

Neighbourhood Management Policy

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1. Document Overview

Purpose	To set out Thrive's approach to managing our Neighbourhoods.		
Audience	Customers, non-Thrive Customers, Contractors and Colleagues.		
Data Classification	For Internal & External Use		
Review Cycle	60 months		
Last Review	13/02/2025	Next Review	13/02/2030

Relevant Legislation	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, The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, The ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014, Consumer Standard: Neighbourhood and Community, Equality & Diversity Act 2010.
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2. Document Version History

Version	Date	Author	Reviewer	Changes & Additions
V1.0	01/06/2019		Jo Barrett	Created
V2.0	01/06/2024	NC and SW	Customer Working Group	Amendments to include our approach to Neighbourhood Disputes, Pests and Vermin, Electric Vehicle Charging, CCTV and Tree Maintenance, to prove additional clarity in accordance with Consumer Standards and recommendations within the Housing Ombudsman noise spotlight report.

3. Introduction

This policy sets out Thrive's role to effectively manage communal areas and contribute to shared spaces. We want to ensure that Thrive Homes' properties and surrounding shared spaces are safe, attractive and well-maintained places to live and that customers have access to. Communal areas include gardens surrounding a block, entrance halls, staircases and any bin and storage areas, that Thrive is responsible for. Shared spaces can include green spaces, car parks and playgrounds close to a Thrive building that we do not own.

4. Scope

This policy explains our approach to managing the communal areas; how we will involve customers in managing and improving our blocks and how we will work in partnership with other agencies concerned with the safety, security and appearance of the communal areas and shared spaces.

This includes the planning, monitoring, management and delivery of services relating to where Thrive has a responsibility or is responsible for;

- gardens, open spaces and grassed areas including tree management
- communal pathways, roadways and parking areas.
- communal bin stores 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, TV aerials etc.

5. Purpose

Thrive Homes recognises that there is a clear relationship between the quality of our properties and customers overall quality of life.

Our vision for Thrive Homes Communal areas is that they are safe and well looked after areas where our customers want to live.

This policy aims to:

- set out a pro-active approach to identify issues in communal areas
- ensure the grounds and communal facilities we own and manage are well maintained

6. Policy Statement

While Thrive Homes aims to deliver high quality communal services, having the support and co-operation of customers 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 customers and / or their visitors.

To maintain communal standards, we need the involvement and support of customers to act responsibly. Customers pay for services through their rent or service charge, so where we believe that a customer's 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 in the most serious cases possession action to end their tenancy. We will also work with other agencies where it is appropriate to do so, for example the local authority or police.

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

We expect customers to keep their gardens 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:

- conduct regular communal area inspections to ensure communal areas and gardens are well maintained, tidy and free from graffiti.
- work closely with local authority, Police and other services to help keep our properties free from anti-social behaviour, harassment and hate crime.
- conduct fire risk assessments in blocks of flats to identify and address fire risks.
- conduct checks to ensure our blocks are compliant with health and safety requirements, such as emergency light and AOV testing.
- let empty homes quickly to help maintain the appearance of the area.
- Identify improvements and investment needs to ensure our properties meet our communal standards.

7. Flat Block (Estate) Inspections

We will carry out estate inspections to all properties with communal areas or facilities no less than four times a year to ensure that they are being looked after, services are being delivered to our standard and to identify problems that need to be addressed.

These inspections will include a range of checks both internally and externally for health and safety reasons, including but not limited to:

- Repairs and maintenance – including door entry systems, signage and lighting.
- Ensuring the communal areas are kept clear and free of hazards.
- Cleaning and grounds maintenance standards – including bin areas and fly tipping.

The frequency of the inspections will be determined and where necessary increased on an individual basis and assessed on a range of factors, such as:

- Anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping
- the level of complaints and reported repairs
- the extent and condition of communal facilities, including any reports of damage.
- issues highlighted following fire risk assessments
- poorly kept gardens
- type of properties including number of stories

Areas where Thrive Homes own no communal land or facilities will not have regular inspections but may still be inspected for management purposes.

Our Communal Area Standards will ensure that we are consistent in our standards of assessment. Where a property is assessed as not good enough, we will take a planned approach with specific actions for improvement to ensure that any additional services or facilities are costed, planned and monitored.

8. Communal Services

Thrive Homes will provide a range of services either directly or through contractors to deliver:

- Communal cleaning
- Grounds maintenance
- Window cleaning
- Tree work
- Playground maintenance

Services will differ from property to property depending on local factors and is paid for through customers rent or service charges.

9. Refuse and Recycling

Customers are responsible for disposing of their waste correctly, including bulky items.

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

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

10. Parking and Garages

We will work with customers and external agencies to reduce irresponsible parking, including to resolve access problems for emergency and service vehicles, and abandoned vehicles.

Where customers do not have designated parking and the area is not owned or managed by Thrive, any issues should be raised by the customer with the local authority.

We may appoint a reputable company to operate a parking scheme, or parking maintenance, in our properties to ensure the effective management/control of parking spaces, facilities, gates or barriers. Additional charges and local policies may apply.

Where parking areas are managed and/or maintained by third parties we will advise customers of this and who they should contact to report any issues.

Customers are responsible for observing any parking restrictions and signs, including the use of disabled parking facilities and keeping areas clear.

Vehicles parked on Thrive land should be roadworthy, have a valid MOT and vehicle tax.

We will work with the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and local authority 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 charge the costs for the removal, storage and disposal of the vehicle.

Garages should be used in accordance with the conditions of the licence agreement and should not be sub-let or used inappropriately.

11. Electric Vehicle charging points

We recognise there is a need to consider electric vehicle (EV) charging points at our properties and where possible will include provisions on new build developments. For the majority of our portfolio, where there is not a provision for EV charging points, we will promote local solutions.

Active EVCP means a charging point or station for the recharging of plug-in electric vehicles that is fully wired and ready to use.

Passive EVCP means a charging point or station for the recharging of plug-in electric vehicles where the electricity supply is not yet activated and some equipment may need to be installed or other works carried out before it is capable of use.

Customers with allocated parking that want to install their own EV charging point or change a passive EVCP to an active EVCP should request permission from Thrive.

Customers with access to a Thrive EVCP will be expected to pay the costs of the supply of electricity, repairs and maintenance. Specific details will be set out in the tenancy agreement or lease.

12. Playground Equipment

Where Thrive Homes owns play equipment, we will ensure that it is safe to use, properly inspected and fit for purpose. Thrive undertake monthly inspections of play equipment and assess whether the playground equipment is safe and structurally sound, this frequency may change based upon recommended guidance / legislation and the management requirements for each site.

All play areas and equipment are subject to an independent annual audit by an external contractor who carries out a comprehensive inspection by a RPII qualified inspector.

13. Tree Management

Thrive Homes will ensure that all trees on communal areas owned by Thrive Homes are managed and maintained through a proactive and risk-based approach.

Thrive Homes will not maintain trees in private or individual gardens. This will be the responsibility of the customer as detailed in their tenancy/licence/leasehold agreement (where applicable).

14. Property or Garden Improvements

Estate improvements are planned works to the communal areas of properties intended to enhance the local environment. Before deciding about spending budgets on communal improvements we will work with customers that live in the building to consider their priorities.

Where any proposed improvements would result in an additional service charge, we will consult with all leaseholders and customers before any works are carried out which will cost any individual resident or leaseholder more than £250. This includes planned maintenance programmes and enhancements such as new flooring, painting, new or additional lighting.

All estate improvement works will be identified, scoped and developed through joint working of the Estates, Neighbourhood and Property teams and any additional stakeholders required.

15. Other Agencies Responsibilities

Where issues are identified or reported on our properties that are not the responsibility of Thrive Homes 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 or the local authority highways agency.

16. Land Transfers

Thrive Homes will consider the transfer of land from communal to private or vice versa where it will improve the area or make it easier to manage. Each case will be considered on its merits.

Before such a transfer can take place, a full appraisal will take place and appropriate consultation carried out with those to be affected by the transfer. If Thrive land is sold, any disposal will be in accordance with Thrive's financial regulations.

17. Motorised Wheelchairs & Ride on Scooters

Thrive Homes recognises that many people use powered vehicles to assist with mobility needs. The storage of these vehicles must be within the home or in a designated area approved by Thrive Homes such as a secure store. Thrive Homes will not permit the storage of such vehicles to compromise the means of escape from blocks of flats or put customers at risk on health and safety grounds. Charging or storage of vehicles in the lobbies or corridors of flats is not allowed.

Where permission is granted, the customer must agree and comply with all conditions placed upon the storage and use of the vehicle. Thrive Homes reserves the right to withdraw permission at any time should the conditions fail to be adhered to.

Customers can apply for a hardstanding / charging point in accordance with our Aids and Adaptations policy. The need for the work must be supported by a relevant health professional that would normally be an occupational therapist.

It should be noted that it is often not practicable to provide such adaptations for customers in flats.

We will consider requests for adaptations to communal areas to assist those with mobility provided the costs are proportionate. Such requests are dealt with in accordance with the Aids and Adaptations policy.

18. Storage of Items in Communal Areas

Communal areas are to be kept completely clear at all times. Our Communal Area Standard set out our expectations on the use of communal spaces.

Where items are left in a communal area Thrive will issue a TORTs notice and follow the TORTs procedure. Thrive may arrange removal without notice where an item is causing an immediate Health & Safety issue or considered fly-tipping.

19. Neighbour Disputes

We encourage customers to take responsibility for minor personal disputes with their neighbours and to try to resolve any problems themselves.

We may ask for Neighbourhood management event logs (Appendix 1) or noise recordings to be provided as part of an initial investigation to determine if the issue being reported meets the definition of antisocial behaviour.

Where a customer has told us about an issue that they are experiencing with a neighbour which does not meet the definition of anti-social behaviour, we will:

- Be clear about what Thrive can or cannot do
- Offer support and advice
- Offer tools such as 'Dear neighbour' cards which are available on Thrive's website

- Consider the use of mediation
- Signpost to agencies where appropriate

Types of behaviour may include, but are not limited to, nuisance considered as general living including, general living noises, dogs barking / fouling, parking or leaving bins in a particular location, smells from smoking or cooking, boundary/fencing or tree disputes.

Our Good Neighbour Guide can be referred to for tips to avoid our customers disturbing each other and enjoy where they live.

20. Pests and vermin

Thrive are responsible for infestation within communal areas only and will use a specialist contractor where appropriate.

21. CCTV

Thrive Homes does not ordinarily use CCTV on its estates or around its properties. However, where this equipment is required to aid the resolution of the case, Thrive Homes will consider whether it is appropriate to refer this request to the relevant ASB partnership group to facilitate this data/evidence gathering, or, depending upon the particular circumstances of the case (including the urgency of the case), source CCTV itself while complying with any relevant GDPR and Data Protection legislation. facilitate any data/evidence gathering.

Thrive customers who have CCTV installed (including Ring Doorbells) with our permission should ensure they respect people's privacy rights and take steps to minimise intrusion to neighbours and passers-by. Further guidance on how to do this and customers responsibilities can be found at <https://ico.org.uk>

22. Thrives Core Behaviours

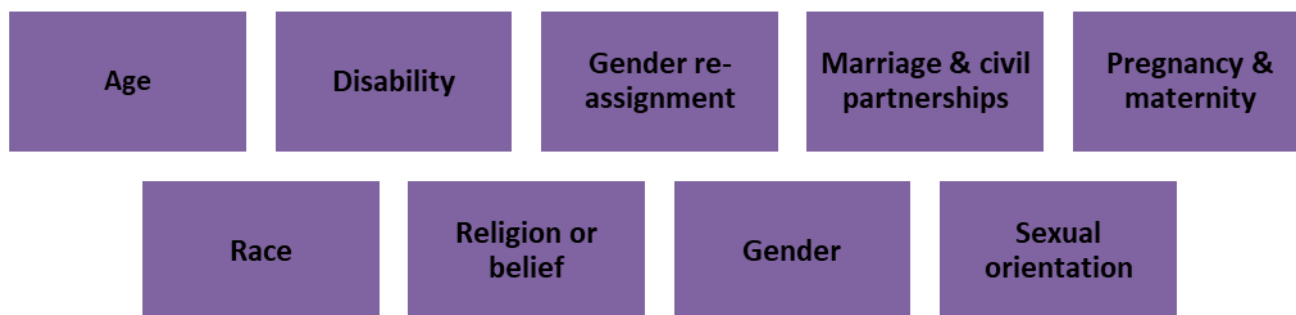
Working with colleagues across Thrive, we have established 5 core behaviours we believe support the culture Thrive strives to foster. To demonstrate how our behaviours can support the delivery of this policy we have set out below some examples:

Tuned-in	We want to work with you to find a good outcome for everyone.
Curious	We want to get things right for everyone, so listening to your experience will help other customers
Smart, Can do	Acting quickly and efficiently to resolve customer concerns.
Ownership	Seeing things through to completion.
Pride	Working in a way that shows the customer we take pride in what we do.

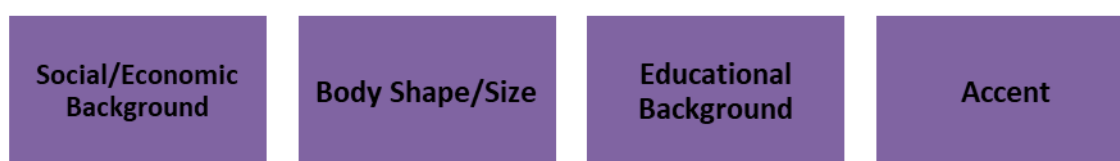
Customers and colleagues are entitled to hold us accountable if we behave in a manner that isn't in keeping with the statements above. To be clear that doesn't mean we can always deliver exactly what is being sought. but it does mean we demonstrate empathy and provide clarity.

23. Treating Everyone with Respect

This policy has been impact assessed in line with Thrive Homes' obligation to comply with the Equality Act (2010). We aim to design inclusive services, policies and behave in a way that does not discriminate on the grounds of:



While we are not required by law, we seek to ensure we do not discriminate on any basis that is rooted in prejudice, for example we are not influence by:



Every effort will be made to ensure that decisions made reflect this commitment.

24. Other Related Policies and Guidance

This policy links to other policies Thrive has in place, including but not limited to:

- Anti-social behaviour Policy
- Aids and Adaptations Policy

As a business we try hard to keep all these related policies aligned with each other. Anyone spotting inconsistency or contradictory statements, is asked to contact the Author and make concerns known. Supporting us to keep information clear and consistent will always be welcomed.

25. Risk and Assurance

The commitments and intent of this policy is aligned to our Strategic and Risk & Assurance Frameworks, specifically:

Strategic Framework Pillar	Corporate Risk Register
A Fair deal for customers	Customer Service and Experience Legal & regulatory Compliance

To ensure we hold ourselves accountable we will:

- Report on estate inspection outcomes in the health of the business reporting
- Contract manage service providers with robust Key Performance Indicators
- Review and address all forms of customer feedback

26. Policy Approval

As this policy is a core component of how Thrive manages its business the document will be evaluated by the Safe and Well Working Group and Committee/Board as part of any review.

27. Support and Further Guidance

This policy has been drafted with input from colleagues across Thrive. Any concerns on how to interpret or follow its requirements, can be raised with members of the Customer Relations or Estates Teams.

Colleagues have a responsibility to work in a way that's consistent with the expectations set out in the policy and its implied intent. Should anyone witness or become aware activities that undermine or conflict with the intention this policy please alert a member of the Customer Relations or Estates Teams, or any member of the leadership team as soon as possible.