

## **CROYDON CHURCHES HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 We are committed to creating places where people want to live and to help meet this goal, we provide various services to make sure our homes and neighbourhoods are maintained and improved to a high standard.
- 1.2 Well-managed buildings and neighbourhoods provide a better quality of life and act as a deterrent to antisocial behaviour, neighbour nuisance and crime. They are not only pleasant and well-kept places to live, but also offer residents the opportunity to develop skills to sustain their tenancies and become active and involved members of the community.
- 1.3 **The Charter** for Social Housing Residents, (Social Housing White Paper 2020), sets out seven themes for what every social housing resident should expect. Theme Six is: 'To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in'.
- 1.4 Much of this is aimed towards new developments and ensuring the build is well designed and that homes are kept to a decent standard. It is also expected that landlords do their bit to keep neighbourhoods safe and clean. Feedback from the government consultation noted that people talked about having pride in their community, but how this was sometimes let down by poor neighbourhood management, upkeep of buildings and the quality of shared spaces. Some residents also struggled to find green spaces to exercise, and others experienced isolation, loneliness and the challenge of dealing with antisocial behaviour. It is therefore important that our communal areas are well managed and that we invest in them to ensure they are positive spaces for our residents and local communities.
- 1.5 As part of our original consultation on Local Offers, our residents wanted the definition of 'local' to include all residents. Compared with many other Registered Providers, we operate within a small geographical area and so can offer consistent services across all our stock. However, on consulting residents regarding our estate services, we have been able to tailor services to residents in our older persons accommodation who requested a slightly different service when it came to our grounds maintenance and gardening services.

#### **2.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

- 2.1 Effective neighbourhoods are built on the shared responsibilities of all stakeholders including residents, landlords and (where applicable) support providers. This policy sets out our management approach for maintaining and improving these buildings and

neighbourhoods. This policy covers general needs including affordable rents, London living rent, shared ownership and leasehold properties managed by the Neighbourhoods Team, as well as supported housing and housing for older people which are managed by the Housing Services Team under our Intensive Housing services.

## 2.2 Our responsibilities as landlords include:

- providing quality services to maintain accommodation, communal and external areas in a good state of repair and cleanliness;
- periodic estate inspections by officers responsible for a patch;
- giving residents a variety of options for involvement in how those services are delivered, how performance is monitored and satisfaction assessed;
- making improvements to neighbourhoods in consultation with residents;
- working in partnership with those support providers delivering services to our more vulnerable residents;
- ensuring we meet our Health and Safety obligations;
- working in partnership to deal effectively with antisocial behaviour and neighbour nuisance via our Antisocial Behaviour Policy;
- supporting resident initiatives which build good neighbourly relationships and a sense of community, and;
- multi-agency working for the benefit of the areas our residents live in.

## 2.3 Residents' responsibilities include:

- complying with the terms of the tenancy agreement, licence or lease;
- helping us keep communal areas clean and tidy;
- making sure private gardens and homes are well maintained and that any repairs are reported;
- reporting antisocial behaviour and nuisance, and;
- being a considerate neighbour and not causing antisocial behaviour within the community.

2.4 Landlord and resident responsibilities are fully detailed in our tenancy agreements, leases and licence agreements.

2.5 The Director of Customers (DoC) and Director of Homes (DoH) have responsibility for ensuring that competent individuals are appointed to manage and maintain our neighbourhoods.

### 3.0 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIPS WITH RESIDENTS

- 3.1 **Engagement and consultation** – Resident engagement is central to our work and a key part of building community cohesion. We are committed to working with all tenures of residents to do this. Previously, our commitments were explained in our Resident Involvement Strategy 2016-20. This is currently under review, and we are in the process of developing a new Customer Strategy which will detail our new resident engagement and communication commitments. This will ensure we meet the requirements of **The Charter** and the new consumer standards and sign up to 'Together with Tenants'. The Together with Tenants Charter aims to strengthen the relationship between residents and landlords by providing a framework to help us get our services right and make sure we are held accountable.
- 3.2 Current engagement includes monthly and transactional surveys, our Consultation Group and wide reaching consultation exercises which have included our Business Plan ccha2025, our estate services and repairs procurement and our new Customer Standards. Our new strategy will also look at how we can achieve better scrutiny by residents and ensure we achieve our strategic objective to have services shaped by our residents for our residents.
- 3.3 **Resident Profiling** – We encourage and support joint working between all tenures of residents, staff and other partners to allow communities to flourish, and collect information about our residents to understand their needs better.
- 3.4 **Supporting our residents** – We will work with residents through our Community Strategy to encourage stronger communities and neighbourhood wellbeing by addressing worklessness, homelessness and youth engagement as well as delivering on other community improvement initiatives.
- 3.5 **Dealing with Antisocial Behaviour** – We are committed to working in partnership with all tenures of residents, staff and other partners to effectively tackle antisocial behaviour. This is explained in further detail in our Antisocial Behaviour Policy which is also under review.
- 3.6 **Intensive Housing Management** – To maintain the quality of accommodation our Maintenance & Wellbeing Assistants and Maintenance Assistants regularly visit, encouraging residents to inform them of repairs that need to be actioned and to participate in Health and Safety checks. Residents living in supported accommodation are supported by a range of providers to help them in developing the skills needed to move on to permanent accommodation. For residents who live in our older person's accommodation, welfare checks are carried out and sign-posting and referrals for support services are in place. This helps residents remain independent in their own homes for as long as they wish, where it is safe for them to do so. Our Aids and Adaptations Procedure sets out how we will support residents to remain independent by carrying out improvements and adaptations to their homes.

3.7 **Safeguarding of Vulnerable Persons** – We work to ensure all residents are able to live safely within their home without fear of abuse. Our Safeguarding Policy details how we work to protect our residents.

#### 4.0 SHARED ACCOMMODATION AND COMMUNAL AREAS

4.1 These areas include:

- shared doorways and any windows in communal areas;
- hallways, stairs and lifts;
- gardens and grassed areas;
- bin stores and drying areas;
- paths, roadways and parking areas, and;
- any other common communal spaces that we manage.

4.2 **Repairs and Maintenance** – We will ensure that communal areas and facilities are kept in good repair, adequately serviced and lit, kept free of litter, unwanted items and graffiti, and kept safe, clean, and secure. These will be completed in accordance with the timescales set out in our Repairs and Maintenance Standards.

4.3 **Health & Safety** – To ensure the safety of all residents, items must not be stored in communal areas without our express permission – see our Residents Handbook. We will immediately remove any items assessed to be hazardous and may recharge the resident. More information around our approach to monitoring and mitigating the risk of fire can be found in our Fire Safety Policy and Procedures including details on our regular inspections and Fire Risk Assessments. We also carry out our regular compliance checks for asbestos, electrics, gas, lifts and water hygiene.

4.4 **Building Checks** – These are undertaken on the communal areas of the buildings in housing for older persons each week and include estate inspections. Inspections for supported accommodation are carried out on either a weekly, fortnightly or quarterly basis depending on the service. Visits are scheduled on specific days which are publicised to residents so they are able to join or raise issues if they need to.

4.5 **Sustainability** – We will work with local authorities to ensure the right rubbish and recycling facilities are provided. We will take action wherever possible against residents who dump rubbish and may recharge the costs of removal to the resident. Our approach to sustainability is set out in our Environmental Policy.

4.6 **Estate Inspections and Estate Action Days** – Historically, these regular events give us an important opportunity to listen to the views of individual and groups of residents on the services provided and to identify any further issues. We will let residents know the times and dates in advance. The frequency will differ from estate to estate dependent on need, and the views of residents. For general needs estates, these are inspected monthly. More information can be found in the Estate Inspections Procedure.

4.7 **Smoke Free** – Within supported accommodation there are a number of shared houses. These are completely smoke free with no smoking permitted within any part of the building, including bedrooms. See Smoke Free Procedure. In all other supported and older person's accommodation, smoking is not permitted in communal areas but is allowed in each individual's own private dwelling.

4.8 **Misuse of Drugs** – We are committed to achieving the right balance between social inclusion and community safety. While we aim to provide an accessible and inclusive service, we also recognise that we have a duty to provide a safe environment for all residents, staff, contractors and visitors, and to be sensitive to the local community. See Misuse of Drugs Procedure.

## 5.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD INVESTMENT

5.1 **Pro-active Asset Management** – We invest in our properties via the delivery of planned and cyclical works which service to improve communal environments within neighbourhoods and enhance quality of life. Details of our approach can be found in our Asset Management Strategy. We are also careful about the sites we choose to develop and the specifications and work closely with housing management teams and Property Services. Details of our approach can be found in our Development Strategy.

5.2 **The President's Fund** – This is an annual fund linked to delivering estate improvements that residents want to see, as well as to provide added value to services – for example improving the quality of life for residents, allocating money for specific projects and encouraging groups of residents to join together for events. The fund is resident-led and many initiatives benefitting our neighbourhoods have been made possible through the fund. See the Community Strategy.

5.3 **'Consortia' neighbourhoods** – A 'consortia' neighbourhood is when more than one landlord has properties within a specified area. Most will have a consortia agreement which sets out the responsibilities of each landlord. Plans for improvement will be consulted on with all residents and cost divided among landlords. Less formal arrangements may be put in place where we have co-joining land and/or properties with other registered providers and private landlord.

5.4 **Resident improvements** – We support residents enhancing their homes through alterations and improvements, but acknowledge that as part of a wider community, certain standards must be met. All residents need written permission before installing items such as satellite dishes/aerials and sheds. We will not unreasonably refuse consent. See Residents Handbook.

5.5 **Abandonments and squatters** – We are aware of the negative impact that abandoned properties can have on our neighbourhoods, particularly when these are subsequently squatted in. We will take prompt action to ensure the safety and security of abandoned properties and to bring them back into occupation as soon as practicable. For more information, please see Abandonment Procedure and Squatters Procedure.

5.6 **Sub-letting** – We take seriously any tenancy fraud such as sub-letting and will seek to take action to recover properties where we can prove this is happening. See Tenancy Policy for more information.

5.7 **Pets** – We appreciate that keeping a pet can be important to mental health and wellbeing. We will therefore consider requests on a case by case basis. See Pets Procedure for more information.

## 6.0 RUNNING A BUSINESS FROM HOME

6.1 We support residents who wish to run a business from home, but acknowledge that as part of a wider community, certain standards must be met.

6.2 All residents need written permission before starting a business from home. We will not unreasonably refuse consent.

## 7.0 VEHICLES

7.1 Vehicles are an essential part of many residents' lives. Our aim is to reduce irresponsible parking, parking-related disputes, dumping of illegal vehicles and resolve access problems for emergency vehicles. We will work in partnership with residents and other local groups to do this. This may result in a reputable company being appointed to operate a parking scheme. See Abandoned Vehicle Procedure.

7.2 **Abandoned and un-roadworthy vehicles** – We will work with the relevant authorities to arrange removal and disposal of abandoned and un-roadworthy vehicles. Any costs may be recovered according to our Recharge Policy and any local procedures.

7.3 **Caravans, trailers, oversized and recreational vehicles** – The approach taken will be tailored to the individual situation and the local environment. It will often depend on whether the vehicle is parked in a front or a back garden, or in a driveway. We will not unreasonably refuse a resident's request but will take into account the terms of the tenancy agreement or lease and any covenants.

## 8.0 SNOW

8.1 Gritting after snow fall will not be undertaken on all estates. Decisions will be taken locally based on the vulnerabilities of residents and the feasibility of resourcing gritting work. Grit bins are in place at most of our older persons accommodation and the option to use them is built into the contract of our grounds maintenance contractor.

## 9.0 PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

9.1 Play is an important part of children's' wellbeing and development. Where we own play areas, we will ensure equipment is safe to use, properly inspected and fit for purpose.

9.2 We will carry out or nominate a reputable company to regularly inspect play equipment according to the relevant legislation working to a locally agreed timetable. See Playgrounds Procedure.

## **10.0 COMPLAINTS**

10.1 We aim to deliver quality services. However, if any residents have a complaint about our services, we will address it using our Complaints Procedure. See [Complaints Policy](#).

## **11.0 MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE**

11.1 Through resident surveys and performance management information, we measure satisfaction and how we are doing in terms of our services and the quality of our neighbourhoods. We publish much of this information so residents can see how we are doing, and we use it to see where and how we need to improve. We will continue to develop these measures in line with the Tenant Satisfaction Measures currently being consulted on as part of the Social Housing White Paper and new Consumer Standards.

## **12.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

12.1 We will ensure everyone is treated fairly and without discrimination, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership and age. We will promote inclusion, challenge discrimination, and seek to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that everyone can access our services and that no one is excluded inappropriately from any services or activities provided by us. See our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#).

12.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and has indicated that this policy would not discriminate against any specific groups.

## **13.0 DATA PROTECTION**

13.1 Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998, all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential. We are required to collect and hold certain types of data on residents in order to carry out our business requirements and fulfil our service obligations.

13.2 For the purposes of this policy and how we manage the information that we hold on individuals as part of its delivery, ccha will comply with its obligations under GDPR including ensuring that the appropriate data sharing agreements are in place with all of the partnering organisations we look to work with. A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of this policy review.

<b>Version History</b>	
<b>Policy name</b>	Neighbourhood Policy
<b>Version</b>	2.0
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Director of Customers
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Completed</b>	January 2022
<b>Data Protect Impact Assessment Completed</b>	January 2022
<b>Resident Consultation Completed</b>	Business Plan consultation completed in 2019 – full policy consultation will take place at the next review in 2023
<b>Colleague consultation</b>	December 2021
<b>Date of Issue</b>	January 2022
<b>Date of Review</b>	July 2023*
<b>Policies and procedures replaced</b>	Neighbourhood Policy 2017

\*This policy will be reviewed again in the next 18 months following the completion of our new Customer Strategy including resident engagement and our Antisocial Behaviour Policy.