Policy Area:

We will remove graffiti on estates

Scope

This relates to the removal of graffiti on any building or structure owned by NDH.

Application

We will remove offensive graffiti within 3 working day of being reported and all other graffiti within 10 working days.

5 Health & Safety Inspections

Policy Area:

We will carry out health and safety inspections of footpaths; steps and internal communal areas

Scope

We will carry out regular health and safety inspections of footpaths; steps and internal communal areas owned by North Devon Homes to ensure that the areas are in reasonable condition.

Application

The internal communal areas within both older persons and general needs accommodation will be inspected at least once a month to ensure they are free from obstruction and any hazards are removed if necessary.

Estate footpath; steps and any external lighting on older persons schemes will be inspected every 3 months to ensure they are in reasonable condition.

On family estates footpaths steps and any external lighting will be inspected annually to ensure they are in reasonable condition.

Any issues identified are passed to the relevant team to action.

6 Fly tipping

Policy Area:

We will remove fly tipped items on estates and communal land

Scope

This relates to any items dumped or fly tipped on land belonging to NDH.

Application

Any items fly tipped on land belonging to NDH will be removed by the company and disposed of in a proper manner. Staff have been provided with manual handling training and issued with appropriate protective equipment.

The removal of such items ensures our communal areas remain in a clean and tidy condition and discourages further dumping of rubbish.

If the person(s) responsible can be identified we will take all reasonable steps to do so and seek to recover the removal and disposal cost from them.

7 Abandoned vehicles

Policy Area:

We will report abandoned vehicles

Scope

This relates to any reports of abandoned vehicles is located under the company's ownership.

Application

Upon receiving a report of a possibility abandoned vehicle we will liaise with North Devon Council to see if the last known owner can be identified.

If an owner is identified then the Council will try to make contact with them to establish their intentions with the vehicle.

Where no owner is identified NDH will serve a Torts Notice on the vehicle, and after the expiry of the notice, arrange for the vehicles removal and disposal if necessary.

8 Equality Impact Assessment form

8.1 Who has been consulted in developing the Policy?

Date	Consultation methodology	Challenge/impact/result

8.2 Identify potential impact on each of the diversity "groups"

Strand	No impact	Negative impact	Positive impact	Comments/evidence
Race	√			
Disability	√			
Gender	√			
Gender Reassignment	√			
Sexual orientation	√			
Religion or belief	√			
Age	√			
Rural issues	√			
Social Inclusion issues	√			
Pregnancy and maternity	√			
Marriage and civil partnership	√			

Review date	February 2016
Next review date	February 2019
Further reading and related policies relevant to this report:	
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