



North Devon Homes

Upkeep of Common Parts and Communal Areas Policy

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1. Purpose

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

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.

2. 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

3. 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.

4. Responsibilities

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

5. 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.

6. Policy Statement

6.1 Grounds Maintenance

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 our in house Estate Services team.

The minimum standards are as follows:

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

The Estates Manager will monitor completion of these works.

Team NDH Rangers are required to confirm each time they have completed the respective activity at each site.

Where issues are identified the Estates Manager will highlight them by exception.

The Estates Team will also operate a “don’t walk by” procedure, where any particular hazard or issue identified on NDH ground, whilst undertaking a contract activity.

2 Play areas

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 three-times per week, 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 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 our insurers. These will be monitored and reviewed by the Head of Housing. The Estates Manager will monitor completion of these works.

Where issues are identified the Estates Manager will highlight them by exception.

3 Communal Cleaning

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 hallways / communal lounges and public areas within the company's ownership.

Application

Specifications for different sites vary dependent upon levels of usage but are 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 and Friday to ensure an appropriate level of cleanliness is maintained.

The contract is monitored both by the contractor and 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 the period.

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

4 Removal of graffiti

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 days of being reported and all other graffiti within 10 working days.

5 Health & Safety Inspections

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.

All inspections will be recorded and filed.

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

6 Fly tipping

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

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.

7. Consultation

Who has been consulted in developing the Policy?

| Date | Consultation methodology | Challenge / impact / result |
|------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |

8. Equality Impact Assessment

8.1 Identify potential impact on each of the diversity “groups”

| Strand | No impact | Negative impact | Positive impact | Comments / evidence (if negative impact, how does the policy address this)? |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| Race | X | | | Could update if hate crime graffiti is prioritised |
| Disability | X | | | |
| Gender | X | | | |
| Gender Reassignment | X | | | |
| Sexual orientation | X | | | |
| Religion or belief | X | | | |
| Age | X | | | |
| Rural issues | X | | | |
| Social Inclusion issues | X | | | |
| Pregnancy and maternity | X | | | |
| Marriage and civil partnership | x | | | |

8.2 Does the Policy promote equality of opportunity?

Yes.

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Next review date: | Responsible Officer |
| December 2025 | Head of Customer and Housing Services |
| Author | Related Documents |
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