



Neighbourhood Management Policy

Lead Manager:	Neighbourhood Manager
Responsible Senior Manager:	Assistant Director of Housing
Approved By:	Customer Committee
Date Approved:	June 2024
Date for Review:	June 2027
Replaces Previous Version:	N/A
Version Number:	1
Linked Policies:	Grounds Maintenance Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, Vulnerable Persons Policy, Pet Policy, Customer Alteration, and Improvement Policy, Lettable Standard, Complaints Policy

CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Legal Regulatory Framework**
- 3. Policy Aims and Objectives**
- 4. Neighbourhood Management**
- 5. Equality Impact & Needs Assessment**
- 6. Customer Responsibility**
- 7. Consultation**
- 8. Review**
- 9. Training**
- 10. Equality and Diversity**

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing (STAR) is an ALMO; Arms' Length Management Organisation (and manages the stock on behalf of Shropshire Council). It is responsible for the Council's housing stock including the letting, maintenance, and management of its properties and estates.
- 1.2** This policy sets out our approach to effectively managing our estates and communal environments. With the help of our customers and residents we aim to keep our neighbourhoods clean, safe, and secure and a place where people want to live.
- 1.3** This policy aims to set out our approach to the management, maintenance and improvement of our neighbourhoods and communal areas; how we will work with our partners and other agencies to deliver neighbourhood management; and the standards our customers can expect and their responsibilities.
- 1.4** Whilst we aim to deliver high quality communal services, having the support and co-operation of residents 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 visitor.
- 1.5** STAR will work in partnership with our customers, contractors and other stakeholders and public bodies where it is effective to do so.

2 Legal and Regulatory Framework

- 2.1** This policy supports us in the delivery of requirements and our obligations of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, and particularly the Neighbourhood and Community Standard. Specifically, this policy supports us in:
 - Working co-operatively with Customers, other landlords and relevant organisations to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of shared spaces; and
 - Co-operating with relevant partners to promote social, environmental, and economic wellbeing in the areas where they provide social housing.
- 2.2** From a legislative perspective, this policy also supports us to fulfil obligations and responsibilities under the following legislation, in no particular order:
 - 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
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

3 Policy aims and objectives.

- 3.1** We will work to ensure that customers have quiet enjoyment of their homes, which are in a safe, clean, and secure environment that they can take pride in.
- 3.2** We will conduct regular neighbourhood inspections of communal areas and estates to ensure that they meet expected standards, including that they are well maintained, tidy and free from graffiti.
- 3.3** We will be clear with our customers and communities what is our responsibility to do to ensure the aims of this policy are achieved, and we will be clear where we need to work with other agencies and partners to achieve the aims.
- 3.4** We will ensure residents are aware of their responsibilities, both in relation to their property and neighbourhood and seek to ensure that residents meet these, taking appropriate tenancy management and enforcement action where it is necessary.
- 3.5** We will proactively seek partnerships and work with other agencies to collaborate in ensuring neighbourhoods are well managed and maintained.
- 3.6** We will work in partnership with the Police and other services to help keep our estates free from anti-social behaviour (ASB), harassment and hate crime, in line with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
- 3.7** We will conduct communal inspections in blocks of flats to identify fly tipping and potential fire risks. We will ensure communal areas are cleaned regularly and well maintained.
- 3.8** We will undertake a range of grounds maintenance work across our estates in agreement with our customers and communities, ensuring it is carried out to an agreed standard.
- 3.9** We will discuss community plans and investment with customers to identify improvements and work together to address local priorities.
- 3.10** We will work with customers to proactively identify areas that need improvements and undertake measures to resolve them.

3.11 We will help promote customer involvement opportunities, activities, and events to help develop and support vibrant communities.

4 Neighbourhood Management

4.1 Neighbourhood Inspections

4.1.1 As part of our approach to managing our neighbourhoods and ensuring they remain well managed and maintained, we will undertake regular inspections and visits to the neighbourhoods we manage. The frequency of the inspections will be determined on an individual basis and will be assessed against a range of factors, including;

- anti-social behaviour.
- 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 and number of properties
- general health and safety concerns.
- community and stakeholder input and engagement.
- historical issues or any exceptional events such as flood, storm damage or heavy snow.

4.1.2 Customer, councillors, and other agencies such as the Police are welcome to join neighbourhood housing officers when an estate in their area is inspected to raise any concerns and share ideas for improvement. We will invite community stakeholders to neighbourhood inspections periodically.

4.1.3 Areas where we own no communal land or facilities will not have regular inspections as standard but may still be inspected for management purpose and based on feedback and input from customers.

4.1.4 Area walkabouts enable neighbourhood housing officers to identify issues about the following (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Breaches of tenancy
- Grounds maintenance issues, including hedges, trees and boundaries, and grassed/planted areas.
- Repairs
- A build-up of domestic waste that has not been appropriately disposed of
- Items in your garden which are not in line with your tenancy agreement.
- Any health and safety issues; for example, any deterioration to pathways that could be trip hazards, gas canisters, or anything that should not be in a garden whereby the garden looks untidy or unkempt.
- Communal areas—internal and external
- Car parks and garages

- Cleaning and general maintenance quality
- Security issues, including fencing/ boundaries, security doors.
- Tenancy issues, including external property condition, untidy gardens, pets.
- Environmental issues, including abandoned cars/graffiti/vandalism, fly-tipping, discarded syringes.
- And give our customer the opportunity to speak to us.

4.2 Maintaining Communal Areas

4.2.1 We will deliver grounds maintenance and cleaning services in communal areas that we are responsible for managing to ensure they are kept clean and tidy. These services may be provided by in-house teams and contractors who deliver a consistent service across our neighbourhoods, with minor variations to accommodate local requirements.

4.2.2 We are responsible for maintaining communal green areas of flat-type accommodation we manage and areas of open spaces in the community that we own. We will be clear and transparent with customers and stakeholders what areas of green space we manage and what we do not.

4.2.3 We will publish service standards for our ground's maintenance, outlining the standard and frequency of service that communities can expect from us.

4.2.4 We will have a rolling maintenance programme of tree maintenance to reduce avoidable risks relating to trees on land owned by the STAR. Works to trees outside the works programme will only be undertaken when there has been an identified risk or hazard, such as it is:

- Unsafe
- Obstructing public footpaths or roads
- Proven to be damaging property
- Or where removal costs will cause the Customer extensive hardship

4.2.5 Customers wishing to plant a tree in their garden, must obtain written permission from STAR beforehand.

4.2.6 Customers are responsible for maintaining individual gardens provided with their accommodation. Where a customer fails to maintain their garden, we will take appropriate action (which may result in a recharge to the customer) in line with our Tenancy Management policy. If a customer is unable to maintain a garden or arrange for someone to do this on their behalf, then we will discuss options and support available to them. We may be able to arrange for garden maintenance, but this will be a charge to the customer.

4.3 Permissions

4.3.1 We recognise that our customers and communities will want to invest in their neighbourhoods, however, there are a several things where customers will need to seek STAR's permission. This ensures we can effectively monitor and manage the neighbourhood long-term and that it best meets the needs of the whole community. Customers will need to seek STAR's permission for the following activity within the neighbourhood:

- any changes to either the structure of the property or if they wish to install a new kitchen, bathroom, hardstanding, or CCTV monitoring.
- Place, build or erect any greenhouse, garage, shed, patio, decking, aviary, fencing, conservatory, pigeon-loft, fishpond, pool or similar structure in their garden or a communal area managed by STAR Housing.
- Place, build or erect any gate or barrier across a communal path.
- Replace or erect fencing, and any fencing with written consent should be no higher than one metre at the front or two metres at the back of your property.
- Make changes to boundary walls, outbuildings, or hard surfaces.
- Individual Customers will not be permitted to erect their own sheds in communal areas.

4.4 Vandalism and Graffiti

4.4.1 Acts of vandalism to STAR property or land will be addressed as quickly as possible. Offensive/racist graffiti will be removed within 24 hours of being reported to us, all other graffiti will be removed within a reasonable timescale. STAR will investigate all acts of vandalism and graffiti and appropriate action will be taken against all known perpetrators of vandalism in line with our Tenancy Management policies.

4.5 Litter and Fly Tipping

4.5.1 STAR will take reports of fly tipping on land that we manage seriously and ensure that it is dealt with quickly and efficiently. Any reports of fly-tipping that is not on housing land will be reported to and dealt by the Shropshire Council.

4.5.2 Where applicable STAR staff will also carry out weekly checks to communal areas to check for fly tipping and hazards. There is an expectation that Customers, leaseholders, and other residents play their part in keeping their own communal areas clean and tidy and free from obstruction.

4.5.3 We will seek to remove fly tipping or disposed items where there is a health and safety risk, or it is evident it has been discarded. Where fly tipping occurs in communal areas of the flats STAR will investigate to try and identify the owner

and advise the responsible person to remove the items within a reasonable timescale. If these items are not removed, STAR will arrange for their removal and a recharge will be raised to the responsible person to cover the cost of this service. Where we cannot identify the responsible person, we may charge all customers on the estate through service charges for the disposal.

4.6 Access and Key Management

4.6.1 Additional keys for main entry doors in blocks of flats will not be provided to customers, although replacement keys may be available in appropriate circumstances. If replacement keys are required, any costs relating to this will be recharged to the customer. At your request we can provide a key safe on the exterior of the building for those whose carers require access. Key fobs for entry where there is a door entry system will only be given to employees and contractors to enable them to carry out their duties.

4.7 Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbour Disputes

4.7.1 ASB can have a significant impact on communities and STAR is committed to delivering a non-judgemental, balanced service. We will manage reported and identified anti-social behaviour in line with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

4.7.2 Where we believe the behaviour does not constitute ASB, customers will be told why the issue being reported does not classify as an ASB complaint, and advice will be given to enable self-resolution. We expect a reasonable level of tolerance between neighbours and will make fair evaluations on whether a complaint of ASB is reasonable. An important part of creating sustainable communities is the recognition and acceptance by STAR customers that the initial responsibility to resolve concerns with others lies with them. Therefore, we may be able to provide advice, but we will not investigate the following concerns as ASB:

- A customer going about their daily activities in their home—for example, playing with children, loud footfall, moving of furniture, babies/children crying, television noise, occasional loud music, toilets being flushed (this is not an exhaustive list)
- Noise occurring at different times due to different working patterns or one-off parties.
- Concerns which do not breach the tenancy agreement, for example, people staring, people gossiping, posting on social media, smoking or cooking odours, or clashes due to lifestyle.
- Concerns which involve residents not being pleasant to each other but are not serious enough to justify our involvement.
- Low level boundary disputes.
- Inconsiderate parking and parking disputes.
- One off party.

- Reasonable living noise such as lawn mowing (at reasonable times, during the day) household DIY, hoovering, toilets flushing, doors banging, noise from household appliances or moving around in above floor apartments.

Some ways in which residents may be able to prevent low level complaints being made against them may include:

- Informing your neighbours if you are going to be having a one-off event.
- Having cushioned flooring such as carpets in upper floor flats, so that noise does not transfer to lower down properties.
- Consider the use of appliance mats if you are running washing machines etc. overnight.
- Telling your neighbours if your shift patterns have changed so they can be understanding of your needs.
- Be considerate of your neighbours.
- Do not carry out repairs or other works late at night or at other unsociable hours.
- Do not play music, TV or instruments too loudly.
- Keep dogs and other pets under control.
- Be aware of where your children are playing, who is supervising them and what they are doing.

If residents are not able to resolve more serious matters themselves, they should contact STAR where a neighbourhood officer may be able to offer mediation or other solutions.

4.8 Vehicle and Parking

4.8.1 Customers must not park any vehicle which is untaxed, un-roadworthy or not insured on any STAR Housing communal land (including parking areas).

4.8.2 Any vehicle parked on a drive or on a garden where there is no dropped kerb, and without evidence of a request to Shropshire Council to drop the kerb, will be expected to be removed immediately until a dropped kerb is in place. We will also ensure that customers have appropriate permission from STAR for the installation of a drive. You are not permitted to park a car on a garden that has not had a hardstanding installed without consent.

4.8.3 We recognise that many people now 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 STAR such as a secure store. We 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.

- 4.8.4 Where permission is granted, the customer must agree and comply with all conditions placed upon the storage and use of the vehicle. We reserve the right to withdraw permission at any time should the conditions fail to be adhered to.
- 4.8.5 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.
- 4.8.6 It should be noted that it is often not practicable to provide such adaptations for customers in flats, however, every request will be assessed on a case by case basis.
- 4.8.7 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.

4.9 CCTV And Camera Doorbells

- 4.9.1 STAR will consider applications to install CCTV or camera doorbells where appropriate to do so. Permission will only be granted if the installation is compliant with General Data Protection Regulations. Please refer to the Information Commissioners' Office which regulates and enforces GDPR and the DPA 2018

4.10 Infestation and Pest Vermin

- 4.10.1 Pests or vermin that pose an immediate danger to a person or property will be investigated and dealt with appropriately via the responsive repairs team. However, in some circumstances there may be a recharge for this.

4.11 Transfer of land.

- 4.11.1 We 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 any land is sold, any disposal will be in accordance with all regulations and guidelines.

4.12 Complaints and feedback

- 4.12.1 We try to get things right the first time and when we do, we would love you to let us know. It's great for us to receive positive comments or feedback, so if you wish to complement our staff for doing a great job, we would love to hear from you.

If things do go wrong STAR is committed to:

- Dealing with complaints and comments quickly and effectively in line with our complaints policy; and
- Using complaints, comments and compliments to review and improve our services.

Star Housing has adopted the Housing Ombudsmen's definition of a complaint as: -

“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents’.

We openly encourage customers to tell us when something has gone wrong or when they are dissatisfied so we can do something about it, learn from it and make any necessary improvements.

4.13 Grassed areas and communal land.

4.13.1 Grassed areas located on communal land on an estate are provided as an amenity for the benefit of all Customers. Therefore, Customers should seek permission regarding the use of external communal areas; this is particularly important if there is a proposal to establish a gardening club, or to create a wildlife garden, or to run a community social event.

5 Consultation

5.1 Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing consults with staff, external agencies, Customer Policy focus groups and STAR’s customer services subcommittee to promote continuous improvement and develop good practice in the use of this policy.

6 Review.

6.1 STAR will review this Policy on a 3-yearly basis, unless changes require an earlier review.

7 Training.

7.1 Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing provides continuous development and training for its staff who are responsible for implementing this policy.

8 Roles and Responsibilities

All employees	General overview of Policy
Neighbourhood Housing Officers	Implementation of Policy
Senior Neighbourhood Officers	Line Management Responsibility of neighbourhood officers in the implementation of this policy
Neighbourhood Manager	Overall responsibility for the operational day to day implementation of this policy. Monitoring performance indicators and management information and day to day oversight of the quality of service and outcome
AD Housing	Accountable for the implementation of this policy and for reporting performance to key stakeholders including SMTs, ET and CCB

9 Equality and Diversity

9.1 We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently to all our customers. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or any other grounds set out in our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy.

When applying this policy, we will:

- Act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities.
- Take the necessary positive action to reduce discrimination and harassment in local communities.

This policy and any other related publications of Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing are available on request in other formats (e.g. in an alternative language, in Braille, on tape, in large type).

The TSM measures under responsible neighbourhood management include:

- TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.

- TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.
- TP12: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour.