

Neighbourhood Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We acknowledge that as a major landlord in the area, we must play a lead role in developing and ensuring attractive, clean and safe neighbourhoods. We have developed this overarching Neighbourhood policy to meet our customers' priorities, local needs and to meet our objectives. This delivers on Bolton at Home's approach to working to create 'Homes and neighbourhoods we can all be proud of'.
- 1.2 In order to meet the Neighbourhood and Community standard, there is a specific requirement that we shall consult and actively work in close partnership with our customers, other residents and relevant stakeholders.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of our approach to developing and maintaining attractive, clean and safe neighbourhoods. This includes customers, staff members and partner organisations.
- 2.2 To ensure that we plan and target resources effectively and in a consistent way, whilst taking into account our diverse customer base and their needs so that neighbourhoods are popular and sustainable places to live.
- 2.3 To ensure we adopt a partnership approach, encouraging everyone to play their part and seek to leverage additional resources.
- 2.4 To ensure that we closely monitor the quality of our services and that we quickly deal with complaints.
- 2.5 To ensure that we always seek to deliver effective and efficient services which are lean and offer real value for money.
- 2.6 To ensure that we actively benchmark ourselves against other providers both locally and nationally and report our performance accurately and regularly.

3. Scope

- 3.1 The policy will include and cover the following work:
 - Management of communal areas
 - Grounds maintenance
 - Tree maintenance

- Household refuse and recycling disposal
- Dog fouling
- Pest control
- Needles and syringes
- Graffiti
- Abandoned vehicles
- CCTV
- Untidy gardens
- Estate inspections
- Garage management
- Garage colonies
- Environment improvements
- Winter gritting

4. Policy

4.1 Management of Communal Areas

Bolton at Home, through its subsidiary Starts with you, offers a Handyperson service within each of its Extra Care and Under-One-Roof sheltered schemes. Each Handyperson is responsible for maintaining communal areas to ensure they are clean and safe. In addition, Starts with you carries out statutory health and safety tests and complete small repairs jobs.

We have a cleaning contract with a contractor for our remaining sheltered community centres and Starts with you officers carry out weekly statutory health and safety tests.

When communal areas are refurbished, consultation with customers takes place with regards to decoration and furnishing.

4.2 Grounds Maintenance

Our estates are made up of land owned by us but they also include highways and footpaths owned by Bolton Council. In addition, there may be land in private ownership.

Communal grounds include shared grassed areas, shrub beds, hedges and shared hardstanding areas. We work with our grounds maintenance contractor to maintain these areas to the following schedule:

- Communal grass to be cut up to 18 times per year (March – November).

- Grass cuttings will be removed from paths but not collected elsewhere.
- Shrubs to be litter picked and weeded eight times a year.
- Shrubs to be pruned in accordance with horticultural standards.
- Hedges to be visited twice a year to maintain to a suitable standard.
- Leaves on grassed areas will be cut when the grass is mowed and left in situ on the grass.
- Heavy leaf fall on our footpaths (un adopted) will be removed on a reactive basis.
- Our footpaths (un adopted) and hard standing communal areas will be weed sprayed three times a year. Adopted footpaths on our estates are the responsibility of Bolton Council.

We also have two mobile cleansing teams visiting our estates to support the ground maintenance works. Included in the works to be undertaken by these teams are: sweeping of un adopted footpaths litter picking, edging off of grassed areas, weed removal & fly tipping.

See BH webpage for further information

<http://www.boltonathome.org.uk/environment>

4.3 Tree Maintenance

Bolton at Home manages trees on land within its ownership in line with our Tree Management Policy.

- All trees in our properties' front gardens and on our communal land are inspected by an independent tree surveyor on a three year cycle and any identified work undertaken.
- Rear garden trees are inspected following any health and safety concerns raised by residents or any issue referred by our staff and any identified works undertaken.
- Tree removal requests: Trees will only be removed if there is a serious issue with the tree for example if it is diseased, dead or dying.
- A new tree will be planted in a suitable place when a tree is removed.

Trees will not generally be removed or works undertaken for the following reasons:

- Lack of light
- Obstruction of views
- Poor TV reception
- Problems resulting from falling leaves, seeds, fruit & honeydew

- Bird Droppings
- Tree roots
- Overhanging branches

4.4 Household Refuse and Recycling

Bolton at Home will work in partnership with Bolton Council to encourage residents to dispose of their waste in the correct manner and to recycle their household waste.

4.5 Dog Fouling

Bolton at Home's Tenancy Agreement contains multiple sections relating to pets with a specific reference to dog fouling, e.g.

5.9.2 You must not keep any animal at the property which: is likely to foul land or other property (including your property) in the locality;

In addition Bolton at Home has developed a Pet Policy and customer guide in partnership with The Dogs Trust and RSPCA. This guidance is aimed at supporting customers to be responsible pet owners.

If a complaint of dog fouling is received Bolton at Home will investigate and monitor, carrying out random site visits. If any evidence of dog fouling is recorded then customers will be sent a warning letter and advised further action may include 'withdrawing permission' to keep the dog. Bolton at Home will support customers with rehoming dogs via partnerships with both the RSPCA and Leigh Dogs and Cats Home.

In serious and persistent cases of dog fouling that are impacting the community and could be considered an environmental hazard, Bolton at Home will seek injunctive action. If deemed appropriate Bolton at Home may also work in partnership with Bolton Council providing the evidence, photographs and witness statements for statutory enforcement action e.g. Abatement Notice, Fixed Penalty Notice or Community Protection Notice.

4.6 Pest Control

Bolton Council provides a free service across the borough for the treatment of rat and mice infestations. In addition Bolton at Home will work with a contractor to provide a free service to Bolton at Home Tenants for the treatment of bees, wasps, cockroaches, bed bugs, squirrels and dead birds.

In respect of infestations of ants, beetles, flies, silverfish, fleas, pharaoh ants and moles, Bolton at Home will offer access to a chargeable service to tenants, in partnership with Bolton Council and/or access to online advice in respect of treating such. Where tenants are receiving support from a Bolton

at Home Tenancy Sustainment and Support Officer, these works may be funded by Bolton at Home on referral from the Support Officer.

4.7 Needles and Syringes

Bolton at Home's Tenancy Agreement contains a section relating to health and safety and the tenant's responsibility to ensure their home and the communal areas are safe and does not present a risk to others. This section includes reference to the storing of dangerous items deemed a risk to others.

5.11 Health and safety

You or anyone who lives with or visits you must:

- *not litter any communal area with rubbish or any other item that may cause an obstruction, or cause a health, fire risk or other nuisance;*
- *not do anything in the property which may cause a danger to any person;*

If used needles or syringes are found at the property or in a communal area and are deemed to present a risk impeding Bolton at Home from carrying out their landlord functions, then Bolton at Home will remove and make safe. If the person responsible is identified, Bolton at Home may also charge them for this work. In addition, if a tenant is responsible they will be sent a warning letter. If persistent, Bolton at Home will take injunctive enforcement action to protect its staff and other residents.

4.8 Graffiti

Bolton at Home will remove all graffiti from structures within our ownership in line with the following service standards:

- All offensive or racist graffiti to be removed within 24 hours of it being reported.
- All graffiti to be removed within 7 working days of being reported.

4.9 Abandoned Vehicles

Bolton at Home has guidance on dealing with abandoned vehicles. Reports of abandoned cars on Bolton at Home land will be investigated in partnership with the Police and Fire Service. Abandoned cars present a fire risk and health and safety issue. Working in partnership with the Police will assist in early identification of the vehicle owner or to confirm the status of the vehicle.

If no owner can be identified, Bolton at Home will serve a goods notice on the vehicle and arrange it to be removed and scrapped with a partner, Metro Salvage.

4.10 CCTV

Bolton at Home provides a 24/7 door access control and CCTV service across a number of our properties to prevent unwanted visitors, monitor activity and quickly identify and respond to incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime and disorder.

In addition CCTV installed within our Extra Care schemes helps to monitor the safety and wellbeing of older residents as part of a package of support during the night when no care staff are on duty.

4.11 Untidy Gardens

Bolton at Home's Tenancy Agreement contains several sections relating to the tenant's responsibility to maintain their garden areas to a minimum standard. The tenancy agreement also sets out the responsibility for shared gardens as well as ponds, fencing, walls, hedges, shrubs and trees.

5.21.1 If your property has one or more gardens, you or anyone who lives with you must look after any garden (including any hedges) and keep it tidy and free from rubbish. If you do not keep it in good condition, we may charge you the reasonable cost of any maintenance or clearance work we carry out. If for any reason you cannot maintain your garden, you must contact us for advice as soon as possible.

5.21.3 You and your household must maintain your garden so that it does not grow over any footpath, ginnel or road, block any access or light or otherwise cause a nuisance.

Bolton at Home will respond to reports of untidy gardens and has a written procedure to assist with investigation, recording evidence and a set of garden warning letters.

Bolton at Home adopts a staged approach to resolving untidy gardens, initially working with tenants and supporting them. Should the tenant be identified as vulnerable and unable to carry out the garden work Bolton at Home may offer a garden support service e.g. Estate Ranger.

If the tenant does not engage with Bolton at Home and fails to address the untidy garden within the agreed timescale, the case will be escalated for enforcement action including recharging the tenant for any work undertaken or injunctive action if appropriate. In addition Bolton at Home may also work in partnership with Bolton Council providing the evidence, photographs and witness statements for statutory enforcement action e.g. Abatement Notice, Fixed Penalty Notice or Community Protection Notice.

4.12 Estate Inspections

Communal grassed or hard standing areas under the ownership of Bolton at Home are inspected by Neighbourhood Services staff during the course of checking the quality of the works being undertaken by our grounds maintenance contractor. Any issues that come to light are actioned or passed to the responsible section.

4.13 Garage Management

Garages that are vacated are advertised for rent and/or are cross checked against applicants that have previously expressed an interest a garage in a particular area. Garages are maintained by Bolton at Home via their in-house Responsive Repairs Team and when they become vacant, they are inspected for repairs and cleared of any remaining debris prior to re-allocation.

4.14 Garage Colonies

Bolton at Home provides a facility on a number of sites on land under their ownership for tenants/residents to rent land under licence for an annual fee, for the erection at their own cost of and use of a garage.

4.15 Environmental Improvements

Bolton at Home has an outline programme to renew boundary fencing to Bolton at Home properties on an estate/priority basis. During the course of these works the opportunity to deliver additional environmental improvements to estates are considered, evaluated and delivered where applicable.

Outside of the estate-based Environmental Improvement Programme we will also look to work with community members and partners to address issues of environmental concerns on land under our ownership. We will consult with our tenants and residents on the fencing programme and any environmental improvements.

4.16 Winter Gritting

Working in partnership with our grounds maintenance contractor and caretakers, winter gritting provision is delivered in line with our service policy as follows:

- The service policy identifies 15 sites across our neighbourhoods as 'red', which gives highest priority to areas where vulnerable tenants live and rely on footpaths not maintained by the Authority for Highways.
- Four additional sites have an 'amber' priority based on risk according to footfall and/or how level paths are.
- On days when the MET Office forecasts extensive snow or ice which will likely remain throughout the day, our grounds maintenance contractor or

our caretakers will apply grit to these areas, starting with the high priority areas (red).

Maps showing which paths are to be gritted will be displayed in communal areas where appropriate and accessible online. Where there is no communal area, residents will receive a letter and map by post.

5. Equality analysis

An Equality Analysis has been undertaken for the individual policy elements of this overarching Neighbourhood Policy.

6. Responsibility

The Neighbourhood safety team and Neighbourhood services team will ensure this policy is successful, with staff having individual and collective responsibility to implement the policy.

7. Consultation

This policy was subject to internal consultation and discussed at a customer focus group held on 6th February 2018 where the draft policy was presented to the group. The event provided an opportunity for customers to comment and feedback on each element within the policy, after which it was welcomed and well received.

8. Associated policies

- Anti Social Behaviour & Enforcement Policy (2018)
- Winter service provision policy(Winter Gritting)
- Arboricultural policy (Tree Maintenance)
- Tenancy policy

The above policies can be viewed at the following BH webpage;
<http://www.boltonathome.org.uk/our-policies-and-strategies>

9. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

We will closely monitor the quality of the services we provide and will do this by:

- Setting challenging key performance indicators for contractor performance in specific elements

- On a monthly basis carry out internal checks that our own process are being followed.
- Monitor our asset management and investment delivery to ensure that issues are dealt with as soon as possible.
- Monitor our grounds maintenance standards via our customer grounds maintenance reporting feedback form which can viewed at BH webpage; <http://www.boltonathome.org.uk/environment>
- Ensuring that identified budgets deliver local solutions to neighbourhood concerns
- Engage our customers in service delivery monitoring and service improvement initiatives by working with a customer group in the performance of the grounds maintenance contractor.

The policy will be reviewed formally every three years and BH will engage customers in the review.

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| Date approved | 19 April 2018 |
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