

Neighbourhood & Estate Management Policy

Customer Service

Policy Reference:

Policy Version:



1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy explains how we ensure that our neighbourhoods and communal areas are clean, safe and attractive. We strive to provide excellent services to our communities and we want our neighbourhoods to be places where our current and future customers want to live. The way we manage our neighbourhoods directly affects the quality of life and environment enjoyed by our customers.
- 1.2 We will do this by:
- Ensuring that the communal areas we own are safe and well-maintained
 - Working with other agencies concerned with the safety, security and appearance of the neighbourhood environment.
 - Taking a proactive approach to estate and tenancy management
 - Monitoring neighbourhood performance and developing neighbourhood plans
 - Engaging customers in monitoring standards and in planning for their neighbourhood.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to Social Housing (general needs), Impact, Care & Support (including retirement living) and Riverside Home Ownership.
- It does not cover Irvine.
- 2.2 It relates to Riverside's management of neighbourhoods and internal and external communal shared spaces.

3. Principles

Maintaining communal areas

- 3.1 We will deliver grounds maintenance and cleaning services in communal areas to ensure they are kept clean and tidy. These services are provided by in house teams and contractors who deliver a standard service across the group with minor variations to accommodate local requirements.
- 3.2 We will manage contracts and standards taking into account quality assurance information, local inspections and customer feedback.
- 3.3 When planning new developments and communal area improvements we will consider the impact on service charges and try to minimise costs.
- 3.4 We will ensure these services provide value for money and provide customers with a breakdown of any services carried out in communal areas and how these are reflected in their service charges.

Policy Reference:

Policy Version:



- 3.5 We will maintain trees in communal areas if they require any attention because they present a health & safety risk and to keep them healthy.
- 3.6 We will repair vandalism and remove graffiti, abandoned vehicles, fly tipping and deal with other environmental issues on our land. We recognise that these issues have a negative impact on the estate environment and can escalate. Where we identify that a customer is responsible we will hold them to account by charging them or taking legal action (see 3.13).
- 3.7 Where pest infestations are identified within communal areas we will organise treatment. If it is found the pest infestation is from a customer's property we will seek to recover the costs of the treatment.

Neighbourhood management

- 3.8 We will work with local partners including the Police and local authority community safety teams to address issues such as anti-social behaviour, vehicle abandonment and environmental crime such as fly-tipping, vandalism and graffiti; and participate in community safety forums and partnerships to agree common approaches to deal with neighbourhood issues.
- 3.9 We will work with customers and stakeholders to tackle parking issues on land we own in our neighbourhoods. This includes irresponsible parking and parking-related disputes. We will manage parking controls such as barriers and gates where they exist and we will consider additional parking controls where necessary.
- 3.10 We will communicate to customers about landlord and customer responsibilities, issues our customers have reported and how we have or are responding.
- 3.11 We will encourage customers to help to maintain standards by, for example, keeping communal areas tidy, reporting communal repairs and disposing of waste properly.
- 3.12 We will address untidy gardens with customers and support them to maintain their responsibilities.
- 3.13 Where we believe that a customer's actions are the cause of problems we will try to identify them and may take enforcement action. This may include charging them for the costs we have incurred to clear up problems. We will also work with other agencies where it is appropriate.

Planning for Neighbourhoods

- 3.14 We will proactively gather data and report on a range of indicators in order to analyse the performance of our neighbourhoods. We use this analysis in our Regional Planning to identify the individual characteristics of each neighbourhood and to prioritise which neighbourhoods need increased investment and intervention. This includes understanding the profile of our customers against any protected characteristics.

Policy Reference:

Policy Version:



3.15 Where neighbourhoods are identified as needing investment or they would benefit from intervention, we will develop a Neighbourhood Plan in order to address areas of under-performance and ensure resources are well-focused to meet the diverse needs of our neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood Plans also support the delivery of wider strategic objectives identified in Our Riverside and Regional Plans.

3.16 Interventions set out in our Neighbourhood Plans include:

- Working in partnership with police and other local organisations to tackle ASB and encourage community safety.
- Increasing the numbers of customers formally involved
- Focussing Money Advice and Employment and Training activity to maximise engagement
- Supporting local community groups and activities
- Making environmental improvements

In developing Neighbourhood Plans we engage with residents and wider stakeholders through door to door or telephone surveys, talking to existing residents' groups, public events, and considering frequent complaints.

Ensuring our customers' safety

3.17 We will take all reasonable steps to protect customers in our properties, as well as other customers, visitors, staff, contractors and the general public, from the risks associated with building safety by:

- Our Building Safety Managers and their teams are responsible for the safety of our communal areas and shared services.
- Our Building Safety Inspectors check all shared spaces regularly in accordance with our Communal Area Risk Management Inspection Procedure to ensure they are clear and safe. We ensure any safety concerns from these inspections are reported and actioned as quickly as possible.
- We carry out fire risk assessments in our buildings and follow up any concerns to reduce risks.
- Wherever safety equipment is needed we will fit them and check them regularly, including fire doors, Fire safety equipment i.e. fire alarms, emergency lighting or lift emergency call points.
- We check the safe operations of lifting equipment including passenger lifts and stair lifts etc. We also ensure lift emergency call points are operational.
- We also inspect, service and maintain any other mechanical or electrical systems present e.g. lightning conductors, remote monitoring systems, automatic doors/ gates// barriers, and access control door entry systems
- We are improving customer information for all building safety risks including an online facility to request Fire Risk Assessments and introducing a customer engagement strategy.
- Providing our employees with comprehensive building safety information.
- Communication with customers which sets out what we do to keep customers safe in communal areas and how customers can help to keep their building safe.

Policy Reference:		Policy Version:	
-------------------	--	-----------------	--



- Ensuring measures are in place to identify, manage and mitigate risks associated with hazardous materials including asbestos and water hygiene.
- Identifying all fixed electrical installations, metered installations and electrical equipment and undertaking an inspection every five years.
- Inspecting children’s play areas to ROSPA standards.

Customer involvement

3.18 We recognise that the involvement of customers is essential to maintaining safe, attractive neighbourhoods and schemes. Customers’ local knowledge and feedback is invaluable.

3.19 We will carry out patch walks in key neighbourhoods to identify current issues and agree actions for follow up and resolution. These are arranged on a frequency determined locally depending on factors such as the extent of communal areas, the level of reported complaints, anti-social behaviour and other customer feedback.

Patch walks focus on grounds maintenance, communal areas, and repairs & maintenance. Customers, Police, contractors and local councillors are invited to attend.

3.20 In our supported housing properties, we engage customers to deliver local service reviews and co-produce any support plans required.

3.21 We enhance this further by empowering a team of customer inspectors to visit and scrutinise our retirement living services, reporting into the Quality Team and the Riverside Customer Voice Executive directly, making sure the thoughts and experiences of our customers are recorded and shared to shape future development.

We are planning to introduce similar scrutiny to our general needs services.

3.22 We will consult customers when planning any improvements to communal spaces and, where possible, prioritise the improvements which customers request.

4. Further Information & Support

Communal Area Risk Management Inspection Procedure

Tackling anti-social behaviour policy

Hate crime and harassment policy

Service charge policy

Policy Reference:

Policy Version:



Role	Responsibilities
Regional Planning team Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use internal and external data to analyse the performance of neighbourhoods • Develop neighbourhood plans to address local priorities involving customers and stakeholders
Social Housing Care & Support Operations Riverside Home ownership Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work proactively with local partners such as Police & local authorities to address anti-social behaviour and environmental issues • Deal with ASB, individual customer complaints and issues; support customers and take enforcement action where necessary • Involve customers in inspecting communal areas
Asset Management team Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide grounds maintenance and cleaning services which are value for money and respond to local requirements • Deal promptly with estate issues such as vandalism, graffiti
Compliance team Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take all reasonable steps to ensure communal areas are safe for customers, visitors and staff by checking regularly, taking any action required and communicating with customers,

6. Risk Thresholds
Customer experience

6.1 We have limited tolerance of variations to the service standards we have set and this is diminishing even further as we drive up the customer experience. We will continue to innovate in the delivery of customer service, and the short term consequence of making major improvements may be a temporary reduction in customer experience and we will only accept such reductions where there is a clear articulation of the potential impact and an agreed action plan to return to acceptable levels.

We have a full suite of customer experience KPIs which are scrutinised by Executive Directors, Boards and Neighbourhood Services Committee.

Targets are set informed by Neighbourhood Services Committee.

Safety

6.2 We have no appetite for risk of harm to customers and others.

We have a full suite of building safety KPIs. This is scrutinised by Executive Directors, Boards and Neighbourhood Services Committee.

Targets for building safety KPIs are generally set at 100% against the standards we have agreed.

Policy Reference:

Policy Version:



7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Riverside is committed to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. We strive to be fair in our dealings with all people, communities and organisations, taking into account the diverse nature of their culture and background and actively promoting inclusion. This policy aligns with Riverside's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) and has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

Policy Reference:		Policy Version:	
-------------------	--	-----------------	--

