

Management of communal areas policy

1 Policy statement

- 1.1 Worthing Homes is committed to helping residents to live in well maintained, safe and clean environments. Our neighbourhoods are defined as the internal and external communal spaces around homes which are under our ownership.
- 1.2 This policy sets out our approach to the management of our communal areas and the services and activities that we will provide. It should be read in conjunction with the Fire Safety Policy and the Health and Safety Policy.

2 Legal requirements

- 2.1 The following legal requirements affect this policy:
- 2.2 **Occupiers Liability Act 1957** – This Act imposes a “duty of care” on the occupier of a property. When a visitor frequents a property, the occupier of that property has a duty to take such care to see that the visitor will be reasonably safe in using the premises.
- 2.3 **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** – This is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety which includes requirements for protecting the health, safety and welfare of members of the public as well as staff.
- 2.4 **The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** – requires all those in control of non-domestic premises including the communal areas of blocks of flats to take adequate measures to ensure the safety from fire of all occupants and visitors to the building.
- 2.5 **Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977** – defines what responsibilities we have in removing a tenant’s property and setting out how and when to dispose of it.

3 Regulatory requirements:

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood and Community Standard within the Regulator of Social Housing’s regulatory framework states that registered providers ‘...*shall keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in partnership with their*

tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so.'

4 Residents' responsibilities

It is the responsibility of our residents to keep communal areas as outlined by the terms of the tenancy agreement which states-

The tenant agrees to-

Keep all shared areas such as entrances, stairways, corridors and landings clean and free from obstructions. The Tenant should not leave any personal belongings or rubbish in these areas

Electricity meter cupboards, in communal areas, must be kept locked and not used for the storage of any items.

Residents are not permitted to use the landlord's electrical supply or charge any battery items in the communal area. This includes the running of power cables under doors or through letterboxes from their own property. Plug-in air fresheners are not permitted in communal areas.

5 Our approach

- 5.1 Worthing Homes will, in accordance with its duties under the above legislation and good practice, support residents in keeping their neighbourhoods clean, well maintained and safe.
- 5.2 We will adopt a common sense approach to managing communal areas that we own.
- 5.3 This means that we may allow a small number of personal items immediately outside residents' doors in blocks of flats. Residents must ensure these items are made from non-combustible materials and do not prevent or restrict occupants or visitors to the premises from escaping quickly in the case of emergency.
- 5.4 Mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs must not be stored or charged in communal areas. They should only be stored where appropriate to do so; for example within a resident's home or where a designated store is provided. We will offer occupational therapy advice to support disabled tenants to find a suitable alternative option.
- 5.5 Push chairs, bikes and furniture must not be stored in communal areas.
- 5.6 Worthing Homes will regularly monitor the communal areas by carrying out Estate Inspections of internal and external areas in order to:
 - Report and deal with any issues which could be a risk to health and

safety such as trip hazards or obstructions of fire access routes;

- Monitor cleaning contractor performance;
- Report on fly tipped or dumped items

5.7 In addition to any formal process of estate inspections that we may have, it is the responsibility of **all employees** who are out and about on our neighbourhoods to report issues that may cause a risk to health and safety or issues that may be causing damage to our properties or communal areas.

5.8 We will remove any items left in general needs communal areas and look to recover our costs for doings so.

Where no individual can be identified as responsible, any costs will be charged back to the block or estate through a service charge.

6 Review

6.1 Worthing Homes will review this policy every 2 years or when appropriate to do so.

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