



## ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

### 1. Introduction

This policy relates to how Citizen will deliver our estate management service, explains our service delivery standards in this area and how we ensure that our services are delivered to that standard.

Our estate management service refers to the management of the environment around our properties to ensure our neighbourhoods are well maintained, safe and secure places. However as many of our homes are in areas of mixed tenure and we may not be the owners of the land we will not always be responsible for all aspects of maintenance concerning the physical surroundings of our homes.

This policy also sets out the responsibilities of both us and our customers in relation to the environments in which we have our homes. This policy should be read in conjunction with customers' individual tenancy, licence and leasehold agreements which further define these responsibilities.

Citizen has a robust approach to ensuring the health and safety of our customers and staff. Further detail on this can be found in our Health and Safety Policy and procedures.

The maintenance of the physical environment is very important to us and our customers; it affects feelings of safety and security and pride in the local community. We also recognise that clean and secure common areas can have a positive impact on reducing antisocial behaviour and criminal activity and is fundamental to our aim to 'provide homes that are a foundation for life'.

The Regulator for Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard requires all registered providers to have policies and processes in respect of the upkeep of common parts and communal areas, and for providing responsive estate management services.

### 2. Scope

This policy extends to operational areas where properties are managed by Citizen. A communal area is defined as the parts of a house, a block of flats, a street or an estate which customers have a right to use in common with other customers. These include both hard surface and landscaped areas as well as the communal areas of our properties.

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### 3. Policy Detail

#### What we will aim to deliver:

- Ensure that our customers are meeting their tenancy, licence and lease conditions and enforce them when they are not.
- Set out clearly in tenancy, licence and lease agreements what are our responsibilities and what are customer's responsibilities in maintaining common areas and individual homes.
- Provide support and advice to customers about how they can ensure they can meet their obligations.
- Maintain, in conjunction with our customers, clean safe and secure external and internal communal areas on our estates.
- Where we are responsible, we will tackle environmental crime which includes fly tipping; littering; animal faeces and abandoned cars. We will work in partnership with local enforcement agencies in doing this.
- Undertake regular and ad hoc inspections to ensure common areas are maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and repair.
- Have appropriate contracts in place which ensure clear standards of service exist and are communicated to customers.
- Take prompt action when our partners and contractors are not delivering services to the agreed standard.
- Work closely with customers wherever possible to monitor services, improve quality and in the development of policies and procedures.
- Ensure that our customers are aware of the mechanism to report estate management issues.

Where we are legally able, we will service charge all costs of our estate management to customers who benefit from this service.

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### **3.1 Responsibility**

Generally, the repair and maintenance of communal areas is the responsibility of us as the Landlord, although customers have their responsibilities to keep communal areas clean, tidy and free from obstructions in line with their tenancy, licence and lease agreements.

Where, due to historical agreements, responsibility for the cleaning of communal areas has been taken over by customers, we aim to improve the management of these areas to ensure that they are being cleaned to an acceptable standard.

We have a planned maintenance programme which ensures that the structural features of our houses are regularly surveyed and, as a result, become part of a programme of works to keep them in good condition and compliant with housing quality standards.

Customers are responsible for non-communal areas outside areas for example; their front and rear gardens and some instances the areas immediately in front of their homes.

The Citizen Tree Management Supporting Information document supports this policy and details Citizen's responsibilities in respect of trees.

Where issues are identified or reported on estates that are not the responsibility of Citizen they will be noted, and customers will be advised to report the issue directly to the relevant organisation. For example; to the Police, Environmental Health or the local authority highways agency

### **3.2 Environmental offences**

Environmental offences are illegal acts which directly harm the environment for example; littering, animal fouling, dumping of bulk waste and fly tipping.

We take environmental offences very seriously and will work with our Local Authority partners in ensuring this is dealt with quickly. It should be noted that some incidents, for example; fly tipping, are the responsibility of the Local Authority to resolve.

Our intention is to minimise any negative impact on the environment in delivering our estate management service and this forms a key part of our processes.

We expect customers to treat common areas with respect and not to commit any environmental offences. Where we know who committed an environmental offence they will be charged for any of our costs associated with rectifying the issue and appropriate action taken against them.

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### **3.3 Customer reporting**

In the first instance customers should report any issues to our customer service centre. If the issue is our responsibility a timescale for the expected resolution of the issue will be given to the customer.

If the issue reported is not our responsibility to rectify, where possible we will sign post to the appropriate agency.

Customers are also surveyed on a rolling programme through the CEX platform and asked for feedback on our services.

### **3.4 Estate inspections**

We will carry out a quarterly programme of estate inspections and block inspections to ensure that services are being delivered to agreed specifications by our contractors and partners.

### **3.5 Property Left in Communal Areas**

We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to keeping communal areas free of rubbish and personal belongings, ensuring that the risk and impact of fire is minimised. We will serve the appropriate notices on items left in communal areas and remove and dispose of items not removed at the end of the notice period.

We will recharge the customer responsible for the cost of removing and disposing of items left in communal areas. When we cannot identify who is responsible we may include the costs in service charges.

### **3.6 CCTV**

CCTV is used in some of the areas in which we have our homes to ensure the safety and security of our customers. This is both actively and passively monitored. Where CCTV is in use it will be clearly signposted. CCTV footage may be used to enforce tenancy conditions and to identify those carrying out environmental offences, anti social behaviour or criminal acts.

We will ensure that our use of CCTV complies with all relevant GDPR legislation and Regulation of Investigatory Powers legislation.

### **3.7 Communal and community rooms**

Where we have communal and community rooms customers must adhere to the rules which have been set locally for the use of these rooms. We will ensure that any rules are made available to users of the rooms.

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### **3.8 Snow Clearance and Gritting**

Local Authorities (LA's) are responsible for clearing roads and paved areas in accordance with their own criteria for prioritising and carrying out this activity. Individual LA's websites should be visited to obtain further information.

In some specialised accommodation, snow clearance and grit bins will be provided on communal pathways providing a clear access to these properties. We will endeavour to ensure that there is an adequate supply of grit but do not provide a grit spreading service. A list of the sites covered is published on our website. Areas not listed will not receive this service.

This work is dictated by the weather and the ability to carry out the work. Clearance of paths will only take place during normal working hours Monday to Friday. None of the above constitutes a promise to clear paths or to provide safe pathways for tenants and/or visitors.

### **4.Roles, responsibility and Governance**

It is the responsibility of the Board to seek assurance that this Policy is successfully implemented. The Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this Policy and that all staff understand the importance of this Policy, the related procedures and that they comply with them.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their team have undertaken the appropriate Policy eLearning and training.

Any changes to this Policy must be made in line with the requirements set out in Citizens Standing Orders and our Policy framework.

### **5. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, unless legislation, service delivery or sector developments require otherwise ensuring the policy continues to meet its objectives and take account of good practice developments.

Legal advice will be taken to ensure compliance with legal, regulatory and contractual responsibilities.

Where appropriate service delivery reports in respect of this policy as incorporated into our quarterly reporting suite.

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## 6. Equality Impact assessment

This policy has been subject to an Equality Analysis. Staff working across Citizen have considered the impact of this policy on different groups and communities that we work with. In framing this policy, our staff are committed to not discriminate adversely against any group and will respect the diversity of the communities we are working within.

The EIA and any actions identified as needing to be implemented are in the Appendix.

## 7.VERSION CONTROL

VERSION	DATE	AMENDMENTS	APPROVED AT/BY	REVIEW
V 1.0	Sept 2019	Policy updated to reflect Citizen and reviewed for compliance	Board – 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2019	Sept 2022
V2.0	March 2021	Updated into new citizen template	Director of Housing	Sept 2022
V3.0	Dec 2021	Added section 3.8	Director of Housing Director of Maintenance Operations	Sept 2022
V4.0	September 2022	3 year review. Minor changes to wording and refers to tree management guidance. Reference of aim for improved management of cleaning within communal areas where currently undertaken by customers. Section 3.8 (snow and grit) wording refined.	Director of Housing	Sept 2025

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