

Neighbourhood Management Policy

Board Approval:	August 2024	Responsible Board:	Ocean Housing Ltd
Next Review:	August 2027	Responsible Executive:	Managing Director of Ocean Housing Ltd

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out Ocean's approach to the management of our neighbourhoods to ensure they are safe, secure, clean, and well-maintained place for people to live in.

1.2 We will deliver services, so we meet:

- The Neighbourhood and Community Consumer Standard
- The Safety and Quality Consumer Standard
- Ocean's Service Standard Commitment
- Relevant Health and Safety legislation.

1.3 The relevant Ocean Service Standard commitments are:

- Keep your neighbourhood well maintained by:
 - ✓ Cutting communal grassed areas regularly throughout the growing season
 - ✓ Maintaining and trimming the edges of communal grassed areas
 - ✓ Spraying and removing all weeds, moss and algae from pathways
 - ✓ Pruning untidy trees and shrubs in communal areas as required
- Keep your communal areas well maintained by:
 - ✓ Carrying out Fire Risk Assessments annually and ensure any issues are acted on
 - ✓ Test fire alarms, emergency lighting and sprinkler systems at the required frequency
 - ✓ Maintain door entry systems
 - ✓ Clean communal areas at either a weekly or fortnightly frequency

2.0 Policy Statement

2.1 Our mission is "to be an innovative provider of quality homes and services with tenants and residents and staff at the heart of Ocean, and Ocean at the heart of the community".

2.2 We want our homes and neighbourhoods to be places where people choose to live and are proud to do so.

2.3 Neighbourhood management crosses a number of areas and issues, which may not be solely within Ocean's control. In many instances, we will work in partnership with other agencies.

- 2.4 We will deliver services to ensure that Ocean owned land is clean, safe, and well maintained. This includes play and recreational areas, car parks, communal areas inside blocks of flats, communal gardens, grassed areas, shared pathways, refuse stores and drying areas.
- 2.5 We aim to provide high quality services, create sustainable communities and promote pride in our neighbourhoods
- 2.6 We will comply with the Regulator's Neighbourhood and Community Standard through partnership working with our tenants and external organisations, and our commitment to keeping neighbourhoods and communal areas clean and safe.
- 2.7 We will involve customers and other parties with an interest in understanding the neighbourhood need.
- 2.8 We will ensure the staff team have clear expectations placed on them and are supported and supervised to deliver a high quality and effective service.
- 2.9 We will ensure that all customers are aware of their respective responsibilities.
- 2.10 We will ensure the services we provide represent value for money and that the people who benefit from the services pay a fair share of the cost of providing them.
- 2.11 For the purposes of this policy, 'neighbourhood management' incorporates activities and services, such as, (but not exclusively):
- Grounds maintenance
 - Tree management
 - Cleaning of internal communal areas
 - Caretaking
 - Security systems
 - Removal of graffiti and fly tipping
 - Car park management
 - Removal of abandoned/untaxed vehicles
 - Maintenance and improvement of communal areas
 - Neighbourhood checks
 - Health and Safety inspections
 - Waste Management
 - Pests and vermin

3.0 Our Approach

- 3.1 **Grounds Maintenance:** We provide a Grounds Maintenance service where we have a combination of communal grassed areas, footpaths and hard standing areas, hedgerows and shrubberies that require regular maintenance.
- 3.2 **Communal Cleaning:** We provide a communal cleaning service to blocks of flats, with communal entrances, walkways, refuse areas and drying areas. This includes a number of older-persons schemes that have additional communal areas such as tenants and resident's lounges, guest bedrooms, kitchens and laundries.

- 3.3 **Caretaking:** Ocean provides caretaking services to Park House, which comprises 67 mixed tenure homes in an 11-storey block.
- 3.4 **Security systems:** To ensure the health and safety of tenants and residents living in blocks of flats, Ocean has installed security systems to prevent unauthorised access to communal areas and guard against the incidence of smoke and fire. This includes door entry, fire alarm, smoke detection and sprinkler systems, although not all equipment is present in all blocks.
- 3.5 **Removal of graffiti and fly tipping:** We will deal with incidences of graffiti and fly tipping in a quick and responsive manner to maintain the appearance of our neighbourhoods. Where possible we will recharge the people responsible for fly tipping or graffiti.
- 3.6 **Car Park monitoring:** Whilst most of Ocean's car park areas operate satisfactorily, with no need for any formal management arrangements, very occasionally, some form of problem will arise that affects tenants and residents' ability to use the car park and, in such instances, we will introduce a car park management system to resolve the issue.
- 3.7 **Removal of abandoned vehicles:** abandoned vehicles on adopted highway within the curtilage of an Ocean estate will be reported to Cornwall Council for removal. Where they are on Ocean land we will manage the issue.
- 3.8 **Maintenance of communal areas:** to ensure the sustainability and visual appeal of Ocean's neighbourhoods, particularly those comprising blocks of flats, it is important they are well maintained, and well decorated. Our asset management strategy delivers a regular planned programme of component renewal and decoration to communal areas.
- 3.9 **Neighbourhood Checks:** Every Ocean employee who visits one of our neighbourhoods will be alert for issues that may need attention, either dealing with them immediately or reporting them to the appropriate team.
- 3.10 **Tree Management:** We survey all trees on land owned by Ocean every two years and use that survey data to inform our planned tree works. We will only remove trees where they present a risk to people or property.
- 3.11 We will ensure that all tree works are carried out, in accordance with good arboriculture practice, and we will maintain our trees in a safe and sustainable way, whilst developing and increasing biodiversity and seasonal character in our trees, for the benefit of wildlife, tenants and communities.
- 3.12 We will not maintain trees in private or individual gardens. This will be the responsibility of the person who occupies the property and has use of the garden.
- 3.13 **Waste Management:** We will clean and maintain communal bin stores and chutes. Residents are expected to take ensure their household rubbish is properly stored and disposed of appropriately. Refuse must be adequately bagged and stored until collection in bin stores or other designated areas
- 3.14 Tenants are also responsible for dealing with the disposal of large items such as household furniture and must comply with the local arrangements for the collection of refuse.

- 3.15 **Pests and Vermin:** Where pests and vermin are adversely affecting the ability to use a communal area safely, we will arrange for the area to be treated by a pest control expert. We will also undertake any repairs that may be required to address the issue.
- 3.16 **Management of Communal areas:** Tenants must ensure that no items are left in the communal area and that no rubbish or litter is deposited, otherwise in a designated bin or recycling area.
- 3.17 Obstructing communal corridors and staircases compromises the means of escape in the event of a fire. For that reason, we expect residents to keep their belongings in their home or any associated storage. We reserve the right to remove items left or placed in communal areas, including personal objects. Where objects are dangerous they may be removed without notice.
- 3.18 There is a 'no smoking' policy in the internal communal areas of our buildings, as smoking in a public place is against the law.

4.0 Neighbourhood Health Checks

- 4.1 Every Ocean colleague who visits one of our homes or neighbourhoods is responsible for identifying and reporting that may need attention. If they can deal with the issue, there and then they should do.
- 4.3 Blocks with internal communal areas are subject to the following regime:
- Specialist assessment of fire risk – yearly
 - Specialist assessment of other H&S risks – yearly
 - Cleaning Team communal area check – at least very two weeks
 - Compliance Checks (fire safety equipment) – every two weeks
 - Neighbourhood Services Officer - Quarterly except Park House which is inspected on monthly basis
- 4.4 Neighbourhoods with external communal areas are subject to the following regime:
- Periodic professional assessment of H&S risks – three-year cycle.
 - Grounds Maintenance team – Two weekly visit target in the growing season, although a number of factors can impact that cycle, including the weather.
 - Routine visits by all Ocean colleagues – 4,195 compliance visits & 13,000 responsive visits

5.0 Neighbourhood Surveys

- 5.1 Ocean is undertaking a three-year estate condition survey which will inform long term estate investment requirements.

6.0 Neighbourhood Engagement

- 6.1 We encourage our tenants and residents to get involved in their estate and will signpost to other services and sources of help as appropriate. We also have a Community Chest budget that can be used to help our tenants and residents to make improvements to communal amenities on our estates.
- 6.2 Tenant Monitors provide us with monthly feedback on our grounds maintenance and cleaning services.
- 6.3 The Estate Improvement Budget is also available to make positive changes to our neighbourhoods, and these improvements often involve ideas put forward by residents.
- 6.4 Where consideration is given to changing existing services or introducing new ones, Ocean will consult potentially affected tenants on the proposals before initiating any change. In situations where the service charge is likely to be affected, we will follow the relevant contractual and legislative consultation processes.

7.0 Working with others

- 7.1 Where issues are identified that are not the responsibility of Ocean, we will work with the relevant organisation to have the issue addressed. We will encourage residents to report issue to the appropriate organisation and support them to do so where required.
- 7.2 In some neighbourhoods, services are provided by way of a Management Agreement with an external managing agent. In such instances, Ocean is required to ensure they properly maintain the communal areas and hold them to account if they are not.

8.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 8.1 Ocean collects data to understand the diverse needs of tenants, including those arising from protected characteristics, language barriers, and additional support needs; and to assess whether all tenants have fair access to, and equitable outcomes of, housing and landlord services.
- 8.2 Ocean recognises that often vulnerable people may be disadvantaged socially, isolated and/or financially excluded. Where appropriate we will offer services in line with this policy to assist vulnerable tenants to sustain and maintain their tenancy.
- 8.3 Everyone has a right to be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect. This Policy is in line Ocean's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.
- 8.4 This policy does not unfairly or unlawfully discriminate and will be applied equally for all Protected Characteristics. Reasonable Adjustments, under the Equality Act 2010, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.5 We are committed to addressing any communication or language barriers by providing translation services for face-to-face contact and written communication when needed. We will also produce information in alternative formats such as audio or large print where required.

8.6 Staff are made aware of our approach to Customer Care and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, and Safeguarding through staff induction and on-going training.