

	<b>Estate Management Policy</b>
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1	Estate Management & Communal Areas Policy	P Latham	Nov 2023	Board	Nov 2023	Nov 2023	Nov 2026
N/A	Estate Services Policy	Unknown	2015	Unknown	2015	TBC	TBC
1	Pest Control Policy	M Wood	Oct 2023	Board	Oct 2023	Oct 2023	Oct 2026
1	Tree Management Policy	M Wood	Oct 2023	Board	Oct 2023	Oct 2023	Oct 2026
N/A	Neighbourhood and Community Standards Policy	Unknown	2015	Unknown	2015	TBC	TBC
2	Estate Management Policy	P Latham	Oct 2024	Board	Oct 2024	Oct 2024	Oct 2026

## 1. Introduction

This policy seeks to set out Eldonian Community Based Housing Association's (ECBHA's) policy positions regarding overall estate management including communal areas.

This policy has brought together a number of separate policies into one document. Those previous documents and applicable content are superseded by this document.

This policy sets out how ECBHA intends to comply with the relevant legislation and regulatory requirements and guidance.

ECBHA seeks to be transparent with all stakeholders regarding its performance, compliance and assurance with this policy.

The policy is relevant to all ECBHA employees, residents, contractors and other person's or other stakeholders delivering or affected by activities and ECBHA homes and services.

## 2. Aims & Objectives

ECBHA is committed to delivering an attractive, well maintained, and safe environment. The way we manage our estate affects the quality of life and the environment of our residents.

The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to the delivery and management of estate services to internal and external communal areas. This policy aims to provide a basis for ECBHA to achieve the following objectives.

- To maintain a high standard of estate management services that deliver value for money and are accounted for in residents service charges.
- To have an estate that is kept clean, well maintained and safe, and that ECBHA and our residents are proud of.
- To ensure we have clear estate management standards, which make clear what residents can expect, and what the respective obligations are for both ECBHA and residents in delivering those standards.
- To maintain a regular, visible presence on estates.
- To ensure we comply with all Health & Safety requirements.
- To encourage residents to take responsibility for their environment/estate.

### **3. Legislation & Regulation**

Estate Management legislation includes:

- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Occupiers' Liability Act 1957

Effective estate management is also required to ensure compliance with the RSH consumer regulatory standards.

### **4. Scope**

For the purpose of this Policy the following areas will not be included:

- Communal repairs and maintenance
- Communal Investment works
- Anti-social behaviour in communal spaces
- Service charge setting and administration

All of the above topics are covered elsewhere with the ECBHA suite of strategies, policies and procedures. Others areas excluded from this policy are services that are delivered by other Partners/agencies including:

- Provision of recycling
- Highway issues
- Parking outside of ECBHA land
- Street lighting

### **5. Policy Statements**

We will put residents at the heart of their neighborhood by encouraging customer involvement in estate management. We are committed to working in partnership with relevant partners and external agencies such as the local authority and the police to help promote the social environmental and economic wellbeing of our neighborhoods.

### **5.1 Cleaning:**

We will carry out regular cleaning to our blocks and communal areas.

The frequency of cleaning will depend on the need of each block. The cleaning frequency and summary of the specification will be displayed on the notice board in each block.

### **5.2 Grounds Maintenance:**

We will ensure that the communal land looks clean and tidy, hedges/shrubs cut back and grass maintained. Our communal land is classified into three key types for our grounds maintenance specification:

- Older people independent living (Robert Lynch House & Sibert House)
- Other ECBHA Homes
- Amenity land ( includes grass verges, and small community grass areas).

The grounds maintenance summary specification will be displayed on the notice board at Robert Lynch House and Sibert House.

The grounds maintenance summary specification for other ECBHA homes and amenity land can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of this policy.

We will not maintain private or individual gardens. This will be the responsibility of the resident as detailed in their tenancy/licence agreement.

### **5.3 Window Cleaning:**

ECBHA will carry out window cleaning in communal areas and on the external part of individual flat windows where the design is such that they cannot be cleaned by the resident (i.e. the resident cannot reach the external face of the window). All window cleaning is service chargeable to the residents.

For Robert Lynch House and Sibert House all windows are cleaned externally and service charged.

### **5.4 Parking:**

Car parks are designed for resident use only. Where there is provision then visitor's parking will be allowed. All vehicles parking within our car parks must have current valid road tax, MOT and be roadworthy.

Parking must only be in designated car parks, not on paths, communal lawns or other unsuitable or unpaved ground.

If necessary, controlled car parking schemes will be introduced across estates to minimise non-resident parking. If any cost is incurred by ECBHA to run these schemes, residents will be charged through the service charge. If a cost is to be incurred by residents ECBHA will consult with residents and a simple majority (of those voting) will determine the scheme.

ECBHA will allow any instructed parking contractor to use all legal measures to deter parking that contravenes the scheme and to set charges in agreement with ECBHA.

### **5.5 Tree Management:**

ECBHA will primarily retain ownership and take responsibility for the care and maintenance of all mature trees on our land. We will:

- Use our best endeavours to identify trees which we are responsible for, ensuring they are safe and well maintained and do not endanger the safety of people or cause damage to homes or property. However, we may introduce a service charge, if appropriate where trees are within communal gardens or shared open spaces.
- Have a planned maintenance schedule on any mature tree situated on our communal land and those reported by customers within the boundary of our homes.
- Make sure all trees on our land enhance the quality of life, the environment of social housing, providing colour, contrast, and diversity to the surroundings.

For emergency tree works or ad-hoc inspections where the tree poses a risk to the property's residents, we will endeavour attend within one working day to carry out any necessary tree safety works.

If a customer wishes to undertake work to a tree in their garden we will provide the necessary advice and guidance prior to any works.

We will check any Tree Preservation Orders or other conservation restrictions prior to us undertaking work to mature trees in our ownership.

Where works are undertaken to a tree which is located on land that forms part of a leasehold agreement, the leaseholder will be consulted and will be charged according to the terms of their lease.

Instances may occur where a tree, on land owned or managed by us, is found to be affecting our property or our customers. Any impact on either will be considered when undertaking the risk assessment and inspection prior to ordering any works.

We will not undertake tree maintenance or removal for the following reasons:

- Blocking out sunlight
- Size - we will not prune or fell a managed tree because it is "too big" or "too tall." A tree is not dangerous just because it may be considered too big for its surroundings.
- Dropping leaves in gardens
- Telephone or other utility cables.
- Sap falling onto paths or cars
- Overhanging into gardens
- Affecting TV reception
- Fruit falling from tree

Tree maintenance is currently most reactive in nature and conducted in response to reports received from tenants or members of staff regularly inspecting communal areas concerning specific trees.

It is our aim to continually increase the data we have about trees in the area and assess all trees to see if any regular maintenance is required.

Trees in non-communal areas are only surveyed reactively but will be observed regularly by the tenants of the property and any significant hazards obvious to the lay person would in most cases be reported

## **5.6 Communal Bins & Waste Management:**

Communal bins are for use by residents of that allocated building only and must be used in accordance with local authority or waste disposal company guidelines. Where guidelines are not followed and a resident contravenes this, ECBHA may recover the costs for any rectification through recharging both individuals and residents of a block.

Where non-residents are the cause of the contravention we will deal with this as fly tipping (please see section regarding use of communal areas).

Tenants will be notified at the start of their tenancy of arrangements for the removal and recycling of refuse and bulk items.

We will work in partnership with the local authority to encourage our customers to recycle and re-use their household waste.

### **5.7 Use of communal areas (internal and external):**

Communal areas must be kept free of bulky items and nothing should be stored in communal areas, including cupboards with shared access. We want our estates to be safe and items within communal areas can cause both fire hazards and restrict escape routes. ECBHA operate a zero tolerance approach to this, with the exception of:

- Door mats
- Potted plants that do not impede emergency escape from the building
- Small artificial plants / ornaments that have been subject to fire retardment treatment

ECBHA retains the right to remove such items to ensuring communal areas are kept free from combustible materials and trip hazards.

Any items left in internal or external communal areas that are damaged or causing a fire/health & safety risk will be removed immediately and re-charges made where applicable.

### **5.8 Gardens:**

Communal gardens are for the enjoyment of all residents of the respective building who have a right to access these. There must be no fences, barriers, locks or obstructions put in communal gardens that stop residents accessing it.

Residents must not use the communal gardens for their own use (i.e. planting shrubs and beds) unless agreement is given in writing.

Residents must use communal gardens with consideration for others particularly in relation to the time and noise associated with any social use.

We take a zero tolerance approach to environmental crime; which includes fly tipping, littering, animal faeces and abandoned cars. We will work in partnership with local enforcement agencies; which could include legal action against those committing such crimes on our land.

We will ensure that we have a grounds maintenance team in place to maintain all identified open spaces and work in partnership with our approved contractor to ensure the following:

- Communal areas of grass are regularly cut throughout the growing season
- Shrub bed areas are trimmed and cut back as required and shrubs are not allowed to overhang footpaths
- Footpaths, parking bays and roads that have not been adopted by the local authority are inspected and works are raised from the inspections
- Leaf collection is completed three times a year during October, November, and December
- Hedge cutting and base maintenance three times a year
- Grass edging throughout the growing season.

We will ensure that the services provided are of the highest standard to ensure complete customer satisfaction.

#### **5.9 TV Aerials/satellite dishes:**

Permission needs to be sought from ECBHA to install satellite dishes or aerials on individual dwellings including houses. Where ECBHA provides a communal aerial for blocks and this is service charged to residents.

#### **5.10 Invasive plants:**

Invasive plants can cause severe damage to communal grounds and can take several years for successful removal. Such plants include:

- Japanese knotweed
- Hogweed
- Ivy

ECBHA will take reasonable steps to ensure invasive plants are identified and treated at the earliest opportunity. These plants will be removed in line with good horticultural practice and legislation.

Any resident found to have planted, introduced or caused spread of these plants will be liable for the cost of the removal.

#### **5.11 CCTV:**

A small number of locations have CCTV in place. ECBHA will recover all reasonable costs via service charges.

CCTV is passively monitored, which means that footage is only viewed when needed. If CCTV is to be installed or replaced ECBHA will consult with residents over the requirements for the facilities.

ECBHA may use CCTV on occasion to aid investigations of anti-social behaviour and criminal behaviour. The use of CCTV evidence in such circumstances will be in line with legislation and regulation.

#### **5.12 Fire management and building compliance:**

ECBHA estate management approach will be aligned with, and contribute towards its wider policies and procedures regarding fire management, prevention and wider building compliance requirements such as asbestos and legionella among others

#### **5.13 Signage (excluding parking):**

ECBHA will seek to ensure that signage is kept to a reasonable minimum to support the good management of the estate. Communal blocks will be provided with signage stating the locations name.

Requests for signs on estates (e.g. – ‘no ball games’) will normally be refused due to them being non-enforceable and that they can create a detrimental view of an estate.

No communal areas should display any notices or advertisements without permission from ECBHA.

#### **5.14 Pest control in communal areas:**

Where pest infestations are identified within communal areas ECBHA will be responsible for organising treatment.

If during investigations it is found the pest infestation is from a resident's property ECBHA will act to recover the costs of the treatment.

It is recognised that ECBHA homes are adjacent land that is both commercial and awaiting regeneration and redevelopment. Where pest issues relate to this adjacent land ECBHA will seek to work in conjunction with Liverpool City Council to manage these.

ECBHA is responsible for treating pests that are deemed a statutory nuisance in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and as a responsible landlord we have a legal duty to ensure that our homes are safe places for tenants to live under the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation Act) 2018.

Alongside being responsive to customer need, ECBHA will adopt a proactive method to identify and manage risks relating to pest issues. Pests for the purposes of this policy, we will class the following:

- mice,rats
- cockroaches
- wasps
- rats
- pigeons

This list is not exhaustive, and we may consider the treatment of other species of pest where they present a serious risk to harm out tenants or their homes. Residents have a responsibility to prevent and treat pests that are attributable to their actions or inaction.

Where we are responsible for pest control, we will provide the following treatment:

- Mice/Rats – Up to three visits to bait and remove them.
- Cockroaches – One visit to spray the affected area.
- Wasps – One visit to poison and remove the nest.
- Pigeons – Trapping and removing them from inside spaces like lofts once any holes are blocked.

We will ensure that all empty properties are free from infestations before being let which includes all external areas.

### **5.15 Estate Management - Environmental ASB**

Environmental ASB affects our ability to maintain and improve our neighborhoods we aim to minimize the incidents of environmental ASB and respond promptly when incidents are identified. Environmental ASB covers a variety of acts such as:

- Vandalism
- Dog Fouling
- Grafitti
- Dropping Litter
- Fly Tipping

We will investigate all instances of environmental ASB and work to identify the offender and take appropriate enforcement action. We encourage residents who witness environmental ASB to report it to ourselves and any other relevant organization such as the police or the city councils environmental health department.

Tenants are responsible for making good or paying for any damage caused by deliberate acts of vandalism or any results caused by environmental ASB by themselves, any member of their household or visitors.

## **5.16 Winter Weather Services:**

We will as far as be reasonably practicable, maintain safe access to and from our premises. Areas that are most likely to be affected will be walkways, building entrances and car parks.

## **5.17 Estate Walkabouts / Inspections:**

To ensure we provide a good neighborhood management service, we will complete inspections in a variety of ways.

We will work with tenants and the local authority as appropriate to undertake walkabouts or estate inspections where an area has been identified as a cause for concern. Walkabouts are normally completed at least three times a year.

The outcomes concluded from all the different inspection formats will drive the focus of our estate management services.

## **6. Roles & Responsibilities**

The Chief Executive Officer will have overall responsibility for the policy, while the Chief Operating Officer will have operational responsibility for its implementation.

Housing staff will have day to day responsibility for the delivery of this policy.

Residents will be encouraged to take an active role in supporting staff to deliver this policy, particularly in relation to the provision in section 6 of this policy

## **7. Recharges and Enforcement Action**

Where we determine that an estate management issue is a result of a customer's action, or inaction we may recharge the some or the full cost to remedy the problem.

We may consider enforcement action (including possession or injunctive relief) where tenants fail to adhere to their tenancy agreement.

We recognise that some tenants with additional needs, We will ensure that all decisions to recharge, or to take court action in the event of failure to pay a rechargeable debt or failure to maintain an obligation towards the tenant's tenancy agreement is taken on a case-by-case basis. Where vulnerable tenants are concerned, we will ensure that any formal action is subject to a proportionality assessment. Where recharges are applied, and to combat issues of affordability, we will offer a range of low-cost repayment options for rechargeable work to ensure any debt is manageable.

## **8. Policy Breaches**

Any tenant or staff member witnessing a breach of the policy must raise this directly with the person concerned or draw it to the attention of a member of the Senior Management Team. Alternatively, a tenant may choose to invoke the complaints procedure if they believe our estate management services have been inadequate.

## **9. Monitoring**



Estate standards will be monitored through:

- Staff day to day monitoring while undertaking activities in the area.
- Weekly estate inspections
- Quarterly joint residents and customer estate walkabouts.

ECBHA will agree with residents a written guide to acceptable estate management standards. These will be used to grade the condition of communal areas both internally and externally during inspections and walkabouts.

We will also regularly monitor and enforce contracts with organisations providing estate management related activities.

Residents will be encouraged to notify ECBHA of any defects relating to:

- Health and safety
- Defects, such as fly tipping, repairs, graffiti
- Abandoned vehicles

## **10. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years unless changing circumstances or an incident trigger an earlier review.

## **11. Equal Opportunities**

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities for all everyone will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.