

Plymouth Community Homes



Caretaking and Estate Management Policy

- **Purpose**

Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) is committed to maintaining the quality of estates and communal areas through the effective management of:

- caretaking services (cleaning and maintenance of communal areas)
- regular estate inspections and walkabouts;
- residents' responsibilities (i.e. maintaining gardens, erecting satellite dishes);
- environmental works in conjunction with the Local Authority , such as: lighting, security, waste recycling, fly tipping, vandalism, litter and pest control / animal welfare;
- ground and landscape maintenance work;
- play grounds and play equipment owned by PCH;
- garage areas, car parking and abandoned vehicles.

This policy outlines how we aim to provide excellent services that impact positively on the quality of our residents' lives.

PCH has detailed procedures and service standards, which support the practical implementation and processes associated with the core aspects of our estate management policy.

- Policy
 1. Caretaking services
 2. Environmental work
 3. Grounds and landscape maintenance work
 4. Playgrounds and play equipment
 5. Garages, car parking and abandoned vehicles
 6. Estate Inspections and walkabouts
 7. Residents' responsibilities
 8. Equality and diversity
 9. Monitoring and review

1. Caretaking services

1.1 Caretakers' duties can vary depending on the nature of the block. In general Caretakers are responsible for some or all of the following duties:

- Ensuring that shared and common parts of the estate are kept clean and tidy. They are not required to sweep or clean internal areas of the block, such as staircases or landings
- Reporting repairs identified via daily inspections
- Replacing or reporting defective light bulbs or fittings on communal staircases, landings and lobbies
- Resetting security door time clocks to the correct settings
- Resetting time clocks to communal staircase lighting facilities

- Putting out the bins and sweeping/cleaning the bin rooms
- Clearing blocked waste chutes
- Working with Housing Officers to enlist the co-operation of residents in maintaining reasonable behaviour and helping to maintain good relations on the estate.

(This list is not exhaustive).

1.2 PCH Caretakers will:

- Wear name badges and uniforms and personal protective equipment (PPE) whilst on duty.
- Act as a point of information and contact for residents.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Treat customers with courtesy and respect at all times.

1.3 Appropriate cleaning cycles will be in grouping accordance with the work schedules for each specific block. Where cleaning frequencies or standards are to be adjusted this will only be done by involvement and consultation with affected residents.

1.4 PCH will ensure that agreed standards of service are met through on-going resident involvement, consultation and the collection of feedback.

To demonstrate this commitment PCH will:

- regularly review this policy in consultation with residents;
- involve customers in the monitoring and testing of service delivery standards, for example by utilising the relevant continuous improvement group, residents' associations and recognised residents' groups;
- publicise our approach to estate management services, for example in resident magazines or newsletters;

1.5 PCH will aim to achieve and maintain a high level of customer care at all times

2. Environmental work

2.1 PCH will carry out general litter collection on land it has responsibility for, in accordance with the agreed schedules within the Grounds Maintenance Contract.

2.2 PCH will arrange for the removal of any bulk rubbish and fly tipping on land it has responsibility for, and report any fly tipping or dumping to other land owners as appropriate.

2.3 PCH will work with its partners to determine preventative measures to prevent fly tipping, encourage waste recycling, and take enforcement action as deemed appropriate.

2.4 PCH will deal swiftly with the effects of low-level vandalism and graffiti. Any offensive graffiti will be removed within 24 hours of being identified. Other graffiti or effects of low-level vandalism will be dealt with in the agreed timescales.

2.5 PCH will arrange for treatment of areas of infestation of pests or vermin where it is identified, and the source is on land under its ownership or management.

3. Grounds and landscape maintenance work

3.1 PCH will arrange for a planned cycle of maintenance to grass, shrub & flower beds, trees and land which it owns or has responsibility for managing. This service will initially be provided by Plymouth City Council and managed through a service level agreement.

3.2 Monitoring of the standards, which have been agreed in consultation with residents, will be carried out during estate walkabouts and at intervals determined by the SLA documentation.

3.3 PCH will introduce a Gardening Assistance scheme within two years of transfer. A small charge will be payable for this scheme.

4. Playgrounds and play equipment

4.1 Any issues identified which show a lack of maintenance, disrepair, vandalism or fly tipping will be reported to the owners of play equipment or parks located on the estate.

5. Garages, car parking and abandoned vehicles

5.1 PCH recognises that unauthorised and inconsiderate parking by others can cause some residents inconvenience and unnecessary difficulty.

We will act swiftly to address all unauthorised parking and arrange (in conjunction with Plymouth City Council) for the removal of any abandoned vehicles, in line with our abandoned vehicle and unauthorised parking procedures.

5.2 PCH provides allocated car parking spaces and bays, and garages to lease to residents, in some areas.

5.3 Garages are offered for let for the storage of vehicles only. Garages and areas surrounding them should not be used for business purposes or the repair of vehicles.

5.4 Garages are allocated to residents according to time spent on a waiting list, although priority will be given to residents with a physical disability.

6. Estate Inspections and walkabouts

6.1 In order to ensure the estates, including tenants' gardens and open areas, are maintained to the required standard, PCH carries out regular estate inspections and walkabouts through the estate team. The frequency of inspection will be adjusted to reflect individual estate profiles, and hot spots.

6.2 Residents are encouraged to participate in estate inspections and feedback on the quality of estate management services and help to influence future service improvements including the monitoring of estate standards. Where possible residents will be notified in advance of when walkabouts and estate inspections are scheduled to take place together with feedback from previous walkabouts or inspections.

7. Residents responsibilities

7.1 PCH encourages residents to keep their gardens tidy and free from rubbish in accordance with tenancy conditions, and information provided in the tenant handbook.

7.2 PCH will extend the gardening assistance programme to all tenants within two years of transfer for which a charge would be payable.

7.3 Tenants should obtain consent from PCH to erect a garden shed, or any other external construction in their garden. PCH will outline any specific conditions or requirements as part of the written permission to tenants. The continued maintenance and repair of any construction will remain the responsibility of the tenant.

8. Equality and Diversity

8.1 PCH recognises that it operates in a community within which there is wide social diversity, and are committed to providing equal opportunities and valuing diversity.

8.2 Through the management of our housing stock we aim to treat all customers fairly, and with respect and professionalism regardless of their gender, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation and marital status.

8.3 To enable all residents to have clear information and equal access to our available properties, PCH publishes information in a range of appropriate languages and formats and through a range of media. Feedback is also accepted through a variety of different routes to reflect individual customers' preferences or needs.

8.4 This policy has been designed to be fully inclusive regardless of the ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religious belief, or disability of service users or residents.

8.5 The policy has been developed giving full consideration to the PCH Equality and Diversity policy.

9. Monitoring and review:

9.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly in accordance with PCH's review timetable by the Customer Focus Committee.

9.2 Procedures relating to this policy will also be periodically reviewed, taking into account any operational issues that arise.

9.3 Review will take into account any changes in law and best practice.

9.4 The reviews will include equality impact assessments to ensure that all of our policies encourage and support our determination to promote equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

9.5 Plymouth Community Homes will ensure that opportunities are provided for tenants and leaseholders to engage in the process of reviewing and monitoring this policy.

9.6 Systems will be in place to monitor progress against agreed targets, and reported via the Customer Focus Committee to the Board on an annual basis.

9.7 Monitoring will include the following elements

- assessments of tenant satisfaction with what is being done, making sure that methods of doing so take into account the access needs of all;
- regular reports to the board who have overall responsibility for ensuring that the policy delivers continuous improvement and value for money

- systems that identify performance issues and monitor the progress of actions to address them

- **Relevant legislation**

Occupiers Liability Act 1957

Criminal Damage Act 1971

Defective Premises Act 1972

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Environmental Protection Act 1990

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

- **Links to other policies and strategies**

Repairs policy

Anti-social behaviour policy

Hate Crime and Harassment Policy

Tenancy Management Policy

Customer Care and Access Policy