

Paragon Asra Housing Limited

Management Approach in Shared Areas

May 2021

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Department	Housing Services
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Paragon Asra Housing Limited (PA Housing) is committed to equality and diversity. This policy has considered the Equality Act 2010 and its protected characteristics which are: race, gender, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, marriage, civil marriage and partnership, and pregnancy and maternity explicitly.

We will make sure that all of our communication is fully accessible and to achieve this if a policy or document needs to be available in other formats we will provide them.

AUDIT LOG

Date of Change	Who updated	Details of the change
01.04.2021	Andrew Hitchcock	1.3 Amendment of linked procedures 5.3 Amendment – referring to 3rd party, management & Shared ownership blocks 10.3-10.4 Addition - (Introduction of TORTS notice) 10.5 Addition - Disclaimer

1 Introduction

- 1.1 PA Housing is committed to working with customers to ensure that our shared areas are well-maintained and well-managed.
- 1.2 This policy is intended to clearly set out our approach in managing shared areas to ensure that shared areas are safe and clean.
- 1.3 This policy is operated in conjunction with:
 - PA Housing's Health & Safety Policy
 - PA Housing's Fire Safety Policy
 - Accompanying Fire Safety Procedures
 - Shared Area – Managed Use Procedure
 - Shared Area – Zero Tolerance Procedure
 - Shared Area – Escalation and de-escalation Procedure
 - Shared Area – Designated Area Procedure

2 Objectives

- 2.1 This policy will enable our strategic objectives and goals in the following ways:
 - Providing a consistent and high standard of customer service
 - Provide safe and pleasant homes and neighbourhoods where people have pride in their homes and surroundings
- 2.2 The objectives of this policy are to maintain safe and clean shared areas by:
 - Setting a clear, consistent approach to managing shared areas, taking account of local needs and the type of shared areas that are present
 - Setting a service standard for the level of tolerance to the presence of belongings in shared areas, which will ensure PA Housing meet its obligations in regard to compliance with relevant legislation including fire safety and accessibility requirements
 - Explaining how personal and unauthorised belongings in shared areas will be removed, including general timescales
 - Explaining how we will communicate the approach taken in shared areas clearly and transparently to customers who use

them

- To reduce the risk of fire or other safety hazards in shared areas by controlling the presence of sources of ignition & combustible materials and exit route obstructions

3 Definitions

- 3.1 For the purposes of this policy, a “shared area” is any areas owned by PA Housing which is not within the confines of a customers’ property or for their sole use, and to which customers are able to access.
- 3.2 Shared areas include corridors, landings, lifts, stairwells, meter cupboards, basements, bin stores, external common gardens, open walkways and balconies, communal lounges, entrances to buildings and car parking areas.

4 Key Points of Policy

This policy sets out our expectation with regards to the level of tolerance applied to personal belongings stored in shared communal areas.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that residents are clear on our approach, and that visiting staff are confident in inspecting our properties, taking into account fire and safety risks.

PA Housing apply to approaches to managing items left in shared communal areas; through managed use and zero tolerance.

The policy makes clear what enforcement action we will take if steps taken to resolve the issue have been exhausted.

5 Inspections

- 5.1 All staff visiting our neighbourhoods will be aware of the need to visually check for any fire or other risks and will identify any items in shared areas that are causing a risk to the residents and building.
- 5.2 Neighbourhood Inspections will be carried out, to include shared areas, as defined in the PA Neighbourhood Standards which will ensure that Neighbourhoods are safe and clean.
- 5.3 Generally, customers can expect that Neighbourhoods inspections will be conducted based on the following guidelines: *(This includes 3rd*

Party, Management Schemes and Shared Ownership blocks where we may only have a few properties.)

Property Type and Floor Levels	Frequency
6+ stories	Weekly
3-5 stories	Monthly
1-2 stories	Quarterly
Houses (external only)	Six-Monthly

5.4 In addition, the Fire Safety Team will carry out Fire Risk Assessments and any actions identified as required within shared areas will also be subject to removal as per this policy and associated procedures.

6 Our General Management Approach in Shared Areas

6.1 PA have two approaches to managing shared areas:

- **Managed Use** – certain low risk items are allowed in shared areas with permission or where signposted as designated areas; and providing that the items do not prevent safe escape from the building or create a fire risk.
- **Zero Tolerance** – no belongings are allowed within communal areas under any circumstances.

6.2 PA have identified a list of schemes 6+ stories in height which will be managed with a zero tolerance approach. This means that no belongings are allowed within communal areas under any circumstances. These schemes are identified in Appendix 1.

6.3 In all other shared areas, PA Housing will endeavour to take a common sense approach to managing the use of the shared areas, and expect our customers to carry out the responsibilities outlined in our policies and their contractual tenancy agreement to keep the shared areas safe and clean.

6.4 From time to time, where shared areas are not being kept safe and clean then PA Housing may escalate the management approach in these areas to a zero tolerance approach as outlined in Section 9.

6.5 Shared areas, even those adjacent to a customer's property, are not an extension of their property and therefore should not be used for

personal effects or storage of any kind.

6.6 PA Housing customers are expected to keep all shared areas - internal and external – safe and clean.

- If using shared areas, customers are expected to clear away all personal belongings and effects after use and store them within their homes.
- Rubbish must be disposed of correctly and using the correct refuse facilities and designated areas.
- Obstructions to any fire equipment including smoke alarms, fire doors and exit routes is not permitted.
- In all circumstances, front doors must not be compromised by drill, tack or screws – this could compromise the integrity of fire safety doors.

7 Shared Gardens

7.1 Shared garden areas provide opportunities for customers to become involved in the community in which they live, and PA Housing will take a common sense approach to balance health and safety with the opportunity for customers to enjoy these outdoor areas.

7.2 Barbecues are not permitted in any shared areas (both internal and external shared areas).

7.3 Large play equipment must not be left in shared garden areas when not in use (such as trampolines, swings, climbing frames, paddling pools or inflatable play equipment such as bouncy castles)

7.4 Paddling pools and any other play equipment involving water must be emptied and removed from the shared areas when not in use.

7.5 All play equipment must be removed from shared garden areas when not in use. If items are not stored for any reason, and not in use, then these items will be removed.

8 Managed Use Approach in Shared Areas

- 8.1 In addition to our general management approach as outlined in Section 6, PA Housing, in accordance with its duties under relevant legislation and good practice, will adopt a common sense approach to manage shared areas.
- 8.2 This means that we will allow some personal items in shared areas, as identified within this policy. At all times the allowance of these items in “managed use” schemes will be permitted at the discretion of PA Housing, and we will not be unreasonable in our approach.
- 8.3 In shared areas where there is a “Managed Use” approach, the following items may be permitted:
- Walls –
 - small framed pictures (which are not offensive) ,
 - noticeboards
 - Floors –
 - small doormats,
 - potted plants in locations where they do not restrict the escape route and are not exceeding the width of the stairs or exit doors
 - Designated shared storage areas:
 - Buggies, prams, or mobility scooters are only permitted in designated and signposted areas and must not be plugged in or recharged under any circumstances
 - Pushbikes, children’s scooters – only permitted in designated and signposted areas

9 Zero Tolerance Approach in Shared Areas

- 9.1 All PA schemes 6+ stories in height will be managed with a zero-tolerance approach. This means that no belongings are allowed within communal areas under any circumstances. These schemes are identified in Appendix 1.
- 9.2 From time to time, some shared areas may be escalated Zero Tolerance Approach.
- 9.3 Schemes may be escalated to Zero Tolerance for the following

reasons:

- Three months of consistent and persistent issues where items that are not permitted are being left in shared areas;
- A serious incident or issue takes place on site;
- A request is made from Health & Safety or Compliance Teams

9.4 If any of the items in 9.3 apply, then a scheme may be referred to the Safe & Clean Neighbourhoods Panel for review and a determination will be made to implement a zero-tolerance approach.

9.5 Shared areas that are subject to an escalated zero tolerance approach will be reviewed monthly at the Safe & Clean Neighbourhoods Panel to ensure that this action remains proportionate and may be moved back to a Managed Use approach when it is reasonable to do so.

10 Enforcement Action

10.1 PA Housing prioritise our commitment to provide safe and clean neighbourhoods and shared areas, and enforcement action is only pursued when all other options to resolve the issues are exhausted.

10.2 Where customers persist in inappropriately misusing or storing items in shared areas PA Housing may be required to take enforcement action.

10.3 Before removing any item(s) PA Housing will apply a TORTS notice detailing the time frame in which we will arrange removal of the item(s).

10.4 PA Housing will remove and dispose of any personal items that are inappropriately stored in shared areas in accordance with the TORTS (INTERFERENCE WITH GOODS) ACT 1977.

10.5 PA Housing will not be responsible for the loss of these items and under no circumstances will compensation be paid for items which have been disposed of in accordance with our policy & procedure. 10.6 Other methods of enforcement action which PA Housing may use could take the

form of:

- Injunctions;
- Tenancy enforcement actions

10.7 PA Housing reserves the right to recharge the customer(s) involved for any costs associated with removals or enforcement actions at any stage including if items are removed and the owners are identified after removal.

11 Training

11.1 All forms will be regularly updated and implemented through training and toolkit sessions.

11.2 Managers are responsible for ensuring appropriate forms are implemented and staff utilising this policy are trained in all associated procedures.

12 Monitoring & Reporting

12.1 Our approach to managing shared areas will be monitored through ICT systems (including Northgate, CRM and Photobook) which are used to record the following:

- Identification of zero tolerance schemes, whether escalated or permanent
- Neighbourhood Inspections carried out
- Items left in communal areas and associated removals
- Costs associated to implementation of this policy including removals and enforcement actions, and recharges

12.2 Reporting on performance and effectiveness of this policy will be carried out through the following methods:

- KPIs – corporate and operational
- Outcomes from the Safe & Clean Neighbourhoods Panel
- Contractor performance including costs of removals
- Neighbourhood Ratings including customer satisfaction and estates photobook standards
- Any other measurable information

13 Legislation

13.1 This policy is operated in accordance with the following relevant legislation:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (The Fire

- Safety Order)
- TORTS (Interference with Goods) Act 1977
 - Building Regulations 2010

14 Linked Policies

14.1 This policy is operated in conjunction with:

- PA Housing's Health & Safety Policy
- PA Housing's Fire Safety Policy
- Accompanying Fire Safety procedures
- Safe and Clean Neighbourhoods Policy

15 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Permanent Zero Tolerance Schemes