

ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Status: Approved

Policy Lead :	Director of Customer and Communities
Owned By :	Neighbourhood Services Lead
Date Approved:	January 2026
Approved By :	BHA Operations Committee
Review Date:	January 2029
Regulatory / Legislative Considerations/ References	<p>This policy shall be reviewed by BHA's Executive Team before tabling for approval by BHA's Operations Committee.</p> <p>The policy should be considered as an essential document to BHA's fulfilment of its duties under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 including provision of housing services in line with the Scottish Social Housing Charter and compliance with the standards set out in the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework.</p>
Other documents to be read in conjunction with this policy :	<p>This document should be read in conjunction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting Neighbour Nuisance and Antisocial Behaviour Policy • Model Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement • Scottish Social Housing Charter • Tenancy Management Policy • Void Management Policy • Health and Safety Policy • Infection Control Policy • Rechargeable Repairs Policy • Rent and Service Charge Policy

Policy Title:	Estate Management Policy
Purpose / Aim of policy:	This policy aims to set out our approach to managing and maintaining our estates to ensure they are safe, clean, well-maintained, and sustainable places for people to live in line with our vision 'To Realise The Power of Home'.
Scope of Policy:	This policy applies to all estates, communal areas and external spaces owned and managed by Berwickshire Housing Association. It covered the management and maintenance of pathways, parking areas, trees and other estate assets and applies to BHA colleagues and contractors working on our behalf.
Definitions:	Detailed definition of expectations around estate management is provided in sections 3-10.
Specific detail related to each strand in the scope:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardens • Bin stores • Communal areas, drying greens and common parts • Landscape maintenance • Gritting and snow clearance • Car parking, paved areas, garages and lighting • Customer-led inspections • Complaints • Monitoring and policy review
Approval Source:	BHA Operations Committee
Equality Impact Assessment:	No adverse equality impacts were identified during the assessment.
Sustainability Assessment:	No direct implications or requirements.
Partnership Assessment:	BHA colleagues will work in partnership with other organisations where appropriate to ensure our estate management obligations are fulfilled.
Risk Implications:	Risks can arise because of dissatisfaction with service levels, high turnover of properties due to poor environmental standards and impact on wider communities. Effective management of this policy is vital to ensure communities are safe and well-maintained.

1. INTRODUCTION

Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA) is committed to safe, clean and well-managed estates to promote positive neighbourhoods and support community wellbeing.

2. POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to set out our approach to managing and maintaining our estates to ensure they are safe, clean, well-maintained, and sustainable places for people to live. This policy provides a framework for the effective management of shared spaces and land in BHA's ownership to balance the needs and expectations of communities, and BHA's legal, regulatory and financial responsibilities.

3. GARDENS, BIN STORES, COMMUNAL AREAS AND DRYING GREENS

BHA will ensure customers maintain their individual gardens in accordance with their tenancy agreement. Where a customer has exclusive use of a garden, they must take reasonable care to keep it from becoming overgrown, untidy or causing a nuisance. If the garden is not maintained to this reasonable standard, we will contact the customer to find out the reason for this – this may result in a first warning for the condition of the garden.

We will advise customers of the actions required to remedy the situation and the date we will visit to re-inspect. Where no improvement has been made, we may explore legal options or arrange a contractor to complete the necessary work and recharge the customer for the cost.

BHA will maintain and keep clean communal bin stores. We encourage customers to use recycling bins when they are available and all household waste should be disposed of in the correct bin. Where bulky items or rubbish is discarded in common areas, or fly tipping occurs, BHA will investigate to identify the perpetrator.

Section 2.9 of the tenancy agreement sets out the responsibility for keeping common parts (including internal staircases, bin stores and the street outside) clean and free from debris. Where the issue persists, BHA may consider applying recharges to clear affected areas and requesting home fire safety visits for all customers in affected blocks.

Customers must comply with any local arrangements for the use and sharing of communal drying greens. Drying areas are maintained for weeds and moss control throughout the growing season but it is the responsibility of all occupants in a block to keep communal drying areas tidy.

Where stair cleaning is in place, we will clean communal stairs and windows on a regular basis. We will respond quickly to any reported incidents of hazardous substances in stairwells i.e. bodily fluids, discarded syringes in line with our infection control policy. Any reports of this type will be treated as emergencies.

4. ESTATE AND BLOCK INSPECTIONS

BHA will complete regular estate walkabouts while neighbourhoods staff are out on their patch. We will inspect communal areas in flatted blocks and our estates at least once every 8 weeks.

All incidents of vandalism will be reported to Police Scotland as soon as we are aware of this and a crime reference number obtained for insurance purposes. Graffiti will be reported to our contractor for removal. Where graffiti is of a racist, sectarian, obscene or hate crime nature, it should be removed within one day of being reported.

BHA will work with SBC to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided for customers to dispose of refuse and recycling. All customers are responsible for ensuring that their refuse is disposed of safely and securely via the refuse/common bins provided. Bin stores should be kept in a clean and tidy condition, with bins returned to the bin store on the same day as rubbish has been collected.

Any household waste which has been dumped in communal areas will be investigated and may be recharged if a perpetrator is evidenced to be responsible.

5. LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

BHA will ensure that all landscaped areas in our ownership are maintained to a high standard. This will include areas which consist mainly of grass, as well as shrubs and other planted grounds.

Maintenance work will be carried out by our contractor in line with our grounds maintenance contract which sets out works required, frequency of visits, inspections to be completed and for the removal of debris.

The Neighbourhood Services Lead (NSL) will be primarily responsible for ensuring that the contractors' performance is to an acceptable standard. However, Neighbourhood Managers (NMs) and the Independent Living team will be expected to inspect these areas when they are in the locality, and to report any deficiencies in maintenance to the contractor in the first instance and within the contractor performance meetings.

When justified, complaints from customers relating to the upkeep of land situated close to BHA homes, but retained by the Council, or owned by some other landlord, will be investigated, with a view to requiring or persuading the landowner to remedy any nuisance.

6. MANAGEMENT OF TREES

BHA will manage all trees on communal parts of its estates in a safe, sustainable, and planned manner. A comprehensive Tree Register will be established and maintained, recording the location, species, size, condition, and ownership responsibility of all trees under BHA's control.

The register will support routine inspections, risk assessments, maintenance planning, and compliance with relevant health and safety, environmental, and conservation requirements, including Tree Preservation Orders and planning conditions. A comprehensive survey and inspection by competent persons will be carried out at least every five years, with identified works prioritised to protect customers, our properties, and the wider community.

Where trees are located within the gardens of customers' homes, we will clearly define and communicate responsibility for their management and maintenance at the point of tenancy sign up. Trees that remain BHA's responsibility will be recorded on the Tree Register and managed in line with inspection and risk assessment arrangements, with reasonable access agreed with customers.

Where responsibility rests with the customer, guidance will be provided on appropriate care, obligations, and the need to notify BHA before carrying out any work, particularly where Tree Preservation Orders or conservation area controls apply. BHA will take proportionate action where unmanaged trees present a risk to health and safety, property, or neighbouring land.

7. GRITTING AND SNOW CLEARANCE

In estates that have no local authority provision of grit bins, BHA may provide a grit bin and refill with grit/salt during severe weather. Residents and BHA customers in the surrounding community are welcome to use the grit and bins in icy conditions.

BHA can take no responsibility for any injuries or loss incurred in severe weather and residents are advised to exercise caution and judgement for safe usage.

All bins owned and refilled by BHA will be marked as property of Berwickshire Housing with our Freephone number displayed to request refills. Where refills are requested, we will aim to action this in 3 working days.

BHA colleagues will not undertake the clearing of snow or ice and in general, will not take any responsibility for the clearing of snow or ice. However, where there are new build developments, independent living sites or other estates where we deem the clearing of snow or ice to be necessary, we will instruct our contractors to clear as part of their essential duties where it is safe to do so.

BHA is not responsible for ensuring the safety of walkways or roads during severe weather but may consider arranging contractors to clear snow and ice in the event of prolonged and extreme weather.

8. CAR PARKING, ABANDONED VEHICLES AND LIGHTING

BHA will maintain communal parking areas belonging to BHA and we will keep these free of weeds. In most estates, parking spaces are not designated and are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Where parking has been designated, customers should only use their designated space.

BHA cannot regulate or monitor parking in our estates, and we expect parking to be used respectfully and courteously. In the event of parking issues or disagreements, BHA may provide a reminder to residents about appropriate parking, and to inform Police Scotland of any dangerous parking blocking access for emergency services or homes. In some instances, BHA may provide signage to state parking is for its customers as residents.

No vehicle, caravan, trailer or boat may be parked on communal land without permission, even if that land is set aside for parking. In any event, parking should not cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours. Customers should ensure that vehicles, caravans, trailers and boats in their ownership, which are no longer in use, are disposed of appropriately and are not parked in gardens without permission from BHA.

BHA will work with other agencies including Police Scotland and Scottish Borders Council to address vehicles which have been abandoned in our estates (ie vehicles which are untaxed, abandoned and not subject to a DVLA SORN).

Sections 2.16 of the tenancy agreement seek to prevent nuisances by prohibiting the unauthorised parking of customers cars and other vehicles within the boundary of the dwelling or BHA land, footpath or communal garage forecourt. BHA will notify the customer to provide a warning and opportunity to move the vehicle ahead of proceeding to a formal breach of tenancy. Where this is not possible, the vehicle will be reported to Police Scotland.

BHA will repair and maintain any external lighting and lampposts in areas which are not adopted by Scottish Borders Council. We will also repair and maintain communal lighting in common blocks and stairwells. Faults should be reported to us on Freephone 0800 652 8104.

9. PLAYPARKS

Playparks and park equipment in BHA communal areas are inspected by our contractor on a fortnightly basis, with a quarterly inspection completed by a Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) accredited competent person.

Public playparks are generally maintained by SBC who are responsible for any defects and maintenance issues which arise within their own play areas.

10. CUSTOMER-LED INSPECTIONS AND LIAISON WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Estate management is an area of our work where partnership with customers, sharing owners and owners and tenants/resident groups has the potential to extend customer involvement and to encourage local people to take part in and influence this aspect of BHA's work.

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), through the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC), sets the outcomes it expects housing associations to achieve for its customers. BHA carries out a customer satisfaction survey in line with the SSHC and reports to the SHR on the following indicators:

Indicator 5 – Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes

Indicator 13 – Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in

BHA will continue to develop and implement the process by which Neighbourhood Managers will inspect the estates we manage and maintain alongside customers. As a minimum, each Neighbourhood Manager will select one estate within their patch to complete a customer-led inspection, or 'walkabout', in each reporting year

BHA colleagues will work in partnership with other organisations where appropriate to ensure our estate management obligations are fulfilled. Outside agencies may have an interest in matters related to this policy, and where appropriate BHA colleagues will liaise and cooperate with representatives of these organisations.

11. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

Dissatisfaction with our estate management service should be logged via our complaints process. Please refer to our complaints policy for more information. Where customers provide us positive feedback about the work of BHA colleagues or our contractors in their community, we will log these as compliments.

12. MONITORING AND POLICY REVIEW

Reporting on relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) will be via BHA's monthly and quarterly performance reviews, and quarterly to the Operations Committee. We will continue to review this policy and our commitments with customers on an annual basis, making amendments for BHA Operations Committee approval as required. In the event that this policy is not reviewed within this timescale, the latest approved policy will continue to apply.