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1. Purpose of the policy

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to the management of our communal areas including installations, and to the services we provide to residents in communal areas.

1.2 The policy also sets out how our work in this area contributes to our Corporate Objectives.

2. Introduction

2.1 Women's Pioneer Housing (WPH) are committed to providing our residents with high quality homes and services. By Estates Management, we mean the procedures and processes by which we will organise, implement and monitor the services provided to communal areas or installations and for which residents pay through their service charge. The services provided differ from property to property.

2.2 In properties comprising flats, there will be parts of the building shared by residents (common parts). In some properties there may be external areas or gardens for the use of residents (communal grounds). Some properties have communal systems for the provision of heating and or hot water, others may have passenger lifts, most have fire safety equipment and door entry systems from which residents' benefit.

2.3 The Estate Management Policy is also responsible for identifying how we will carry out any improvements to estates that support our management of communal areas including security (flat doors & communal doors, CCTV etc) , health & safety compliance, heating and hot water, introduction of any cooling systems, and waste management

2.4 The services we provide in relation to the above are called Estate Services

3. The Policy

3.1 Estate Services are provided to ensure that all common parts and any communal grounds are clean, tidy, safe, secure and free of hazards and to ensure that any communal installations from which all residents benefit are kept in full working order.

3.2 We do not provide Estate Services to homes which do not have any communal areas or installations shared with others

3.3 The day-to-day responsibility for the management of estates services rests with either the Estate Compliance Officers (ECO's) in the general needs properties or the Scheme Managers in the Sheltered Schemes.

3.4 In our general needs (non-sheltered) homes which makes up most of our housing stock, we employ ECO's to monitor standards of cleanliness and tidiness in common parts and communal grounds and to ensure effective management of estate services contracts. The ECOs will also support the effectiveness of our compliance regime. In sheltered housing schemes for older women, these duties are carried out by the Scheme Manager with the support of the ECO where needed.

3.5 The ECO is not an office -based post as the duties involved in the role require a high degree of mobile working. Currently residents pay eighty per cent of the cost of the ECO service through service charges to reflect the proportion of time spent accordingly on communal services. The remaining twenty percent of the cost of the ECO service is regarded as an office overhead. In Sheltered housing, 80% of the Scheme Manager costs are also dealt with in the same way. This percentage is reviewed annually.

3.6 Appendix 1 sets out a complete list of these services.

3.7 How we charge for these services is set out in the Service Charge Policy and this policy should be read in connection with the Service Charge Policy.

3.8 We apportion Service Charges between all residents however; occasionally we may choose to provide a service for the benefit of a single resident, or to a minority of residents in a particular property. In these circumstances, (subject to the terms of the tenancy agreement or lease) we will recharge the full amount to that resident, or residents receiving the benefit of the service.

3.9 The policy is part of a range of policies framing our work with regard to the following objectives, Our Homes, Our Services.

4. Legislation and relevant WPH policies and procedures

4.1 WPH will comply with all relevant legislation and regulatory requirements in the management of its estates, and other WPH policies and obligations that are in place:

- The Quality & Safety Standard
- WPH Contractors' Code of Conduct
- Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) 2005
- Recharges Policy
- Service Charge Policy
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (as amended).
- Pest Control Policy
- Cyclical, Major Repairs and improvements Policy
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH).
- Torts Procedure
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Consumer Regulations

5. Maintaining and improving our estates and communal areas

5.1 We will carry out a range of risk assessments in our communal areas, and use the recommendations from those assessments to ensure the safety of residents. The risk assessments we will carry out are Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs), Legionella risk assessments, electric testing, gas safety checks, management and control of asbestos and lift servicing and testing (where lifts are in place).

5.2 In addition:

- We will use FRAs to help ensure resident's safety in our communal areas, implementing recommendations as required by the FRA assessor.
- We will use any recommendations from the legionella risk assessments to improve the communal hot water systems and cold-water storage tanks
- We will receive and review stock conditions surveys and consider any recommendations to improve the safety and condition of our buildings to enhance the communal areas.
- Contractors will be asked to report any hazards in communal areas. This will be used to consider improvements for residents
- The ECO inspections will be reviewed and used to support any improvements to communal areas

5.3 Resident influence and engagement

- Feedback and requests from residents to introduce improvements to the communal areas to enhance their quality of life or safety will be considered by the housing and property teams.
- In most cases, consultation will need to take place to ensure most residents are in agreement with any requests.
- Residents will be invited to review any request, be advised of any potential increase in services charges and asked to let us know whether they are in agreement with the proposed improvement.

- In most cases, the majority of residents will need to agree the improvement however in some cases, WPH may use their discretion and introduce an improvement to ensure the safety of one or more resident, or when directed by a statutory partner or similar.
- Residents and residents' groups may specifically request improvements to their individual flat doors or communal spaces.

6. Responding to requests for improvements

6.1 WPH will consider the following security improvement requests:

6.1.1 To replace the existing flat entrance door lock with a high security egress night latch manufactured to BS 8621 which will be fitted by a qualified competent contractor. This lock has a mortice deadlock facility and is approved by the Police and meets fire safety requirements.

6.1.2 To install additional window locks or restrictors where not previously fitted to all windows.

6.1.3 To fit a fire safety compliant spy hole by a qualified and competent contractor.

6.1.4 The installation of CCTV, if supported by an external agency such as the Police or Local Authority.

6.1.5 The installation of a fire-rated letterbox to flat doors, or a suite of letterboxes to the external elevation or internal communal area. All fitted by a competent person

6.2 When a tenant requests improved security for their property, the first consideration will be to replace their door lock with a higher security door lock as detailed at 6.1.1.

6.3 If security further to 6.2 is requested, the Health, Safety and Compliance Manager will consider this on a case-by-case basis supported by any information and evidence available.

6.4 WPH does not allow tenants to have additional flat entrance door locks installed, as the holes made through doors to accommodate the extra locks, compromises the fire-safe integrity of the door. Additional holes reduce the doors' ability to hold back smoke and flames. Doors that have been compromised because of unauthorised changes will need to be replaced with costs to borne by the resident.

6.5 Where a tenant wants to install a security lock or grill, WPH will need to be contacted and provide permission ensuring that any existing safety systems will not be breached.

6.6 There maybe other improvements that will enhance the look or safety of communal spaces. WPH will receive any requests from residents and consider

their appropriateness on a case-by-case basis. This will usually include consultations with other residents as the improvement is likely to result in increased services charges.

7. Equality and diversity

7.1 WPH will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy. We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities and will take positive action or make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

7.2 We will use diversity and vulnerability data to respond to requests

8. How our work supports the objectives

8.1 Objective 1: Our Homes

- We will engage with residents when reviewing the arrangements for providing estate services. We will always consult residents when material changes are being considered.
- We will include residents in key decision-making about service provision. We will also include residents in the process of appointing contractors and recruiting Estate Services Officers.
- We will include resident feedback as a key feature in the periodic reviews of service. This means that we will continue to seek feedback from tenants and consider recommendations from the Tenant Scrutiny panel and any Task and Finish or Focus groups considering any element of the estate service.
- We shall review regularly the effectiveness of the services. Our Estate Service Officers and Scheme Managers will inspect the buildings on a regular basis to ensure that the common parts are clean and free from hazards and that we provide services in accordance with the contracts we hold and that equipment in the common parts is fully functional.
- We will enforce the Contractors' Code of Conduct to ensure the safety of our residents.
- We will set high standards by rigorously monitoring and responding to residents' concerns and complaints and pass on positive feedback.
- We will hold regular review meetings with contractors providing estate services.
- We will aim to resolve complaints raised informally however should this not be successful we will investigate in accordance with our Complaints Policy

8.2 Objective 2: Our services

- We will tailor the delivery of our services to suit resident needs where it is possible to do so.
- We will seek to make reasonable adjustments to service provision when necessary due to the needs of a more vulnerable tenant.
- We will aim to provide estate services in a way, which enhances resident safety- this means that our employees and contractors will adopt safe working

practices as set out in the Contractors Code of Conduct. When ECO's and Scheme Managers identify hazards on site by the use of hazard tape. All communal areas are inspected regularly

- We will maintain a regime of zero tolerance in relation to removing articles left in the common parts which may pose a risk should a fire occur. ECO's and Scheme Managers are responsible for enforcing this regime. We will make residents aware of this approach. and act in line with our ASB policy if residents repeatedly and/or purposely misuse the common areas.
- We will aim to provide estate services in a way, which enhances resident safety. We employ a panel of suitably qualified /experienced contractors working to a Code of Conduct with residents at its heart.

8.3 Objective 3: Our Organisation

- We procure estate services in a way as to ensure value for money. We will aim to procure estate services to secure best value in terms of both price and quality of service offered. We undertake to review these arrangements periodically.
- We will monitor and evaluate estate services contracts to ensure compliance with the specifications and that the quality standards within the contract are being met. The ECO's and the Scheme Managers will be key to this process.

9. Contact Officer

9.1 Monica Read – Estate Compliance Team Leader

10. Links to other policies

- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Security Improvement Policy
- Gas Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Lift Policy
- Condensation, Mould and Damp Management Policy
- Complaints Policy

11 Appeals

11.1 Residents have the right to request a review or appeal against a policy decision

11.2 Appeals or review requests must be submitted in writing and will be considered by a senior officer not involved in the case within 10 working days.'

11.3 Where a resident remains dissatisfied following an appeal or review, they will continue to have access to WPH's complaints procedure and any relevant external escalation route.

Appendix 1

List of Services Paid for Via Service Charges

Cleaning
Window Cleaning
Communal Electric Repairs
Grounds Maintenance
Minor Communal Repairs
Communal Contents Insurance
Communal Computer Costs
Communal Heating and/or Hot Water
Personal Heating and/or Hot Water
Electronic Door Entry System
Pest Control
TV Aerial Repairs
Estate Services Officer or Sheltered Scheme Manager
Communal Asset Depreciation
Fire Equipment Servicing & installation
Communal TV Licence
Lift Servicing
Laundry Costs
Community Alarm Service
Paladin Bin Hire
Legionella Testing
Communal Electricity
Bulk rubbish removal