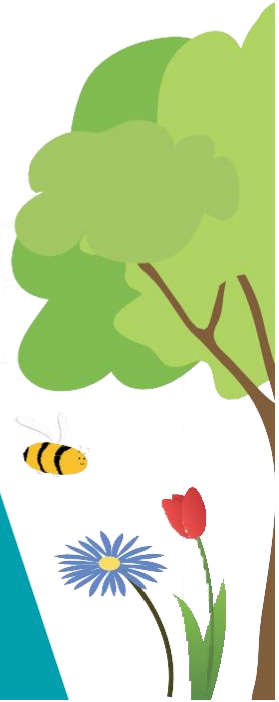


Plus Dane Housing

Neighbourhood & Communal Areas Inspection Policy

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1. Policy statement

We want residents to be proud of their neighbourhoods and we are committed to ensuring our neighbourhoods, schemes and communal areas are attractive and safe places to live.

We will strive to balance the requirements of Fire and Health and Safety regulations with maximising the opportunities for residents to enjoy our communal areas.

As part of our commitment to fire safety and risk management within our communal areas we will ensure that all communal areas are inspected on a monthly basis

All of our communal areas are inspected monthly to ensure a robust approach to our health and safety commitments as a landlord. Each of our communal area inspections is undertaken by a Housing Caretaker. They will ensure regular monitoring and reporting of any necessary works to meet our obligations both regarding the condition of communal areas and identifying any health and safety risks to the building and surrounding area.

We will work closely with the Local Authority, The Fire Authority, other registered providers, leaseholders, private landlords and other responsible agencies to ensure that neighbourhoods are well managed.

2. Policy aims

This policy applies to all homes within our communal schemes including leaseholders who live in our mixed tenure schemes. Through this policy we aim to:

- Ensure that all internal and external communal areas are managed effectively and kept free from obstructions or hazards to protect the health and safety of residents and other users of our buildings.
- Maintain street lighting which is the responsibility of Plus Dane within these communal areas.
- Undertake a programme of gritting, when required, and in line with our Gritting Protocol and external contracts, to mitigate any hazards arising from adverse weather conditions.
- Removing the risk of items causing an obstruction to access or exit routes in the event of an emergency.
- Maintain the appearance of our neighbourhoods by effectively dealing with litter, abandoned vehicles, graffiti, discarded furniture or anything that would cause a negative environmental impact;
- To regularly test, maintain and repair any active fire safety systems, emergency lighting, Fire Fighting Equipment (FFE) and any Automatic Opening Vents (AOVs) etc. ensuring their effectiveness in mitigating risk to our tenants.
- To regularly inspect that vertical and horizontal

compartmentalisation in communal areas is intact and free from breaches.

- To undertake a regime of periodic fire door inspection.
- To regularly check the relevance of existing, condition of existing and requirements for additional signage within our buildings and on our land to ensure it is relevant, informative and fit for purpose.
- To regularly test, maintain and repair any automatic doors, gates or barriers that are installed in the communal areas to ensure they are safe for continued use
- Ensure residents are confident that their area is being well managed.

3. Links to corporate plan

This policy links to the working principles within our corporate plan by ensuring we are clear about what we do and to create with both current and future customers an experience that is efficient and responsive, allows choice, and is tailored to individuals and their circumstances.

4. Our approach

To ensure our communal areas are well maintained and free from hazards we carry out monthly inspections.

Where issues are caused on land not owned or managed by us and this directly affects our residents, we will take a pro-active role to resolve these issues by working with residents and other agencies.

4.1 Communal Areas

Communal areas, even those immediately adjacent to a resident's property, are not an extension of an individual's home. As such, residents and their visitors should not use these areas for their personal effects.

We have a duty to ensure all residents can escape our communal areas in an emergency. This means items, which may cause a trip hazard, anything combustible, or anything that could shatter must not be stored in our communal areas, even if they are outside a resident's front door.

Residents must not use our communal areas for the storage of possessions or place decorative items outside their front door. This includes the storage of mobility scooters, pushchairs and bikes. Where items are identified we will ask the owner to remove them. If they are not removed within 7 days, we shall take steps to remove and dispose of these items.

We reserve the right to remove and immediately dispose of items left in communal areas should they be deemed a hazard, a high fire risk or are obstructing or blocking access and routes. The determination of "high risk" will be the standard set by Fire Risk Assessments, legislation and Fire Authorities or by competent persons carrying out fire safety assessments on behalf of Plus Dane

The cost of removal will be billed to the responsible owner. In addition, we will

consider enforcement action will be taken under the terms of the tenancy or lease agreement.

If there is persistent and large-scale fly-tipping within a communal area, where we are unable to identify the person or persons responsible, we will reserve the right to remove and recharge the cost to the scheme itself through the service charge. We will only do this after we have exhausted efforts to trace those responsible and by giving residents notice of the re-charge.

4.2 Risk Assessments

We reserve the right to remove and immediately dispose of items left in communal areas should they be deemed a hazard, a high fire risk or are obstructing or blocking access and routes.

We will not allow anything that shall cause an obstruction, hazard or affects the aesthetics of the building.

Only authorised items approved by Plus Dane Housing are permitted in communal areas.

4.3 Fly tipping

Fly tipping is a criminal offence. Where there are repeat incidents of fly tipping we shall work with the Local Authority to pursue prosecution.

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that any land in their direct control, to which the public has access or any public highway, is kept clear of litter and refuse.

Where local authority land is adjacent to our schemes, we will utilise our communal inspections to monitor the cleanliness of the land and report any concerns directly to the LA.

4.4 Transparency of inspections

An audit log of all inspections undertaken and pending is available to residents. The frequency of our block inspections will meet Fire Risk Assessment requirements specific to each communal area.

4.5 Pets in Communal areas

Residents are responsible for any damage caused to their home or communal areas by any animal kept in their home or visiting their property.

It is not acceptable for owners to allow their pets to roam communal areas. Dogs should not be left unattended in communal areas for any length of time or allowed off their lead in a communal garden or communal areas of the building. For further information please see Plus Dane Pet Management guidelines.

4.6 Smoking in Communal areas

It is against the law to smoke in any communal areas. This includes but is not limited to, communal corridors, landings, lifts and stairwells and the outside entrance area to the block. This No Smoking policy applies to both traditional cigarettes, e-Cigarettes and vapes.

4.7 Mobility Scooters

Mobility Scooters must not be stored or charged in communal areas. While residents do not need to seek permission from us to own or purchase a scooter they do need to seek our permission to store the scooter on our property so that we can ensure the scooter can be stored responsibly and safely within the owners own home. For further information, please refer to the Plus Dane Mobility Scooter Policy.

4.8 Alterations to Doors

Individual flat entrance doors and any other communal doors such as stairwell doors, cross corridor doors and cupboard doors etc within communal areas must not be replaced, repaired or altered in anyway (including adding any decorative ironmongery or any other decorative items) by residents without our written permission. This includes removing or altering door-closers on flat entrance doors.

This is to ensure existing doors maintain their fire integrity and any replacement door are suitably fire resistant. Any door found not to be fire resistant as a result of resident alteration will be changed and the cost of the works billed to the resident responsible.

4.9 Car parking

Unless there are designated parking places allocated to an individual tenancy, parking is on a first come first served approach.

We may appoint a reputable company to operate a parking scheme, to ensure the effective management of parking spaces.

You must not park caravans, trailers, mobile homes or commercial vehicles at your home or in designated parking areas without our prior written permission.

4.10 Untaxed or abandoned vehicles

All vehicles parking within our car park must have current valid road tax and be roadworthy. If a vehicle has been declared SORN permission must be requested to keep this vehicle on Plus Dane land.

We will work in partnership with Local Authorities to remove untaxed or abandoned vehicles from our land.

4.11 Graffiti

We recognise that graffiti can have a detrimental effect on the appearance of an estate or neighbourhood. Offensive graffiti will be removed within 24 hours of us receiving the report. All other graffiti will be removed within 14 working days.

Where graffiti is hate-related, we will work with our Community Safety Team and with the Police to try to identify the perpetrator and take the appropriate action.

We will also provide support for anybody who is directly or indirectly impacted

by the graffiti.

4.12 Play Areas

Where we own play areas, steps will be taken to ensure that they are clean, safe and well-managed and we shall undertake weekly inspections to ensure that no items are present that can harm a child such as broken glass or syringes.

4.13 Communal Gardens & Landscaping

An important part of our communal area inspections is checking that our communal gardens and landscape facilities are maintained to a high standard.

Where a communal garden is identified as being neglected, we will contact the managing agent or Plus Dane Environmental Services Team to remedy within 14 working days.

We will ensure all open grassed areas we own are cut regularly during the growing season.

We will review all contractors' performance at least annually in regard to the landscape service performance.

4.14 Communal Cleaning

The standard of communal cleaning will be monitored within the periodic communal inspections undertaken by the Plus Dane member of staff. Any failure in agreed contract commitments will be reported on site and remedied in line with the service standards agreed by our cleaning contractor or responsible managing agent.

4.15 Service Charge Contracts

We will charge a service charge for the maintenance and cleaning of certain types of communal areas. Our Tenancy Agreement, Lease or Transfer Document will summarise any charges that will be recovered through a service charge.

If we make a service charge, we will provide the services set out in the service charge schedule.

Residents who pay a service charge will be consulted on the performance of the contractors; the results of this consultation will be used to inform future service reviews and contract renewals in line with our Service Charge Policy.

5. Assurance

We will carry out an agreed programme of communal area inspections and hold a record of all inspection dates on our website. Details of how to access these records will be published on our communal notice boards.

6. Equality impact assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment undertaken on this Policy has indicated there are no negative impacts arising from this Policy based on a customer's race,

religion, disability, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy, or age.

7. Modern slavery and human trafficking

Plus Dane has a zero-tolerance approach to human trafficking and modern slavery.

As part of our commitment to the Modern Slavery Act, when we visit and interact our tenants and our properties, during these visits we will consider signs of modern slavery and human trafficking, as well as any other welfare concerns which tenants or members of their household may have. Where we have concerns, we will raise this concerns through our wider safeguarding approach.