



COMMUNAL AREA MANAGEMENT POLICY

for

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Issued by Regeneration & Housing

January 2023

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Urdu

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Cantonese

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજ બીજી ભાષા અથવા રચનામાં જોઈતો હોય, અથવા જો તમને ઇન્ટરપ્રિટરની સેવાઓ જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક સાધો.

Gujratal

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Polish

COMMUNAL AREA MANAGEMENT POLICY

Quality Record

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Communal Areas Management Policy sets out how Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) will manage both internal and external communal areas in general purpose blocks of flats.
- 1.2 A 'communal area' means any parts of the building or grounds in which the property is situated where you, your household and/or visitors are permitted to go. This includes but is not limited to gardens, pathways, car parks, stairways, balconies, corridors, landings, entrances, lifts, rubbish chutes, and bin areas.
- 1.3 This policy supports NBBCs commitment to keeping the communal areas clean and clear of hazardous items. Responsible Officers shall ensure all communal areas which are owned and operated by NBBC are visually inspected at monthly intervals (minimum). Inspections shall consist of a visual assessment of internal stairwells and corridors, internal storage areas, communal balconies, external pathways, external storage areas and communal gardens.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:
 - Outline the steps that should be taken in the event that items which pose a health and safety risk are found within either internal or external areas managed by NBBC.
 - Advise tenants and leaseholders how NBBC will manage and respond to concerns of fire safety in communal areas in general purpose blocks of flats.
 - Ensure that all internal and external communal areas are managed effectively and kept free from obstructions or hazards.
 - Prevent sources of ignition and fire spread in shared communal areas.
 - Maintain safe routes of escape in housing types, which have shared common areas owned and managed by NBBC.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Head of Housing & Responsive Repairs retains overall responsibility for the implementation of this Policy. The Tenancy Services Manager is responsible for the operational delivery of this policy and associated procedures.
- 3.2 This Policy applies to all employees of NBBC and is applicable to all frontline members of staff attending areas owned and managed by NBBC.

4. Legislation and Fire Risk Assessments

4.1 NBBC will abide by the responsibilities contained within the following Legislation (but not limited to):

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- The Housing Act 2004 which introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System Regulations 2005;
- Building Regulations 2006
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002 (COSHH)
- Fire Safety (England) regulations 2022

4.2 NBBC carry out fire risk assessments for all communal areas within blocks of flats owned by NBBC and these will be reviewed on a periodic basis.

Fire risk assessments may be reviewed sooner where:

- Physical alterations are made to the building including changes to material finishes.
- There is reason to suspect the original fire risk assessment may no longer be valid.
- Improvement works have been carried out as identified by a fire risk assessment and the fire safety of the building requires to be reassessed

5. Belongings in Communal Areas

5.1 NBBC adopts a zero tolerance approach to belongings in communal areas and will not permit any items to be stored in areas including stairwells, balconies, corridors or under stairs. For clarity, belongings will include (but are not limited to):

- Flammable liquids or gases, for example: patio heaters or barbecues, paints or solvent based materials, gas heaters or pressurised cylinders, motorcycles / mopeds, petrol driven gardening equipment.
- Mobility scooters, wheelchairs, walking frames
- Any recycling, waste or wheelie bins
- Clothes, shoes, boots, wellingtons etc
- Any electrical equipment
- Any exercise equipment, for example exercise bike, cross trainer, weights etc
- Clothes drying equipment
- Gardening equipment
- Festive decorations, Christmas trees etc
- Prams or buggies
- Bicycles (see exception below) including electric bicycles
- Children's toys
- Any items of furniture, for example chairs, tables, storage units, mattresses etc
- Curtains, net curtains, blinds on communal windows
- Pictures, posters or other flammable wall coverings
- Carpets, rugs or runners
- Plant pots and plants, artificial flowers

- Any other items identified as a fire hazard or an obstruction to an escape route.

The only exceptions NBBC will allow:

- Bicycles (not electric), pushchairs and non-electric mobility aids. In some communal areas where the appropriate storage facility has been provided.
- Door mats. Tenants may have a door mat at their flat entrance door. The door mat must have a non-slip backing and should be approximately 40 x 60cm in size. Off cuts of carpet should not be used as door mats.

- 5.2 Electrical cupboards, meter cupboards and gas cupboards that are in communal areas are to be sterile environments. This means that these cupboards must contain no items due to the potential risk of fire. Storage areas must not be entered or used by residents, their households/ and or visitors.
- 5.3 There are certain items that must be removed from any communal area as soon as they are noticed. Objects in this category are, but not limited to motorcycles, scooters, gas BBQ's, petrol lawnmowers, anything with an engine that uses petrol or diesel, cans of fuel etc. For more detail, please see NBBC Communal Area Management Procedure.

6. Tenants Responsibility

- 6.1 Tenants and leaseholder must not leave their belongings or those of their household and/or visitors in the communal areas. Section 2.5.3 of NBBCs tenancy agreement states *“you must not leave your belongings or those of your household and/or visitors in the common areas. The Council may remove any item left in the common areas and dispose of them”*. Section 2.8.2 clarifies *“you must keep all common areas free from obstructions. You must not keep any items that will block access or cause a health and safety risk in corridors, landings, walkways, stairwells or any shared area. If you do, the Council may dispose of them and you will have to pay our reasonable cost for doing this”*.
- 6.2 Tenants and leaseholders must not leave waste or other items in the Common Areas (except in designated bins or other appropriate receptacles).
- 6.3 Tenants and their visitors are not permitted to smoke/vape within the internal communal areas. However, residents and their visitors can smoke/vape within an external communal area, providing that this does not cause a nuisance or annoyance to other residents. Cigarette ends must be disposed of appropriately and must not be discarded in the external communal area.
- 6.4 It is also tenants responsibility to ensure that any fire doors are not propped open in any event. This is an immediate fire safety risk and anyone found responsible for this action will have action taken against their tenancy, which could result in possession proceedings being sought.

7. Enforcement

- 7.1 Where unauthorised belongings are being stored in a communal area, NBBC will attempt to contact the owner of any goods and ask them to remove the items. High risk items (for example motorbike, mobility scooter) will be removed immediately.
- 7.2 Where the owner cannot be located the items will be photographed and removed, either by the Estates Team or by an external contractor. Items with a value of over £100 (for example bicycles, pushchairs) will be kept in storage for 28 days before being disposed of. All other items will be disposed of immediately. Should the owner wish to re-claim items removed by NBBC, proof of ownership must be provided.
- 7.3 Where the owner is identified, but the items are not removed from the communal areas, NBBC will arrange removal and the Business Support Team will invoice the owner for the cost. Owners wishing to reclaim valuable items from storage must cover the removal and storage costs for the items before the items are returned.
- 7.4 Continued failure to comply will result in a breach of tenancy conditions and NBBC may take legal action against the tenant.

8. References

- Tenancy Agreement
- Communal Area Management Procedure
- Fire Safety Risk Assessments
- Health and Safety Policy and Procedures
- Lone Worker Policy

9. Equality and Diversity

- 9.1 This policy and associated procedures will apply to all. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to eliminating unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, belief, class, financial status and any other difference that can lead to discrimination or unfair treatment.

10. Review Date

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or on the introduction of the new legislation, regulation or good practice guidance.