

SAXON WEALD

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT POLICY

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Author: Les Marjoram

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1.0 Introduction and aims

- 1.1 Saxon Weald aims to make all shared areas safe, clean, and well maintained. When we talk about “neighbourhoods” we mean both the indoor and outdoor communal spaces around our homes that we own, as well as nearby shared spaces that we don’t directly manage but still form part of the environment our customers live in.
- 1.2 This policy sets out our approach to neighbourhood management and the services and activities that we will provide. It should be read in conjunction with our Fire Safety Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, the Health and Safety Policy, Customer Safety Communication Policy, the Rent and Service Charge Policy, the Chargeable Works Policy and the Waste and Recycling Procedure.
- 1.3 In this policy, the term “customers” means anyone who lives in or uses our neighbourhoods – including tenants, leaseholders, shared owners, and other residents who use the shared spaces.

2.0 Policy

- 2.1 Saxon Weald will take reasonable steps, in line with the legislation and regulation, to ensure neighbourhoods are clean, safe, and well maintained. We will listen to customers about the standards they would like to see and use their feedback to help shape our approach. We will also work with customers and other organisations to maintain good standards in areas that we do not manage directly but share with others.
- 2.2 Saxon Weald will work with a range of partners to support the social, environmental, and economic wellbeing of the neighbourhoods we serve. This includes engaging with our customers through resident involvement activities and community projects that help strengthen and improve our local areas.
- 2.3 Saxon Weald is committed to ensuring that disabled people can access our services without disadvantage. We will make reasonable adjustments, where

appropriate, to support disabled customers and to ensure this policy is implemented in an inclusive and accessible way.

- 2.4 Colleagues working in our neighbourhoods are expected to report any issues they see that could pose a health and safety risk or cause damage to our properties or communal areas. This responsibility applies alongside our formal programme of estate inspections.

3.0 Neighbourhood management activities

3.1 Estate inspections – General Needs

- 3.1.1 Communal areas around our homes will be inspected on a regular basis. The frequency of these inspections is based on a risk-scoring system, which ensures that estates with higher risks receive more frequent visits. The risk score for each estate is reviewed after every inspection, meaning the number of visits can increase or decrease throughout the year depending on the latest results. The Neighbourhood inspection procedure provides further information on the risk-based scoring process.

- 3.1.2 The purpose of these inspections is to:

- Identify any fly-tipped, dumped items or graffiti.
- Monitor grounds maintenance and cleaning contractor performance.
- Report any issues that could be a risk to health and safety such as trip hazards or obstructions of fire access routes.
- Ensure sufficiently displayed health and safety signage.
- Report indicators of anti-social behaviour, for example, damage or vandalism, graffiti, and dumped items.
- Report any repairs required.
- Maintain noticeboards with grounds maintenance and cleaning specifications and information about keeping communal areas free from obstructions.
- Assess standard of internal decoration to help inform future cyclical works programmes.

- 3.1.3 Sheds, cupboards, washing lines, bin stores, boundary walls, and fencing are included in the standard visual inspection. Any visible issues will be noted and reported as part of the estate inspection.

- 3.1.4 Where possible, we will seek to include customers in these inspections by informing customers in advance, inviting them to attend and providing feedback for each inspection.

- 3.1.5 We will work with local authorities, fire and police services to improve the neighbourhoods where our customers live. Examples include, working with refuse collectors to provide additional bin stores; informing county councils of path verges that require attention; liaising with the fire service for assistance in messaging about keeping communal areas clear; and seeking police assistance with crime or security related matters.

3.2 Facilities Management – Retirement, Extra Care and Supported Schemes

3.2.1 A scheme manager or extra care services manager have a facilities management role for the scheme(s) they are responsible for. This includes regular testing of fire alarms, lighting and water appliances and visual checks of lifts, door entry and means of escape. These checks are recorded and are monitored by Regional Managers.

3.2.2 Scheme and extra care services managers are also responsible for dealing with housing actions following a fire risk assessment. These include, but are not limited to, ensuring appropriate signage is in place, dumped items are removed swiftly, and customers are spoken to about using communal spaces safely.

3.2.3 Contractor performance is also monitored and include grounds maintenance, cleaning, communal repair and servicing works

3.3 Grounds maintenance and cleaning services

3.3.1 Saxon Weald's responsibility for ensuring the upkeep of all external communal areas under its management includes grounds maintenance and cleaning services. We recognise the importance of these areas being maintained regularly and to a good standard for the enjoyment of our customers.

3.3.2 To achieve this, our procurement process ensures services provide good value for money and reflect the needs and expectations of our customers. We will closely monitor contractor performance, including frequency of visits and the quality of the work delivered, in line with the service standard specifications in the Neighbourhood Procedure.

3.3.3 We will consult with and involve customers on the procurement of grounds maintenance and cleaning services. Such services are service chargeable.

3.4 Tree maintenance

3.4.1 Trees are a very valuable part of our neighbourhood ecosystems, so we only cut down a tree if it is dead, in poor health or likely to cause damage to property. All trees situated on communal land owned by Saxon Weald will be regularly surveyed by a specialist contractor to assess their condition and suitability for their locations. Subsequent work, based on survey findings, will be completed on a priority basis and follow-up surveys will be targeted, based on the tree's condition.

3.4.2 Customers are responsible for managing trees in their own gardens. However, we are committed to supporting customers who may be unable to manage trees by conducting inspections upon request and ordering subsequent work if required.

3.5 Gritting

3.5.1 We will make reasonable efforts to grit high footfall areas within our extra care schemes in persistent icy conditions, and we will ensure that grit bins are kept replenished.

3.6 Waste management

- 3.6.1 Saxon Weald will arrange clearances on communal land under its ownership to address fly tipping and litter.
- 3.6.2 Where possible, we will take action against customers who are responsible for fly tipping or dumping goods in communal areas under the terms of their tenancy or lease.
- 3.6.3 We will seek to promote the recycling of household waste and, where appropriate, provide facilities to support this.

3.7 Pest Control

- 3.7.1 Saxon Weald is responsible for dealing with pest issues on our communal land. We will take a managed approach to tackling pest issues within customers' homes, taking into consideration the severity of the issue, the cause of infestation, and the customer's personal circumstances. Full details of this process are set out in the Pest Control Procedure.

3.8 Shared spaces managed by others

- 3.8.1 Saxon Weald owns homes on some sites where communal areas are managed by external managing agents. We also have properties located close to shared public spaces, such as parks and playgrounds.
- 3.8.2 We will maintain relationships with managing agents to ensure that the services they provide are delivered and communal areas are maintained to an acceptable standard. This includes grounds maintenance and the maintenance of unadopted roads and footpaths.

3.9 Neighbourhood improvements

- 3.9.1 Where funds allow, we will work with customers to identify and carry out improvements to communal areas, prioritising areas most in need. Examples include bin store improvements, installation of communal seating areas, and additional planting in communal gardens.

3.10 Fire safety

- 3.10.1 Saxon Weald's overall approach to fire safety is set out in the Fire Safety Policy. In terms of managing communal areas, we have adopted a 'zero tolerance' approach to the storage of goods or items in communal areas. This means that no items can be stored in the communal areas of blocks, including mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs. The cost for the removal of these items will be recharged to customers.
- 3.10.2 Where there is no designated mobility scooter store available, we will offer to pay for advice and support from occupational therapy services to support disabled customers to find suitable alternative options.
- 3.10.3 We will proactively remove any items left in communal areas. We will apply a tort notice (see section 8.1 on legal requirements) to items to allow seven

days for customers to remove them. However, if the items are a significant risk, they may be removed immediately.

3.11 Abandoned vehicles

3.11.1 As a landowner, Saxon Weald has the legal right to remove vehicles, trailers, horse boxes, caravans, etc., that are parked in an unauthorised area or have been abandoned.

3.11.2 We have given permission for abandoned or untaxed vehicles to be removed from Saxon Weald land by an initiative called 'Operation Crackdown' – a joint initiative run by the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and Sussex Police.

4.0 Customer engagement

4.1 We use different ways to involve customers in monitoring our estates:

- a) The Green Team is a group of volunteers who are scoring the quality of grounds maintenance on the estates where they live. This information is shared with the contractors to ensure performance meets the required standards.
- b) The Community Inspectors carry out estate inspections in their neighbourhoods and provide 'on the ground' insight into the services provided where they live.

4.2 We understand the importance of considering the individual needs and circumstances of our customers when managing our neighbourhoods. This means adapting our services and approach as is reasonable. For example, where budget is available, we may help customers who are struggling with their garden to get it back in order; we will then signpost to others who could help. We support applications for disabled parking bays and will make reasonable access adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010.

4.3 We will hold community days and other customer involvement activities to engage with customers within their neighbourhoods.

5.0 Value for money

5.1 The tendering process for neighbourhood contracts (grounds maintenance and cleaning) balances cost and quality and incorporates feedback from customers. Customers will be consulted on a range of possible service options and standards (and the cost of these) so that they can make choices and influence the service specifications.

5.2 Quality of services delivered by both contractors and inhouse teams will be monitored against detailed service specifications, standards, and performance measures to ensure value for money is achieved.

6.0 Monitoring and review

6.1 We will monitor the quality and outcomes of neighbourhood management through a range of ongoing checks and feedback channels, including:

- **Customer experience surveys**, including Tenant Satisfaction Measures, to understand how residents feel about their neighbourhood.
- **Routine site inspections** to assess the condition, safety, and upkeep of neighbourhood areas.
- **Joint audits with contractors** to review performance and ensure agreed standards are being met.
- **Reviewing neighbourhood-related customer contacts** to identify trends, issues, and areas needing attention.
- **Customer engagement projects** that give residents opportunities to shape services and provide direct feedback.

6.2 This policy will be reviewed at least every three years to ensure that it reflects the needs of our customers, good practice, and changes to legislation or regulation.

7.0 Equality and diversity

7.1 Saxon Weald recognises that some customers may be considered vulnerable due to personal circumstances or protected characteristics and may require reasonable adjustments to fully access neighbourhood management services. We are committed to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 by adapting our approach where it is reasonable and proportionate to do so, while maintaining health, safety, and service standards.

7.2 Vulnerable customers may include, but are not limited to, older people, disabled people, customers with mental health needs or cognitive impairments, households with young children, customers experiencing financial hardship, and those with communication or language barriers.

7.3 Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Making **reasonable access adjustments** to communal areas, estate layouts, signage, or service delivery where practicable.
- Providing **additional support for disabled customers**, including assistance with applications for disabled parking bays and funding advice and support from occupational therapy services where mobility equipment storage in communal areas is restricted for fire safety reasons.
- Adjusting **communication methods**, such as using clear and simple language, offering verbal explanations, allowing extra time to respond to correspondence, or providing alternative formats where appropriate.
- Taking a **managed and proportionate approach to enforcement**, including fly-tipping action, removal of items from communal areas, and pest management, by considering individual circumstances alongside safety and legal obligations.
- Offering **practical support on a discretionary basis**, where budgets allow, to assist customers struggling to maintain gardens or external areas, followed by signposting to appropriate longer-term support.

- Carrying out **more frequent inspections and monitoring** in retirement and extra care schemes, linked to on-site scheme manager presence and fire safety requirements.
 - Prioritising **safety measures** in areas used by vulnerable customers, such as enhanced gritting of high-footfall routes in extra care schemes and prompt removal of hazards.
- 7.4 Where reasonable adjustments are requested, Saxon Weald will assess each request on an individual basis, balancing the needs of the customer with statutory requirements, health and safety considerations, and available resources.
- 7.5 Staff working in neighbourhoods are expected to be alert to signs of vulnerability and to seek advice or make referrals to appropriate internal teams or partner agencies where additional support may be required.
- 7.6 Information about neighbourhood responsibilities and services will be provided in line with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, ensuring that customers are able to understand what support is available and how to request reasonable adjustments.
- 7.7 No person or group of people, either working for Saxon Weald or seeking housing, services, employment or contracts from us, will be treated less favourably because of their or their partner's, family's, friend's or associated person's protected characteristics, which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

8.0 Legal and regulatory requirements

Legal requirements

- 8.1 The following legal requirements affect this policy:
- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** – This is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety, which includes requirements for protecting the health, safety, and welfare of members of the public as well as colleagues.
 - **The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** – This requires all those in control of non-domestic premises, including the communal areas of blocks of flats, to take adequate measures to ensure the safety from fire of all occupants and visitors to the building.
 - **The Fire Safety Act 2021** – This act amends The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to include the building's structure and external walls, communal doors and common parts, doors and windows of external walls and anything attached to the walls, including balconies.
 - **The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022** – This is an addition to The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and sets out recommendations for ensuring the fire safety of all multi-occupied residential buildings with two or more sets of domestic premises, and additional duties for properties over 11 metres and 18 metres.
 - **Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977** – This is a formal legal document used by landlords to notify a person to collect goods left behind

after a lease has ended or in communal areas. It gives notice that items will be removed, sold, or disposed of if not collected within a specified period.

Regulatory requirements

8.2 The Regulator of Social Housing has three consumer standards that are applicable to this policy:

- a) **The Safety and Quality Standard:** "Registered providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas".
- b) **The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard:** "Registered providers must provide tenants with accessible information about the responsibilities of the registered provider and the tenant for maintaining homes, communal areas, shared spaces and neighbourhoods".
- c) **The Neighbourhood and Community Standard:** "Registered providers must work co-operatively with tenants, other landlords and relevant organisations to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of shared spaces".

Version	Amendment	By	Date
2	Three-yearly review	Laura Anderson	Jan 2019
3	Three-yearly review	Les Marjoram & Laura Anderson	Jan 2022
4	Review of whole policy	Thomas Coleman	Apr 2024
5	Review of whole policy following recommendations from the Task and Finish Group (customer scrutiny group)	Matt Green, Estate Services Manager Les Marjoram, Assistant Director of Housing	May 2026