

Neighbourhood & Estate Management Policy

Customer Service

GENERAL - EXTERNAL

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1. Purpose

1.1 This Policy explains how Riverside aims to ensure that neighbourhoods, care and support schemes and services and communal areas are safe, clean and well maintained. Riverside strive to provide excellent services to those communities and want our neighbourhoods, schemes and services to be places where current and future customers want to live. The way in how we manage, maintain and invest in those areas directly affects the quality of life and the environment enjoyed by Riverside customers.

1.2 Riverside will do this by:

- Working co-operatively with customers to take all reasonable steps to ensure communal areas and shared spaces are safe, clean and well maintained.
- Working co-operatively with customers to identify solutions to local problems.
- Involve customers to monitor and scrutinise standards to local service delivery within Riverside neighbourhoods, schemes and services.
- Developing neighbourhood plans with customers, local partners and stakeholders to ensure plans reflect the priorities for customers in their local area, identifying what matters most and take actions to reflect those priorities.
- We will work in partnership with local authority departments, the police and other relevant agencies as appropriate to effectively manage and deal with reports of anti-social behaviour and hate crime within the neighbourhoods we manage.
- Take a proactive approach to neighbourhood and estate management through strong partnerships between Riverside and local stakeholders and ensuring that our neighbourhoods, schemes and services are well maintained, safe and offer local opportunities of support to local customers.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all Riverside properties and customers, including Social Housing, Care & Support, Riverside Home Ownership & One Housing. It does not apply to members of the public that we do not have a contractual relationship with, claims of personal injury, or sub tenants of a leaseholder.

The policy does not cover Riverside Scotland.

2.2 The policy relates to Riverside's management of neighbourhoods, schemes and services and internal and external communal shared spaces.

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3. Principles

Maintaining Communal Areas

Regulatory standards: Neighbourhood & Community Standard; Safety & Quality Standard

3.1 We will deliver grounds maintenance and cleaning services in communal areas to ensure they are kept clean and tidy. These Services are provided by external contractors and internal teams who deliver a standardised service across the group with minor variations to accommodate local requirements. Such services are service chargeable.

3.2 We will work co-operatively with customers, other landlords and relevant organisations in the maintenance and upkeep of internal and external shared spaces by supporting customers in scrutinising local service delivery from contractors and Riverside services and teams.

3.3 Security and safety is a high priority for customers, we will ensure all walkways, stairwells and footpaths are well maintained with sufficient lighting to provide customers with safe access and deter anti-social behaviour.

3.4 Where CCTV is installed within Riverside communal areas, it will be used to provide reassurance to customers and to help prevent crime. Usage will be in line with legislation and good practice and used as necessary for the purpose of crime prevention and detection. Footage will be made available to the Police upon their request but will not be made available to individual customers.

3.5 We will manage contracts and standards, considering quality assurance information, local inspections and customer feedback.

3.6 When planning new developments and communal area improvements we will consider the impact on service charges and try to minimise costs.

3.7 We will ensure these services provide value for money and provide customers with a breakdown of any services carried out in communal areas and how these are reflected in their service charges.

3.8 We will maintain trees in communal areas which are owned by Riverside if they present a health and safety risk and also to keep them healthy and well maintained.

3.9 We will remove graffiti (hate crime related graffiti removed within 48 hours) and repair damage caused by vandalism, fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and deal with other environmental issues on our land and property. It is recognised that such issues have a negative impact on the estate and environment and negatively affect customer satisfaction with their area, where a customer of Riverside is identified as being responsible, we will charge them through a recoverable charge or take legal action against their tenancy as appropriate.

3.10 Where pest infestations are identified within internal communal areas Riverside will organise treatment. Upon further investigation if an infestation is caused by a customer or customers due to their living arrangements, a recharge to the customer will be applicable.

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Neighbourhood Management

Regulatory standards: Neighbourhood & Community Standard; Safety & Quality Standard

3.11 We will work with local partners including the Police, registered providers and local authority community safety teams to address issues such as anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance, environmental crime (such as fly tipping), vandalism, graffiti and vehicle abandonment across all of our neighbourhoods, schemes and services. We will, where possible, utilise mediation services to help resolve neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

3.12 We will work with customers and local stakeholders to tackle parking issues on our land we own in our neighbourhoods and schemes. This includes irresponsible parking and parking related disputes. Riverside will manage parking controls such as barriers and gates where they exist and new parking controls will be considered where necessary.

3.13 We will communicate to customers about landlord and customer responsibilities, issues our customers have reported and how we have or are responding.

3.14 We will address untidy gardens with customers and support them in maintaining their responsibilities.

3.15 Where we believe that a customers actions are the cause of problems, we will work with partner agencies where possible to identify solutions and actions, this may also result in enforcement action(s) against a tenancy or tenancies, if appropriate. Riverside may also look to recover any associated costs attributed to this resolution and outcome.

Neighbourhood Plans

Regulatory standards: Neighbourhood & Community Standard.

3.16 We will proactively gather data and report on a wide range of indicators in order to analyse the performance of our neighbourhoods and (where possible) schemes. Data and information will be used to identify the individual characteristics of a neighbourhood and working with our customers we will identify the priorities for their neighbourhoods and schemes and develop a neighbourhood and / or scheme plan. This includes understanding the profile of our customers against any protected characteristics.

3.17 Where neighbourhoods or schemes are identified as needing intervention and or investment, through local engagement with customers and partners a neighbourhood and / or scheme plan will be developed, with a focus on building resilience within a neighbourhood or scheme through projects and services linked to our Community & Livelihoods strategy. Examples of actions set out within a neighbourhood or scheme plan would be:

- Customer involvement to shape and influence the outcomes in neighbourhoods
- Focusing money advice and employment and training activities
- Support local community groups
- Support community activities throughout the year, such as community events & environmental improvements

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- Link in with local partners to enhance the offer for local customers
- Improvements to neighbourhood
- Provide customers with the opportunity to review and feedback on delivery progress
- Working in partnership with partners, agencies, charities and the local authority to bring to life projects in neighbourhoods and estates which will benefit customers and the wider community.
- Funding through Riverside Foundation for community led projects, helping to address local challenges.
- Seek to establish match funding for projects from partner agencies.

3.18 We will offer a range of services that support our customers to navigate the cost of living crisis, such as employment & training, money advice, affordable warmth and the housing sustainment service.

3.19 In smaller areas where we own properties but are not the main registered provider of housing, or the number of Riverside properties is much lower, such as rural or dispersed areas, we will tailor the approach and develop a smaller neighbourhood plan in partnership with customers and key stakeholders and in response to particular issues of concern.

Ensuring Riverside Customers Safety

Regulatory standards: Neighbourhood & Community Standard; Safety & Quality Standard.

3.20 We will take all reasonable steps to protect customers within our properties, as well as visitors, staff, contractors and members of the general public, from risks associated with building safety by:

- Ensuring each building has a designated building safety manager who is responsible for the safety of the communal areas and shared spaces.
- Building safety inspectors check all shared spaces regularly in line with the communal area risk management inspection procedure to ensure they are clear and safe. Any safety concerns raised through these inspections are reported and action taken as quickly as possible.
- Regular fire risk assessments carried out on all buildings with a communal / shared space and follow up any concerns to reduce risk.
- Wherever safety equipment is needed, including fire doors, fire safety equipment such as fire alarms, emergency lighting, lift call points; these will be regularly checked.
- Check the safe operation of lifting equipment, including passenger lifts and stair lifts.
- Ensure lift call points are maintained and operational.
- Inspect, service and maintain any other mechanical or electrical systems present e.g. lighting, remote monitoring systems, automatic doors and gates / barriers and access control door entry systems.
- Provide our customers with up to date information in relation to their building safety, information provided will be accessible in all forms.
- Provide our employees with comprehensive building safety information.

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- Ensure measures are in place to identify, manage and mitigate risks associated with hazardous materials including asbestos and water hygiene.
- Identify all fixed electrical installations, metered installations and electrical equipment, undertaking an inspection every 5 years.
- Inspect children's play areas within estates and neighbourhoods which are owned and managed by Riverside to ROSPA standards.

Customer Engagement and Involvement

Regulatory standards: Neighbourhood & Community Standard;

3.21 We recognise that the involvement of customers is essential to maintaining safe, attractive neighbourhoods and schemes, using customers local knowledge, insight and feedback is key to this approach and we will use feedback and insight to shape the approach

3.22 Customer feedback will be provided through Local Service Assessments, Patch Walks (inspections), Customer engagement sessions, such as tenants and residents association meetings, customer review panels (where applicable) and feedback from our complaints process.

3.23 We will carry out patch walks (inspections) across neighbourhoods to identify and address current issues. Customers and local stakeholders and partners (such as the Police, ward councillors, community groups) will be invited to patch walks within their areas.

3.24 Patch walks will be aligned with the relevant neighbourhood plan and the frequency of walks will be dependent on the issues and priorities identified within that neighbourhood plan.

3.25 In supported housing properties and services customers are engaged to seek their feedback and the local teams work to co-produce service delivery changes.

3.26 Within retirement living and supported housing schemes we work with customers to gain their feedback around their homes, inspectors scrutinise accommodation and service standards, reporting into the quality team and Riverside customer voice executive directly, making sure customer feedback shapes future development and improvements.

3.27 Customers will be consulted when any planned improvements to communal spaces are being considered and where possible prioritise improvements which customers request.

4. Further Information & Support

Service charge policy

Pet ownership guidance

Tackling anti-social behaviour policy

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Communal area risk management inspection procedure

Community & Livelihoods Strategy

Customer Experience Strategy

5. Roles and Responsibilities

<p>Social Housing Riverside Home Ownership Care and Support Operational Teams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work proactively with local partners, agencies and local authority to address anti social behaviour and environmental issues • Involve customers and stakeholders in patch walks and service scrutiny (where applicable). • Ownership and delivery of Neighbourhood and Patch plans • Deal promptly with estate issues as and when identified.
<p>Community Planning & Resilience Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use internal and external data to analyse neighbourhoods and provide data to help form neighbourhood plans. • Develop neighbourhood plans to address local priorities.
<p>Care and Support Quality Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support with scrutiny of retirement living services where applicable.
<p>Property Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of our shared spaces, to ensure Safe, Clean & well maintained. (safety and quality standards) & Service Charges • Shared Spaces Inspections (Hazard identification , Repair identification & functional testing) • local engagement with residents & stakeholders around their shared space
<p>Shared Spaces Contract Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with Consumer Standards and Statutory and regulatory health and safety assessments • Contract Management of Shared Spaces contracts (Repairs &

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	Maintenance Specialist Equipment and environmental services)
Asset Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned works in relation to neighbourhood plans and customer priorities as applicable.

6. Risks

Customer Experience

6.1 There is limited tolerance of variations to the service standards set and this is diminishing even further as Riverside drive up the customer experience. Riverside will continue to work towards improving delivery of customer services, the short-term consequence of making major improvements may be a temporary reduction in customer experience, however such reductions will only be tolerated where there is a clear articulation of the potential impact and an agreed action plan to return to acceptable levels.

6.2 A full suite of customer experience KPIs which are scrutinised by Group Board, Executive Directors, Customer Experience Committee and Care and Support Committee.

Customer Safety

6.3 There is no appetite for risk of harm to customers and others. Targets for building safety KPIs are generally set at 100% against the standards agreed.

6.4 A full suite of customer experience KPIs which are scrutinised by Group Board, Executive Directors, Customer Experience Committee and Care and Support Committee.

7. Appeal & Complaints

As detailed in the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, customers are invited to hold us to account for the decisions we make, that impact upon them, under this Policy/Procedure.

If a customer wishes to appeal a decision made under this Policy/Procedure, this should be received and heard under our complaint's procedure.

If a customer wishes to complain about the service they have received under this Policy/Procedure, this should be handled through our Complaint Handling Procedure, which is governed by the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code of Practice.

These associated procedures are available on our website at <https://www.riverside.org.uk/you-your-home/customer-feedback/> or

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8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Riverside is committed to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. We strive to be fair in our dealings with all people, communities and organisations, taking into account the diverse nature of their culture and background and actively promoting inclusion. This policy aligns with Riverside's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) and has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

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