

Neighbourhood Management Policy



CLARION
HOUSING

1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy is concerned with the effective management of the neighbourhood environment around Clarion Housing Association (Clarion) homes and shared communal areas to ensure that neighbourhoods are safe, attractive and well maintained places to live.
- 1.2 It explains our approach to managing the neighbourhood, how we will involve local residents in neighbourhood planning and improvements, and partnership working with other agencies concerned with the safety, security and appearance of the neighbourhood environment.
- 1.3 This includes the planning, monitoring, management and delivery of services relating to but not limited to:
 - Gardens, open spaces and grassed areas
 - Communal pathways, roadways and parking areas.
 - Communal bin stores, bike sheds and drying areas
 - Playgrounds and other communal facilities
 - Communal entrance doorways and windows
 - Communal stairs, hallways, passages and lifts
 - Communal services to flats e.g. lighting, fire alarm systems, communal door systems, TV aerials, CCTV equipment
- 1.4 Our neighbourhoods are diverse and can be defined estates, tower blocks, singular or groups of homes with shared external or internal areas, with or without pockets of land and access roads. The way we manage our different neighbourhoods will be influenced by their individual characteristics and management requirements.
- 1.5 The document should be read in conjunction with Clarion's Local Offer documents and it applies to all of Clarion's housing stock. However, leases may need to be checked to see what the extent of Clarion's responsibilities are in relation to the delivery of any neighbourhood services to homeowners.

2. Policy Objectives

- 2.1 Clarion recognises that there is a clear relationship between the quality of the local environment and residents overall quality of life.
- 2.2 Our vision for Clarion neighbourhoods is that they are safe and well looked after areas with vibrant, diverse communities where our residents want to live.

2.3 This policy aims to:

- set out a pro-active approach to neighbourhood management
- ensure the grounds and communal facilities we own and manage are well maintained
- ensure the quality of neighbourhood services we deliver or procure represent 'value for money' for customers and we comply with financial regulations
- involve residents and other parties with an interest in understanding the neighbourhood needs and the requirements to address those needs
- support and encourage local initiatives to resolve long term or entrenched issues impacting individual areas

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Clarion is a national housing association that provides homes and services to over 120,000 households across 150+ local authority areas in England. To improve and maintain high standards on our estates we consider neighbourhood management as a partnership between Clarion, local residents and other partners working or operating in the neighbourhood.

3.2 While Clarion aims to deliver high quality estate services, having the support and co-operation of local residents is critical to our success. Many environmental problems such as the dumping of rubbish, fly tipping, dog fouling, graffiti and broken door entry systems are costly to tackle and yet are often caused by a minority of local residents and / or their visitors.

3.3 To maintain neighbourhood standards we need the involvement and support of local residents and for residents to act responsibly. Residents pay for services through their rent or service charge, so where we believe that a residents' actions are the cause of problems we will try to identify the perpetrators and may take tenancy enforcement action against them. This may include charging them for the costs we have incurred to clear up problems or taking legal action. We will also work with other agencies where it is appropriate to do so.

3.4 Resident's local knowledge and involvement in the estate inspection process, local offers and neighbourhood improvement plans will lead to a more sustained improvement in services and the local neighbourhood environment.

3.5 It is only through proactive neighbourhood management, firm tenancy enforcement action and planned preventative measures that we can maintain high standards. Where environmental ASB is blighting our neighbourhoods we will work with local residents, other agencies and interested parties to identify and plan preventative measures to tackle the root causes.

3.6 We expect residents to keep their gardens and communal areas tidy, report communal repairs quickly and not to do anything that would adversely affect the environment that everyone shares and wants to enjoy. In return we will:

- Ensure our housing teams conduct regular neighbourhood inspections to check that they are well maintained, tidy and free from graffiti
- Regularly cut grassed areas and shrubbery
- Work closely with local Police and other services to help keep our estates free from anti-social behaviour, harassment and hate crime.

- Inspect blocks of flats regularly to ensure that they are clean and well maintained and kept clear of rubbish
- Conduct fire risk assessments in blocks of flats to identify and address fire risks.
- Regularly check and maintain shared facilities such as lifts, water tanks, play areas to make sure they are safe and fit for purpose
- Let empty homes quickly to help maintain the appearance of the area.
- Identify improvements and investment needs with local residents and work and develop neighbourhood plans to address those needs
- Work closely with local residents groups and Clarion Futures to develop local resident engagement, community facilities, activities and events to support and develop active, vibrant communities

3.7 By applying effective neighbourhood management, firm tenancy engagement and encouraging the involvement and support of local residents it will ensure that any long term or entrenched local issues are identified, and the right interventions are put in place to tackle them.

4. Neighbourhood Inspections

4.1 Regular inspections are one of main ways that we can ensure that local neighbourhoods are being looked after and to identify problems that need to be addressed.

4.2 The frequency of the inspections will be determined on an individual basis based on a regular assessment of a range of factors, such as:

- previous reported levels of anti-social behaviour, damage, and goods abandoned or stored in communal areas
- the type and the cost of services delivered
- the level of complaints, reported repairs and the historic performance of external contractors or managing agents
- the extent, age and condition of communal facilities, including any reports of damage.
- poorly kept gardens
- the amount or type of properties including the number of high rise blocks
- historical issues or any exceptional events such as storm damage or heavy snow
- building(s) that have been previously been assessed as being more susceptible to fire due to their construction type, finish, design or accessibility to the Fire Service

4.3 All estates with communal areas or facilities will be inspected no less than twice a year, and all converted street properties with communal areas or facilities will be inspected no less than once a year. Where necessary this can be as frequent as every 4 weeks where serious persistent issues are identified that are compromising the safety of residents, and/or the appearance of the estate.

4.4. Neighbourhoods where Clarion own no communal land or facilities will not have regular inspections but may still be inspected for management purposes.

4.5 Our inspection grading (e.g. estate / block standards) will ensure that we are consistent in our standards of assessment. Where a neighbourhood is frequently assessed as unsatisfactory we will consider taking a planned approach with specific actions for

improvement to ensure that any additional services or facilities are costed, planned and monitored. Where additional services or initiatives over and above Clarion's Core Offer are required to address specific identified neighbourhood issues, we will consider developing a Local Offer to assist in meeting our neighbourhood vision, and improving the quality of life of the residents.

5. Estate Services

Clarion will provide a range of services either directly or through contractors. Services will differ from neighbourhood to neighbourhood depending on local factors.

5.1 Refuse and Recycling

We will work closely with local authorities to ensure that estates have the appropriate facilities for disposing of rubbish and recycling.

We will take action, wherever possible, against those found to be dumping rubbish or fly tipping on our estates, including recharging them for the costs and providing evidence to support prosecution.

Where we assess that Clarion refuse and recycling facilities are required, or existing facilities require investment to modernise, improve, secure or encourage greater usage we will consider these sites for Estate Improvements / Planned Investment works.

Where we identify sites that have acute or long term issues relating to refuse, recycling, dumped rubbish or fly-tipping and additional services or activities above our usual services are required, we will consider sites for a Local Offer to address the issues.

5.2 Vehicles and Parking

Abandoned vehicles and inconsiderate parking can impact on the appearance of a neighbourhood, create health and safety issues and encourage ASB.

We will work with residents and external agencies to reduce irresponsible parking, parking-related disputes, abandoned vehicles and resolve access problems for emergency and service vehicles.

We may appoint a reputable company to operate a parking scheme, or parking maintenance, in our neighbourhoods to ensure the effective management/control of parking spaces, facilities, gates or barriers.

Where residents want to keep a caravan on our estates they should seek our permission first as these can pose a problem where parking is limited or the caravan is a health and safety concern, or in our opinion has a detrimental impact on the appearance of the local area.

We will work with the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) 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 being given the required notice. Where the owner is identified we may re-charge the costs for the removal, storage and disposal of the vehicle or take legal action (see Unauthorised Parking and Abandoned Vehicles procedure for more information).

5.3 Playground Equipment

Where Clarion owns play equipment, we will ensure that it is safe to use, properly inspected and fit for purpose. We will undertake regular inspections of play equipment as part of our estate inspections and assess whether the playground equipment is safe and structurally sound.

Where play or multi-use games areas are assessed as required, or existing areas are identified as needing improvement, regeneration or removal scheduled works will be considered from our estate improvement or planned investment budgets.

Where we identify sites that have acute or long term issues relating to play or multi-use games areas, and additional services or activities above our usual services are required we will consider sites for a Local Offer to address the issues.

5.4 Estate Improvements

Estate improvement works are a way Clarion can make tangible changes to environments that impact positively on resident's lives and enhance their neighbourhood. Before making a decision about spending budgets on significant estate improvements we will work with local residents that live on the estate to consider their priorities.

Where any proposed improvements would result in an additional service charge we will consult with all leaseholders and residents before any works are carried out which will cost any individual resident or leaseholder more than £250.

6. Consortia Estates

6.1 'Consortia estates' are those where more than one social landlord owns or manages properties on the estate. Clarion will seek to agree and obtain an agreement which sets out the responsibilities of each landlord in accordance with the division of stock on the estate. Inspections will be agreed and carried out with representatives of the relevant landlords.

6.2 We will discuss any estate improvements with the other relevant landlords to reach agreement with the consortia partners, and consult with residents before works are undertaken. The cost of estate improvements on consortium estates should be divided between the landlords in accordance with the division of stock and consortia agreements.

7. Other Agencies Responsibilities

7.1 Where issues are identified or reported on estates that are not the responsibility of Clarion they will be noted and residents will be advised to report the issue directly to the relevant organisation. For example to the Police, Environmental Health or the local authority highways agency. Where the issues persist and they are detrimentally impacting our residents we will try to work with the partner agencies concerned (e.g. to improve the safety, security or appearance of a wider area).

8. Key Legislation

8.1 The key legislation relevant to the neighbourhood environment is:

- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978
- The Removal, Storage and Disposal of Vehicles (Prescribed Sums and Charges) Regulations 2008
- Law of Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977
- Public Health Act 1936.
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010

9. Compliance

- 9.1 The outcomes from this policy, its related delivery costs and the impact on resident service charges will be regularly reviewed to assess the value for money i.e. costs, quality and customer satisfaction.

We will set specific standards to measure and assess the quality of the local neighbourhood environment and use this to make improvements to the services we provide.

Associated Documents:

- Fire Safety Management Policy
- Fire Safety in Communal Areas (describes standard for communal areas.)
- Open Access Balconies and Walkways to Flats – Fire Safety Arrangements
- Fire safety related documents
- Resident Involvement Strategy
- ASB policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Neighbourhood Investment Policy
- Unauthorised Parking and Abandoned Vehicles procedure
- Abandoned Goods & Animals Policy
- Neighbourhood Management Framework
- Tree Management Procedure
- Untidy Garden Procedure
- Pest Control and Wildlife Procedure