

Neighbourhood Management Policy

1.0	SCOPE
	Purpose
1.1	This document sets out whg's Policy towards the effective management of the neighbourhood environment and whg communal areas.
1.2	This document explains our approach to managing neighbourhoods including our approach to encourage customers to take responsibility for making their neighbourhoods work, pulling together to solve problems and strengthen communities. We involve customers and use customer insight to maintain and improve neighbourhoods as well as, working in partnership with other agencies concerned with the safety, security and appearance of the neighbourhood environment.
1.3	<p>This includes the planning, monitoring, management and delivery of services relating to whg land, this includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communal open spaces including gardens and grassed areas • Communal pathways, access ways and parking areas • Communal bin stores and drying areas • Playgrounds and other communal facilities • Communal stairs, hallways, landings and lifts • Communal services to flats e.g. cleaning, caretaking, lighting, fire alarm systems, TV aerials, CCTV equipment.
2.0	POLICY OBJECTIVES
2.1	Our Corporate Plan states our strategic aim is to 'Deliver high quality homes and services for our customers.'
	Neighbourhood Services
2.2	whg will provide a range of services either directly or through contractors.

2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We conduct regular, scheduled visits to communal blocks and areas ensuring they are well maintained, tidy and free from graffiti. • Our communal cleaning programme services high-rise and low-rise blocks, community rooms and Wellbeing schemes. • Our grounds maintenance programme includes the maintenance of communal grassed areas, hedges and flowerbeds. The maintenance schedule wording is mainly applied to high-rise and low-rise blocks and bungalow sites i.e. the customers that pay the bulk of the ground maintenance service charge. For instance, the schedule for these areas is two weekly grass cuts between April and October (dependent on weather condition). However, we aim not to exceed four weeks in the service intervals during this period for estates that do not pay the service charge. • We work closely with local Police and other services to help reduce anti social behaviour, harassment and hate crime in our neighbourhoods. • We conduct fire risk assessments in blocks of flats to identify and address fire risks. • We regularly check the maintenance of shared facilities such as lifts, fire safety systems and play area equipment to make sure they are safe and fit for purpose. • We have robust processes for dealing with fly-tipping, drug related equipment and graffiti. • Our customer consultation includes estate walkabouts and community events which feeds into our Neighbourhood Action Plans. • This Policy will support the delivery of whg’s Resident Engagement Strategy (Building Safety), to enable clear routes for customers to resolve safety issues in our high-rise homes and participate in decisions regarding building safety We work with customers and external agencies to reduce irresponsible parking, parking-related disputes, and abandoned vehicles. • We work with customers to consider their priorities for improvements to ensure meaningful projects that address community health and safety issues and enhance customers immediate environment are prioritised.
2.3.1	<p>whg own homes and other assets on developed sites where the maintenance and management of all the Public Open Spaces are not adopted by the Local Authority. These areas are managed by a third party management company appointed by the private development company. We will signpost customers to the relevant company that can assist with enquiries for these areas. In a few cases, whg directly manage the Public Open Spaces and will process enquiries internally.</p>
	Refuse and Recycling

2.4	<p>whg will work closely with local authorities and waste processing contractors to ensure that our properties have the appropriate facilities for disposing of rubbish and recycling. Our neighbourhood teams will implement proactive and preventative measures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joined up recycling projects with Local Authority services - Implementation of our recharging regime - Making better use of disused open spaces - Separation of waste to maximise diversion from landfill
2.4.1	<p>Where appropriate we will consider whether there are alternative uses for any small parcels of land which fall within whg's ownership. We will, for example, consider if the land is suitable for redevelopment or, where this is not possible, we may consider whether there are any alternative uses available, such as creating a small community garden. In these cases we will engage the local community and relevant stakeholders, such as local community and voluntary groups and the local authority.</p>
2.4.2	<p>Our Customer Portal includes fly tipping functionality with Google Maps included to improve customer experience.</p>
2.4.3	<p>We work with and support community organisations to recycle wood from whg waste for DIY/furniture for home and garden. Also, to reclaim and upcycle furniture from outgoing whg customers.</p>
2.4.4	<p>We will take action, wherever possible, against those found to be dumping rubbish or fly tipping on whg land, including tenancy enforcement or recharging for costs incurred.</p>
Vehicles and Parking	
2.5	<p>whg will work with customers and external agencies to reduce irresponsible parking, parking-related disputes, and abandoned vehicles.</p>
2.5.1	<p>We may include the use of barriers, bollards or gates to manage and control the use of whg parking areas.</p>
2.5.2	<p>We will work with the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency to identify owners of suspected abandoned vehicles and arrange for the vehicle to be removed, stored and disposed of if the owner does not respond after giving the required notice. Where the owner is identified we may re-charge the costs for the removal, storage and disposal of the vehicle.</p>
2.5.3	<p>Our tenancy agreement restricts parking on whg land to currently taxed and roadworthy vehicles. This parking exclusion includes SORN vehicles.</p>
Public Open Spaces	

2.6	Where whg owns play or outdoor gym equipment, we will ensure that it is safe to use and properly inspected. We are committed to these areas and will work to keep them accessible which includes, regular inspections of equipment as part of our inspection regime and assess whether the equipment is safe and structurally sound.
2.6.1	We also apply this principle to Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems such as balancing ponds that we are responsible for. Regular inspections of these facilities are carried out throughout the year.
2.6.2	We have a Communal Tree Policy that sets out whg's commitment to the environment and maintaining healthy and safe trees on communal land.
Other Agencies Responsibilities'	
2.7	Where neighbourhood issues are identified or reported on that are not the responsibility of whg, they will be noted and customers will be advised to report the issue directly to the relevant organisation. For example to the Police, Environmental Health, the local authority or the Highways Agency.
Customer Insight	
2.8	Our Customer Voice Strategy 2023-2026 meets the requirements for co-regulation set out in the Social Housing (Regulations) Act 2023, the new obligations outlined in the Building Safety Act (2022) for Resident Engagement and is influenced by the Better Social Housing Review (2023). This includes our approach for the new engagement standards (Tenant Satisfaction Measures) and how we use insight to inform our engagement and consultation programme.
2.9	<p>The content of this Policy was shaped using customer insight and involvement data where customer priorities and activities are incorporated. Data sources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive contribution to neighbourhood satisfaction • Housemark benchmarking • Complaints and compliments • Customer Neighbourhood Plan surveys • Drop-in sessions at blocks / neighbourhoods • Councillor/MP enquiries • Customer walkabouts and inspections • Neighbourhood Impact Officer surveys • Contact Centre Indices of Deprivation data • Partnership working • Social Media / Digital engagement

3.0	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
	Neighbourhood Inspections
3.1	whg's Neighbourhood Inspection schedule covers communal areas including our low-rise and high-rise blocks and Wellbeing Schemes. This is one of the ways we ensure that local neighbourhoods are being maintained and to identify issues that need to be addressed.
3.2	All Neighbourhoods with communal areas or facilities will be inspected no less than twice a year. High-rise blocks are visited daily Monday to Friday. Low-rise blocks receive a minimum of one visit per month.
3.3	Neighbourhoods where whg own no communal land or facilities will not have regular scheduled inspections but may still be inspected for management purposes.
3.4	We offer a wide range of performance measures including Customer Insight data to improve services. This includes neighbourhood satisfaction, customer inspections and social media / digital engagement.
4.0	EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY
4.1	This Policy complies with whg's Customer Voice Strategy which states "we offer a range of ways for customers to engage with purpose and influence. We are committed to taking meaningful action to increase the diversity of our customers participating, and will make sure we are listening and acting upon the voices of many. We will work to reduce barriers for customers who are underrepresented and actively seek out the quiet voices." "There is a clear menu of options that are flexible around our customers' lifestyles so we offer all customers the opportunity to share their views and have influence."
5.0	TRAINING AND DISSEMINATION
5.1	This Policy will be published in compliance with the RSH Neighbourhood and Community Standard
6.0	MONITOR AND REVIEW
6.1	This Policy will be monitored by the Director of Housing and Customer Services and reviewed regularly by the Policy Group and approved by the Customer Service Oversight Committee.

7.0	ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• whg Asset Management Strategy• whg Customer Voice Strategy• whg Fire Risk Assessment Policy• whg Communal Tree Policy• whg Housing Strategy

Document author	Neighbourhood Services Manager
Document owner	Assistant Director of Housing
Legal advice	Property Lawyer
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Approved by	Policy Group – August 2023 Customer Service Oversight Committee – October 2023
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Corporate Plan aim	Deliver high quality homes and services for our customers
Equality Assessment	Completed
Key changes made	Reference to new legislation and the new Customer Voice Strategy included.