



simply  
affordable  
homes

# Neighbourhood & Community Policy

Company No: 11567414  
Registered Provider No: 5094  
Version 2.1 – February 2025

## Simply Affordable Homes RP (SAH) Limited

### NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY POLICY

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy sets out our approach to managing communal areas and neighbourhoods.
- 1.2. It aims to explain how we ensure that our neighbourhoods and communal areas are clean, safe, attractive, and well managed.
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4. We will work in partnership with our customers, local agencies, and partners to provide safe environments, to prevent and manage anti-social behaviour and to promote community engagement to deliver sustainable communities.
- 1.5. Our policy addresses those aspects of neighbourhood management that are specific to the areas of the district in which we own homes.
- 1.6. Our neighbourhoods can be defined as groups of homes with shared external or internal areas, or ad-hoc roads or pockets of land that we manage. We recognise that our neighbourhoods are diverse and so our approach to neighbourhood management reflects the individual requirements of our homes, communal areas, and associated land in a particular area.

#### 2. Our approach

##### Ground maintenance

- 2.1. We will work alongside customers to deliver a grounds maintenance service to the agreed standards.
- 2.2. Our contract will ensure that borders and shrub areas are looked after according to the plant species and are weed and litter free, that grassed areas are cut as appropriate during the different seasons and hard landscaped areas are free of debris.

### Trees

- 2.3. We will actively survey and manage our existing tree population, ensuring that sector best practice guidelines and legislation are followed at all times, which includes developing and managing a tree register in line with our property maintenance policy.
- 2.4. Where we identify that a tree is dead, diseased or dangerous, we will carry out work to ensure that it poses no risk to the general public or property. We aim to maintain a healthy tree population so we will not carry out work for aesthetic or light restriction reasons only.
- 2.5. On occasions we may have to remove an established tree, but we will not do this unnecessarily. We will try to replace the tree, so our tree management approach is sustainable.
- 2.6. We may inspect and undertake works to trees in customers gardens where they pose a possible health and safety risk or are damaging the property. Generally, the maintenance of trees in customers gardens is the responsibility of the customer and this is normally specified in the tenancy agreement.

### Cleaning

- 2.7. We will ensure that the communal areas of our schemes, blocks, estates and neighbourhoods are clean and safe. We also expect our customers and others to play their part in keeping their neighbourhoods clean by disposing of unwanted items responsibly.
- 2.8. Cleaning can be described as keeping internal and external communal areas swept, mopped and free from litter and graffiti.
- 2.9. We often use a contractor to deliver a cleaning service for us, but in some neighbourhoods, customers may wish to deliver the service themselves. We will work with communities who chose to deliver the service themselves and consult before introducing a contractual service. However, there may be times where we choose to impose such a service even if the majority are not in favour, for instance if the standard is regularly below agreed expectations.
- 2.10. Where a cleaning contract is in place, we will work alongside customers to design a specification that always delivers a service to the agreed standard.
- 2.11. We will encourage customers to play an active role in monitoring the quality of service delivered.

2.12. We expect dog owners to act responsibly by taking dog waste home, or placing it in dog waste bins if provided. We will ensure that dog waste bins that we own are emptied regularly.

#### **Environmental crime, including fly tipping**

2.13. We take a robust approach to environmental crime, and we will work in partnership with local enforcement agencies, which could include legal action against those committing such crimes on our land, for example fly tipping. We take such issues seriously and will ensure these are dealt with quickly.

2.14. If we are able to establish who is responsible, the person will be asked to remove the items. If they do not do so within the timescale we have given them, we will arrange for the removal of the items and recharge those concerned for the whole cost of this service.

2.15. Where these recharges are not paid, the customer concerned will be pursued for the costs. We will also take legal action where appropriate.

#### **Parking**

2.16. Our tenancy agreements and leases have specific clauses related to parking which customers must adhere to.

2.17. All vehicles within our property boundaries must be taxed, insured and have a MOT. We consider vehicles parked within our property boundaries that do not meet these requirements to be causing a nuisance.

2.18. We will take action to remove them in accordance with our procedures and permit other authorised bodies such as the police or DVLA to do likewise. We do not permit SORN to apply to vehicles that are untaxed or not insured within our property boundaries, including car parks. This does not apply to a driveway which is part of an individual home.

2.19. We have some areas where we have installed barriers, gates or bollards to restrict parking. Although we recognise that for some individuals this can make access more difficult, for example if they have several visitors during the day or have mobility difficulties, we will balance the needs of the individual against those of the wider community.

2.20. Where appropriate we will consult before introducing any parking service that will involve additional charges for customers. However, there may be times where we will need to impose a service, for instance if the parking is a safety issue, or if our facilities are being regularly abused and we need to secure them, or the resources we are using to manage the complaints and issues mean it is a financial/resource drain on us.

- 2.21. Value for money is an essential consideration for us, and expenditure on parking facilities is not a key priority although we appreciate the benefits it can bring in terms of convenience for our customers.
- 2.22. We do not generally designate communal parking spaces to individual customers, unless noted in your tenancy agreement or lease. All our communal spaces are available to all our customers and their visitors, although those marked for blue badge holders are only available for those who are eligible.
- 2.23. We will not normally intervene in parking disputes between customers unless someone is in breach of their tenancy, or lease, due to the way they are using parking facilities, the way they are behaving towards other customers (e.g. where their actions are serious enough as to cause alarm and distress to others) or they are abusing facilities due to multiple vehicle ownership. In these instances, we will encourage customers to use mediation.

#### **Communal repairs, including lighting**

- 2.24. All our staff have a duty in the course of their day-to-day work when they are out and about in our neighbourhoods to note any communal repairs and issues, particularly those which pose a threat to health and safety and report them promptly.
- 2.25. We will maintain the lighting we are responsible for and will replace bulbs and fixtures as appropriate. We will report defective lighting on our estates to the relevant authority where we are not responsible.
- 2.26. Our neighbourhoods include a variety of features including service roads, footpaths, riverbanks and bridges. Their condition will be examined to determine whether they are safe, stable and in good repair.

#### **External structure, including satellite dishes**

- 2.27. Customers should seek the prior consent from us before erecting any garages, greenhouses, sheds, satellite dishes (flats only), CCTV cameras or any other external structure. All requests must comply with planning or other statutory regulations applicable.
- 2.28. We will not unreasonably withhold permission to erect any structures, but we will take into account the appearance of the area and how neighbours will be affected.
- 2.29. Express permission is required prior to any breaches of the building structure for the installation of cabling etc. retaining the building integrity and ensuring customer safety is our number one priority.

### Signage

- 2.30. We will ensure that signage on our estates is clear, necessary, appropriate, and well maintained.
- 2.31. We will ensure that health and safety and other mandatory signage is present where required.

### Snow / leaf clearance

- 2.32. In winter months we are unable to prevent a build-up of leaves but will look to ensure that any build-up does not pose a slip hazard on pathways. We are generally unable to grit and clear snowfalls/ice from our neighbourhoods.
- 2.33. Customers are responsible for gritting or clearing snow on any sole or shared pavements to their homes.
- 2.34. We will ensure that grit bins on our estates are replenished so that grit is available for our customers to use.
- 2.35. We will work with the local authority to encourage regular replenishment of grit bins on the public highway in neighbourhoods where we manage homes.

### Property inspections and items in communal areas

- 2.36. Our team of experienced Property Managers work within our neighbourhoods. In addition to their routine visits we will have a programme of robust neighbourhood inspections in place.
- 2.37. We will publish our programme of inspections and encourage customers and other local stakeholders to attend and participate.
- 2.38. We will also visit each of our blocks regularly on a risk assessed basis to identify and resolve any health and safety issues so that our neighbourhoods are a safe place to live.
- 2.39. Customers are not allowed to store any item in a communal area unless they have our written permission.
- 2.40. We will try to identify the owner of any item left in a communal area without permission but will remove the item ourselves if the owner cannot be found and the item is a safety concern. We will re-charge the customer where we know it was a specific household. These areas are regularly inspected.

### Security and anti-social behaviour

- 2.41. We will work with customers, local police safer neighbourhood teams, the fire service and other partners to reduce crime, nuisance and anti-social behaviour on our estates.

- 2.42. We will do this through improving physical security, supporting and promoting local initiatives, and taking enforcement or prosecution action where appropriate.
- 2.43. Where there are high incidences of crime and anti-social behaviour we may install CCTV on estates – on a temporary or permanent basis – to combat disorder, gather evidence, reduce fear and bolster a sense of safety and accountability among affected customers.
- 2.44. Our ASB policy has more details regarding our approach to safety and security in our neighbourhoods.

### Partnerships working

- 2.45. We recognise that high quality sustainable neighbourhoods can only be achieved if organisations work together.
- 2.46. We are committed to developing positive working relationships with agencies such as local authorities, neighbourhood police and other housing providers so that we can realise the aspirations of our neighbourhoods.
- 2.47. Unauthorised use of our land under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994: Section 61, would allow the Police to move travellers or trespassers off our land immediately.
- 2.48. We will expect our customers to take responsibility for working with us in ensuring that the standards on our estates and communal areas remain high, for instance by keeping their own gardens clear and tidy, protecting the local environment, removing their rubbish, not causing nuisance with fire, keeping their pets under control, being respectful of others, not causing noise nuisance or anti-social behaviour, not storing belongings inappropriately etc.
- 2.49. We will take the opportunity when it arises through development and regeneration to ensure good design so we can design-out problems where appropriate, in consultation with partners, customers and the wider community.

## 3. Review

### Quality monitoring, feedback and reporting

- 3.1. We will routinely inspect our blocks and neighbourhoods.
- 3.2. We will undertake a program of customer satisfaction surveys, to obtain direct feedback from our customers about the area they live in and any works we carry out in the communal areas.



- 3.3. We will regularly seek and review feedback and engage/consult our customers about the services we offer via various other methods and forums - which will also be used to help us to improve our standards, services and general offering.
- 3.4. We will undertake an annual program of customer satisfaction surveys, in line with the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) and review all relevant customer complaints to identify any potential trends in service failures.
- 3.5. All of the above will help us continue to identify any opportunities to improve the services we provide. In addition, to ensure we are getting value for money from our property managers and contractors.
- 3.6. We hold regular meetings with our property managers/key contractors to discuss performance in general and against KPI's (key performance indicators), and operational performance summary reports are also produced and issued to senior management and our Board, on at least quarterly basis.

#### **4. Key legislation (but not limited to)**

- The Social Housing Regulation Bill 2022
- Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Law of Torts (interference with goods) Acts 1977
- Anti-social behaviour, Crime and policy act 2014

#### **5. Policy review**

- 5.1. We will review this policy within 12 months (by the end of July 2025) to reflect any learning during our first year; and then generally every two years to address customer feedback, legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues, unless otherwise needed.
-



### Appendix 1 – Revision History

Date	Version	Comments / Changes
15/04/2024	1.0	Initial version
7/05/2024	1.1	Minor changes following board comments
July 2024	2.0	CT Review
February 2025	2.1	New Template and review
July 2025		Year one review
July 2027		Review

