

Estates & Neighbourhood Management Policy

Date of last review: January 2024

Version: 3

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1.0 Introduction

This document presents a series of policy statements to inform staff and residents about the council's commitments for managing communal areas in all of the homes we own and how we deliver services on our Estates.

The policy outlines our objectives to maintain common areas to ensure they are safe and clean, by working as 'one organisation', ensuring we involve residents and measuring our performance.

2.0 Aims of this Policy

This policy helps the council to meet the recommendations on the Housing Ombudsman spotlight report on noise and to fulfil the Regulatory code, set by the Regulator for Social Housing, in particular, the Neighbourhood and Community Standard and includes any communal areas associated with the homes we manage.

This policy aims to:

- proactively maintain good relationships between neighbours in the homes we manage.
- keep our communal areas and neighbourhoods safe, clean and maintained and to ensure the provision of services to a good standard.
- work in partnership with our stakeholders as one organisation to create neighbourhoods and communities that residents are proud of.
- support the council's climate emergency and environmental sustainability in the provision of services and contracts.
- support active resident participation, through involvement and consultation on all aspects of neighbourhood management, ensuring that our residents are treated fairly and with respect.
- work with internal and external partners to ensure our neighbourhoods are well-managed and cultivate quality environments for all of our residents, that help to deter anti-social behaviour and crime.
- ensure that equalities and tackling inequality is a part of everything we do and aligns to our Borough Plan.

3.0 Who is this Policy for?

This document applies to all officers and teams in the council involved in the management of communal areas and provide services on our estates.

This policy also guides tenants and leaseholders living in housing managed by the council, external organisations and our partners, of their responsibilities.

4.0 Estates and Neighbourhood Management Policy statements

4.1. Proactively maintain positive neighbourhood relationships

New tenancy Induction

At sign up there is a detailed tenancy induction briefing for each resident which includes advice on how to be a good neighbour, including how to minimise noise disturbances which are the main cause of complaints.

We also run community initiatives and events to help neighbours get to know each other. This makes it easier to deal with issues as they arise.

Good Neighbourhood Relationships

Things may happen which can be perceived by neighbours as nuisance behaviour but are not done intentionally to cause distress and often the result of normal day-to-day living. In the first instance, the initial responsibility is for residents to resolve concerns and other issues, usually best lies with themselves, rather than involving council officials.

Residents should take reasonable steps to avoid disturbing their neighbours. Advice for residents includes:

- Informing your neighbours if you are going to be having a one off event
- Making sure there is appropriate flooring in place
- Considering the use of appliance mats if you are running washing machines etc.
- overnight
- Telling your neighbours if your shift patterns have changed so they can be understanding of your needs
- Be considerate of your neighbours
- Do not carry out repairs or other works late at night or at other unsociable hours
- Do not play music, TV or instruments too loudly
- Keep dogs and other pets under control
- Be aware of where your children are playing, who is supervising them and what they are doing

Depending on the circumstances we will provide advice but will say where tenants and leaseholders are better talking to one another. We will be clear about what is considered day-to-day living and manage expectations about what can be done.

Residents should not be asked to keep diary sheets and noise records unless it is likely to serve a purpose.

The ASB policy defines the sorts of activities that are **not** considered as “anti-social”.

- Day-to-day living noise, which is not excessive, nor unreasonable;
- Babies crying;
- Cooking odours;
- One off parties/BBQ where there's no evidence further problems will occur, nor is it detrimental to the quality of life of those in the locality, nor unreasonable;
- Normal behaviour occurring at unusual times, for example, due to different working patterns and providing the resident is being considerate;
- Low-level disputes between neighbours;
- Children's play;
- Noise transference due to poor sound insulation;
- Toilets flushing.

If residents are unable to resolve their disputes, then mediation may be an option. Officers should be clear that the mediation isn't looking to blame one party over the other, but finding the best way that everyone can live together happily. This would be offered by a housing officer, rather than a member of the tenancy enforcement team.

4.2. Keeping communal areas in a safe condition

We will comply with the Neighbourhood and Community Standard, set by the Regulator of Social Housing, comply with legislation and as part of our commitment to keeping neighbourhoods and communal areas safe and clean. We will do this by providing services to maintain good standards and will work in partnership with residents and partners to make continuous improvements.

Fire safety in communal areas

The management of communal areas is to ensure that fire safety is not compromised. In enclosed communal areas it is essential that all escape routes are kept entirely clear as set out in the Fire Safety in Communal Areas Policy. The council has a zero tolerance to items left in communal areas and is based on specific criteria's and some areas have a managed approach.

Communal areas will be checked regularly, using the safety hazard assessments to identify items for removal such as furniture, buggies, mobility scooters, plant pots, facilities to dry clothes, rubbish, bicycles, electric bikes or scooters, mopeds etc., (this list is not exhaustive).

Repairs and maintenance of communal areas

We will:

- ensure stairways, lifts, landings and corridors are safe and well maintained.
- carry out regular inspections and repairs, including play areas

The council is responsible for repairing and maintaining external structures we own; therefore a holistic communal repair programme is in place to address compliance and component replacement alongside major external renewals, which will also tackle day to day problems and ensure that our stock does not deteriorate.

We will:

- maintain communal entrance doors
- ensure that external areas are safe and well maintained
- carry out water quality risk assessments for communal water services
- update our annual programmes to improve and enhance our properties and estates

To complement reactive maintenance in communal areas, the council has an ongoing major works improvement programme that includes:

- fire door replacements
- landlord's electrics
- door entry or CCTV
- lift replacement
- structural external and internal improvements in communal areas
- replacement of communal water tanks

We will continue to work closely with leaseholders to ensure that the charges they incur for expenditure on fire safety and compliance, communal areas and the wider environment represents a fair deal for everyone.

External structures

With the exception of adapting homes, or external areas for older or disabled tenants, all residents wishing to change the structure or outside of their home will need written permission from the council and if approved, the resident will be responsible for maintaining improvements made, for example:

- walls
- pigeon loft
- greenhouse or shed
- garage
- driveway or parking space
- transmitting antenna i.e. television aerial or satellite dish

Where changes to structures were made without first getting written permission, the council may:

- investigate the issue
- obtain an order from the court requiring the resident to put the property back to its previous state

- return the property to its original state and charge the resident for the cost of doing this, including the cost of repairing any damage caused (we will not be responsible for any damage our contractor's cause when removing any unauthorised improvements)
- in very serious cases, obtain an order from the court to end a tenancy

We aim to be responsive to tenants' needs in a fair and transparent way and issues can be raised via our website [Contact Lambeth Housing](#).

4.3 Measuring the quality of service

To ensure we are providing a good standard of service we will measure our performance in line with the council's performance management framework, report on resident satisfaction with repairs, estate caretaking, cleaning and grounds maintenance in a proactive way, to ensure that residents can hold us to account for the services we deliver. [Estate Management Services Survey](#)

4.4 Working as one organisation

The council will work effectively with all departments and our partners, as one organisation to protect residents, improve outcomes for vulnerable residents, maintaining our assets, as well as enhancing neighbourhoods and the borough.

Recycling

We strongly encourage residents to play a part in protecting the environment by recycling household waste. The recycling service is delivered alongside the council's waste services.

All residents in Lambeth can use our 'Reuse and Recycling' centres to dispose of a wide range of reusable and recyclable items for free. [Reuse and Recycling](#)

Waste collection service

Lambeth has a dedicated contract providing waste services and the collection days will be publicised locally, or on our website [waste service check my address](#).

Residents will be expected to:

- dispose of all domestic rubbish in bins or containers associated with their home
- to use where possible, the local recycling points and the reuse and recycling centre, or other initiatives that reduce the pressure on landfill sites.
- to organise and pay for personal bulk refuse (or large) items that cannot be recycled.

We regularly inspect our streets for fly-tips, and we also rely on residents to give us information about people that are dumping rubbish so we can prosecute. [Report fly-tipping](#).

If we can identify the offender, financial penalties will be issued and if necessary, we will refer more serious issues for prosecution via the local magistrates' court.

Parking enforcement

Parking in some areas is restricted to:

- marked bays
- vehicles with a valid virtual permit, or on display
- up-to-date road tax

Abandoned Vehicles

Housing Management services will make initial enquiries where vehicles appear to be a danger, abandoned, a nuisance, or not being used. Issues will be referred to our parking contractors who are responsible for investigating and arranging removal of abandoned vehicles. [Report abandoned vehicles](#)

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) such as noise, vandalism, graffiti and harassment will not be tolerated. The council is committed to preventing and tackling ASB at an early stage, taking a victim-focused approach, we will also hold residents responsible for anti-social behaviour caused by members of their household, pets, and their visitors. Actions will be considered against residents who breach the council's Anti-social behaviour policy and the terms of their respective Tenancy and Leasehold agreements. [Report anti-social behaviour](#)

The remit of Safer Lambeth Partnership, is to work together to address the impact of ASB on the community. The council will investigate issues and will use its powers, where necessary, to address incidents. The partnership includes the council, Public Protection, Assurance and Regulatory service (PPARS), Police, London Fire Brigade and Lambeth Housing Partnership.

Trees in garden areas

Residents are responsible for the upkeep of gardens associated with their home, by maintaining grass and hedges ensuring they do not cause a nuisance to neighbours. The responsibilities for maintaining gardens and trees are set out in the respective Tenancy and Leasehold agreements, as such must not cut down, remove, relocate, plant or significantly alter any tree connected with their home unless the council have given written permission in advance.

Where trees in shared gardens are causing damage, they will be inspected.

The council may provide some extra services to vulnerable tenants such as the elderly in line with the respective, Vulnerable Tenants and Vulnerable Residents policy.

4.5 The provision of services on Estates

To protect residents effectively, we co-ordinate services on a larger scale through specific teams and provide the following services on our estates:

Recycling on Estates

To promote recycling for residents who live on estates, we provide large green communal recycling bins usually in the bin chamber areas.

- when recycling, residents should aim to check and remove non-recyclable items.
- recyclable items, such as paper, glass, and plastic must be put straight into the recycling bin and not any kind of bag (or refuse sack) and no items should be placed around the bin.

Parking on Estates

To park on Lambeth estates with a Traffic Management Order (TMO), residents are required to meet the permit criteria before permits will be issued.

Vehicles on estates must have up-to-date road tax, or a Statutory Off-Road Notice only with prior written permission from the Neighbourhood Housing Manager.

The parking controls on estates that have Traffic Management Orders (TMOs) are to ensure that:

- residents or their visitors with valid permits can park within the designated TMO and spaces are not misused by non-residents or businesses
- access to the limited parking is fair
- access to service roads, garages, rubbish chutes and chambers are not blocked
- vehicles that are not being used, a nuisance, abandoned, or may be a danger to the public are removed, supporting the identification and control of anti-social behaviour, crime and criminal activities

To prevent potential misuse we will monitor the number of annual and visitor permits per household. Parking permits will be refused if the council has taken legal action for nuisance and if there are rent arrears, or service charge arrears against the property (one week for tenants and one month for leaseholders).

Estate Services team

Partnerships and collaborative working are critical to delivering improvements, as such the Estate Services team work closely with Caretakers, Grounds Maintenance, Environment and all areas that deliver Housing Services. The neighbourhood working model, will enhance the delivery of services on estates and aims to encourage more residents to engage in shaping services and to be involved.

The Estates services teams will contribute to the climate change emergency, improved air quality and maximising green space in line with Lambeth's Biodiversity Action Plan' (Lambeth BAP) 2019-2024. The team will also contribute to better traffic management, creating secure cycle areas and new garden areas for socialising and play.

The Estate Services team role includes the management of;

- playground areas
- estates and S106
- CCTV cameras owned by housing
- roll out of fibre broadband services

- all estate contracts and service level agreements to ensure residents and leaseholders get value for money

Overseeing installations of;

- bicycle stands
- electric vehicle charging points on estates

Increasing biodiversity

- providing a flexible and responsive estate landscaping service
- contributing to our flood risk response

Grounds Maintenance on Estates

Lambeth Landscapes service provision is managed by the Estates Services team, using a service level agreement with performance monitoring indicators.

Lambeth Landscapes is responsible for the maintenance of open spaces and communal areas on housing estates, primarily maintaining grass, hedges, flower beds and naturalised areas. They aim to increase areas managed for biodiversity in consultation with residents and stakeholders.

The council recognise the importance of green and open space to encourage play, leisure and relaxation and the positive impact it can have on the health and wellbeing of residents. In response to this, Lambeth Landscapes have published *Our pledges for landscaping*.

The pledges will enable:

- residents to be informed of our vision for green and open space and to improve their skills
- the creation of areas that reflect biodiversity, where appropriate, in line with the borough's biodiversity action plan, as well as environmental benefits for air quality and flood risk
- residents to collaborate and agree a landscaping plan for their estate, so that it is maintained to the agreed standards
- access to pursue external funding and external accreditation for the provision of support for residents to set up and maintain food growing spaces, community gardens and associated facilities

Trees on estates

Trees on estates are subject to an inspection schedule to check the health of the tree and to ensure that the tree is not causing a health and safety risk.

- Trees in shared areas and outside of the tree team inspection schedule, that are the source of risk or damage will be assessed and referred to the tree team.

Maintaining safety on Estates

Lighting and fences are in place on estates and open spaces for general security. We will enhance safety by delivering additional measures so that:

- road safety and estate road layout and traffic on estates is made safer.
- on the estates residents are supported to report nuisance, anti-social behaviour, vandalism or crime and the Estate Services team work with Public Protection on safety initiatives

- on estates where concierge services are provided (usually in medium and high-rise buildings) they include the provision of a 24-hour controlled entry and closed-circuit television surveillance.
- better-secured doors and windows through the relevant repair programmes will make individual homes more secure.

4.6 Resident participation

As well as working as one organisation, we aim to put residents at the heart of their neighbourhoods and policymaking by encouraging active customer involvement and consultation so they can continue to shape all aspects of neighbourhood management. We have consulted with residents in developing this policy.

Communication

We are committed to the principles of diversity and inclusion to:

- consult and engage with residents and advocates for community organisations or forums, by listening to their views, taking notice of the issues they raise and recognise their contribution to the neighbourhood
- meet the needs and choice of people from all backgrounds
- ensure that our services are relevant, responsive, and sensitive to the needs of our existing and future residents
- ensure that all sections of the community in which we work have equal access to our services

We will provide general information and our performance information in newsletters, emails, on our websites and as agreed locally. Notice Boards may also be used to provide estate specific information such as, contact numbers and cleaning times etc.

Lambeth will work in partnership with residents, stakeholders, and external organisations to achieve well-managed neighbourhoods and to deliver environmental improvements which also deter anti-social behaviour and crime:

- improve communal and green spaces, access to green space and support the wellbeing of residents
- we will work with residents to identify issues on estates and where applicable, develop Estate Action Plans (EAPs), by utilising funds where they are available
- enhance the communal areas and green spaces on estates to make them safer and more biodiverse

Organised inspections on estates

We will provide a responsive approach to managing estates and identifying improvements through 'walkabouts' on estates with councillors, resident groups, residents and relevant staff to complement the existing regular estate checks and inspections of equipment. A walkabout can be used to raise issues affecting groups of residents to the attention of relevant stakeholders for resolution.

4.7 Working with external stakeholders

The Lambeth Housing Partnership (LHP) aims to strengthen partnership working with other housing providers operating in the borough to link our work at the local level, by working together and sharing best practice. The LHP has an agreement with the ten largest registered providers of social housing operating in the borough.

The main workstream priorities of the LHP complements this Estate Management & Neighbourhood policy. The LHP is strategically focused to address the needs of residents through the Neighbourhoods and Community Safety and the Health and Resilience workstreams by sharing housing management practice, complementing the work of other initiatives, such as, tackling community safety and developing access routes for vulnerable households.

In their work the LHP facilitates collaboration with other agencies such as the police and community organisations to strategically support residents, and at the same time fulfilling the shared vision and strategic aims of the borough.

5.0 Related Policies

- Anti-social behaviour policy
- Tree management policy
- Fire Safety policy in communal areas
- Fire Safety policy
- Lambeth Biodiversity Action Plan' (Lambeth BAP) 2019-2024
- Leasehold agreement
- Parking policy
- Tenancy agreement

Useful links

- [How to become a Neighbourhood Champion](#)
- [Lambeth Housing Standard](#)
- [Climate change and sustainability](#)
- [Rubbish and recycling](#)
- [Report dumped rubbish on a housing estate](#)
- [Communal services on estates](#)
- [Regulatory standards - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Handbook 4 Your Environment.pdf \(lambeth.gov.uk\)](#)

Glossary and key terms

ASB	Anti-social behaviour
EAP	Estate Action Plans
SLA	Service Level Agreement - contract between the service provider
S106	Section 106 Agreement -a legal agreement for in kind or monetary contributions
PPARS	Public Protection, Assurance and Regulatory service
LHP	Lambeth Housing Partnership
Partners	Help to deliver council services, or similar activities
Stakeholders	Groups with an interest in council services, e.g. Councillors, health care services, community groups
TMO	Traffic Management Order - legal document to enforce road traffic management.