

Policy	Neighbourhood Management
Policy Ref:	PHL POL 25
Approved by:	Board
Date Approved	13 th October 2017
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Lead Officer/post	Chief Executive Officer

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Preferred Homes Limited ('PHL') is committed to maintaining the quality of its homes, communal areas and neighbourhood environment to a high standard through the effective management of: -

- Environmental elements such as lighting, security, waste recycling, vandalism, litter and pest control/animal welfare
- Grounds and landscape maintenance work
- Playgrounds and play equipment
- Car parking and abandoned vehicles
- Cleaning and maintenance of communal areas
- Regular scheme inspections and walkabouts
- Managing residents' responsibilities (e.g. maintaining gardens)

1.2 PHL will use its cycle of scheme inspections and customer feedback to tailor service delivery and implement improvements to reflect the needs of the local area and/or specific properties. PHL will recognise where additional resources are required to manage 'hot spots' and target key priority areas to help create sustainable communities.

1.3 PHL will work in partnership with other key stakeholder partner agencies to deliver safe and thriving neighbourhoods.

2. Associated Policies and Legislation

- Occupiers Liability Act 1957
- Criminal Damage Act 1971
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Equality Act 2012
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Tenancy Standards Measures 2023

- Repairs and maintenance policy
- Planned and cyclical maintenance policy
- Tenancy management policy
- Hoarding Policy
- Adaptations Policy
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

3. POLICY CONTENT

3.1 Environmental work

- 3.1.1 PHL will maintain communal lighting and security within communal areas to a high standard to ensure health & safety, security and to maintain the quality of the overall environment.
- 3.1.2 PHL will seek to implement a scheme standard across the areas it operates in and seek to maintain this standard in association with local residents and agencies. General litter collection, bulk rubbish removal and fly tipping will ordinarily be the responsibility of the local authority for adopted areas.
- 3.1.3 On private land, PHL will enter into a service level agreement with an appropriate agency to ensure regular litter collection (to the agreed standard) and the removal of bulk rubbish and fly tipping within 48 hours.
- 3.1.4 PHL will attempt to maintain the environment to a high standard and deter escalating vandalism and graffiti. Graffiti will be removed within 5 working days (offensive/hate graffiti within 24 hours) and acts of vandalism will be remedied within the routine maintenance target of 42 days. Where there are health & safety issues then PHL will be committed to making safe as an emergency.
- 3.1.5 Tenants will normally be expected to resolve issues of pest control and infestation by using the local authority or a private company. PHL will not normally provide this service except in such circumstances where PHL has caused the infestation, or the issue requires wider treatment within the scheme. Where there are environmental or health and safety issues with vulnerable residents, then PHL will directly liaise with the appropriate authority.
- 3.1.6 Problems of animal welfare will be acted upon in association with appropriate welfare agencies including the RSPCA. PHL will liaise and provide appropriate assistance to access land and property to help investigate and resolve the problem.

3.2 Grounds and landscape maintenance work:

- 3.2.1 Where land is not adopted by the local authority, PHL will retain responsibility for the maintenance of grass, trees, shrubs, flower beds, and hard areas. The standards of maintenance for these areas will be included in the PHL scheme standard.

- 3.2.2 PHL may enter into agreements or contracts with appropriate suppliers to maintain and enhance these areas. This will be undertaken in association with local residents to ensure the environment reflects their needs. In the selection process elements of price and quality will be considered to ensure value for money.

3.3 Playgrounds and play equipment

PHL will not ordinarily seek to own and maintain play equipment areas and will seek agreements with local parish councils and community organisations to fund and maintain these areas. Where this is not possible then PHL will seek to secure funding from other non-landlord sources to maintain, enhance any playgrounds and equipment and ensure it is safe to use.

3.4 Car parking and abandoned vehicles

3.4.1 Car parking.

PHL recognises that unauthorised and inconsiderate parking by others can cause some residents inconvenience and unnecessary difficulty. Accordingly, PHL will act swiftly to address all unauthorised parking and remove any abandoned vehicles, in line with a consistent approach to abandoned vehicle and unauthorised parking arrangements.

PHL will work with the Drivers and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA) to identify the owners of abandoned vehicles and arrange for it to be disposed off or stored, if there is no response after the serving of a Notice.

- 3.4.2 PHL will provide car parking spaces and bays including cycle racks.

3.5 Cleaning and maintenance of communal areas and communal gardens

- 3.5.1 PHL will seek to set communal area standards as part of its overall scheme standard. In regard to general cleanliness, PHL will not seek to be prescriptive about the number of cleans but will set a good standard of cleanliness that must be maintained.

- 3.5.2 Tenants will be expected to contribute toward the cost of cleaning, maintaining and enhancing the communal areas through their service charge and in accordance with their terms of tenancy. Tenant responsibility for communal maintenance is outlined in the repairs and maintenance policy.

- 3.5.3 Tenants will be involved in specifying improvement works to the communal areas. PHL will seek to maintain a satisfactory level of security within communal areas.

3.6 Residents responsibilities

- 3.6.1 Gardens and sheds. PHL expects residents to keep the gardens tidy and free from rubbish in accordance with tenancy conditions, and information provided in the tenant handbook.

- 3.6.2 Tenants should obtain consent from PHL to erect a garden shed, or any other external construction in the garden, in accordance with their tenancy agreement. PHL will outline any specific conditions or requirements as part of the written permission to

tenants. The continued maintenance and repair of any construction will remain the responsibility of the tenant.

3.6.3 TV/ Satellite Aerial. Subject to planning restrictions, residents may install TV aerials and satellite dishes with PHL's prior consent.

3.6.4 PHL will repair and maintain communal T.V aerials and cables to the outlet where they are provided, for example in blocks of flats.

3.6.5 Communal Furnishings. New developments made up of apartments within a larger building which have communal areas, or shared accommodation which have communal areas, will have larger items of furniture provided by PHL for the communal areas only. The furniture which PHL will usually supply, maintain and replace are detailed below:

- Sofas and armchairs
- Dining table and chairs
- Window covering (blinds only)
- Floor covering

3.7 New Development Furnishings

In new developments, communal wall coverings or artwork may initially form part of the scheme decoration. These items will not be replaced or repaired by PHL. Communal furnishings will be replaced by PHL in line with the terms set out above.

3.8 Tenant Furnishings

Tenants individual living areas are furnished directly by the tenants (or their appointee). No element of cost is recovered for replacement of non-communal furniture and therefore no provision is made for the supply and replacement of individual tenant furnishings.

4. EQUALITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

4.1 PHL recognises that it operates in a community within which there is wide social diversity and is committed to providing equal opportunities and valuing diversity.

4.2 Through the delivery of PHL scheme management services, PHL aims to treat all customers fairly, and with respect and professionalism regardless of their gender, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation and marital status.

4.3 To enable all residents to have clear information and equal access to PHL scheme management services, PHL will publish clear information in a range of appropriate languages and formats and through a range of media. Feedback is also accepted through a variety of different routes to reflect individual customer's preferences or needs.

5. CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT

5.1 PHL recognises the importance of working in partnership with residents to develop and continuously improve services and raise standards.

5.2 PHL will seek to involve customers at the beginning of relevant decision making processes and ensures tenants are empowered to play a part in wider consultation and involvement⁵, as detailed in PHL's policies.

5.3 To demonstrate PHL's commitment to this policy PHL will:

- Ensure regular review in consultation with residents
- provides opportunities for residents to contribute to the continued improvement of the scheme management policy in partnership with PHL

6. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 PHL may contract the management of properties to a responsible and suitably experienced local registered provider under the terms of a management and maintenance agreement. This would be a contract to provide services on specific terms and for a fixed period. It will not be a lease.

6.2 In such circumstance, the management and maintenance agreement will appoint the local registered provider as an agent of PHL to perform management and maintenance services at a property owned by PHL including the obligations and practices and procedures set out in this policy. The management and maintenance agreement will explicitly require the local registered provider to be compliant with all PHL established policies (as reviewed and update from time to time) including this policy.

6.3 Given PHL will remains legally responsible for all matters relation to tenancy agreements and the Regulator's Neighbourhood and Community Standard, the management and maintenance agreement will contain specific contractual key performance indicators, the requirement for insurance and indemnities and review and termination provisions particularly in the context of breach and/or failure of required performance.

6.4 Each management and maintenance agreement will be directly managed by a senior Officer of PHL who will be committed to performance and relationship management of the agent including (at least) monthly on-site visits to ascertain performance and seek feedback from tenants and other partners.

7. POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

7.1 Monitoring

The monitoring of outcomes is essential for PHL to track the impact of its approach to scheme management. Monitoring of the implementation of this neighbourhood management policy will consider:

- How easily customers can access the scheme management services
- Performance against service standards and targets set out in the procedures
- The cost of providing the service
- Customer satisfaction and level of complaints, reviews and appeals

Monitoring information will be reported to the Board and provided to customers on a regular basis.

7.2 Review -Monitoring results will be used by PHL to inform future policy review in this area. All reviews will consider whether:

- The current policy adheres to legislative and regulatory requirements, and reflects current good practice
- The aims and objectives of the policy are being met
- The current policy outcomes meet the needs and aspirations of PHL's diverse customer base
- Service users are aware of and understand the policy and believe it to be consistent and fair
- The policy provides sufficient choice for customers
- The service offers value for money
- Partnership arrangements are working effectively

Overall monitoring and review of the policy will be undertaken in consultation with:

- Staff groups
- Board Members
- Existing and future service users
- Resident and community groups
- Relevant partners, local voluntary agencies and other statutory services as relevant

This policy will be reviewed at least every year or in line with legislative or regulatory changes.

8. RESPONSIBILITY

The Chief Executive Officer retains the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.