

Pests Policy

May 2024

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Title: Pests Policy

Document status (Version/Draft/Final)	Final V.1.5	
Document reference	CS.Po19.Pes.17.v1	
Reason for review	Review of policy	
Approved by (Officer)	ELT	
Originally Approved	10 May 2017	
Effective from (Date)	10 May 2024	
Policy author	Service Quality Manager	
Policy owner	Director of Housing	
Accountable officer	Executive Director of Operations	
Date of next review	May 2027	
Consultation: internal	Heads of Neighbourhood Management in London and in Hertford, Operations and Housing Contracts Manager and Juliana Almeida SNG	
Consultation: customers	n/a	
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	Date completed	21/03/2017
	Initial/ Full EIA	Initial

Version Control – Change Record

Date	Author	version	Reason for change
10/02/17	Business Development Director	0.1	New policy
October 2019	Research and Policy Analyst	V1.2	Responsibility for pests within rented homes
February 2021	Service Quality Manager	V1.3	Review of Policy

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December 2023	Service Quality Manager	V1.4	Rebrand
May 2024	Service Quality Manager	V1.5	3 yearly review

Reviewers/ Contributors

Name	Position	Version reviewed & Date
Adam Chester	Integration Graduate	v 0.1, 29 September 2016
Nigel Moore	Business Development Director	v.0.1 February 2017
Michael Thorne	Research and Policy Analyst	V1 October 2019
Elizabeth Lill	Service Quality Manager	V1.5 Three yearly review

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1. Scope and Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out Sovereign Network Homes’ (SNH) approach to controlling pest infestations in our customers’ homes and communal areas.
- 1.2 We have a legal responsibility to deal with any pest proofing that is required to help prevent the recurrence of pest infestations.
- 1.3 This policy covers all customers that live in Sovereign Network Homes’ properties, including general needs customers, older persons, those in supported and temporary housing, key workers, shared owners, leaseholders, and freeholders.
- 1.4 We will always consider ours and our customers obligations as set out in our agreements when establishing liability.

This policy meets the Registered Social Housing Regulatory framework.

2 Purpose and Objectives

- 2.1 The aims of this Pest Policy are:
 - To provide suitable pest control advice.
 - To make clear which responsibilities and accountabilities lie, with Sovereign Network Homes, and with customers, when dealing with pest infestations.
 - To ensure that Sovereign Network Homes’ customers are treated in a consistent and equitable way.
 - To ensure that Sovereign Network Homes meets our legal obligations regarding pest control.

3. Policy Statement

This policy explains how we will manage pest control issues in customers’ homes and in communal areas.

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4.0 Definitions

The definitions mentioned in this Policy are explained in the table below. This is not an exhaustive list.

<p>Pest</p>	<p>This is used as a generic term for vermin, this is any organism, usually an animal which is judged as a threat to human in the homes they occupy. Pests are commonly considered to be a public nuisance, due to their effect on the home, health, or environment. Types of animals and insects considered to be pests include wasps, bees, fleas, bed bugs, mice, rats, silver fish, cockroaches, feral pigeons, and ants.</p> <p>Japanese knotweed is particularly hard to eradicate compared with other plants, requiring multi-year treatment with herbicide or excavation. There is also an ongoing risk that the plant will regrow, either because it is only made dormant by herbicides or because fragments of the plant remain in the soil.</p>
<p>What is not classified as a pest</p>	<p>Animals such as foxes, bats, badgers, crickets, sand lizards, slow worms, snakes and common frogs or toads are not considered pests. Many of these are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which prohibits the killing or injuring of these animals. Customers and staff should seek clarification before taking action</p>
<p>Statutory Nuisance</p>	<p>Statutory Nuisance – The Environmental Protection Act 1990 defines premises that are in such a state as to be ‘prejudicial to health or a nuisance’ as a statutory nuisance. Some infestations, such as those of rats, mice, pharaoh ants and cockroaches can count as a statutory nuisance.</p>

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	Local authorities have a duty to investigate potential statutory nuisances, and the Act gives them the power to serve an enforcement notice on the person responsible for the nuisance.
Remedial works	This means blocking entry to our properties to prevent the recurrence of pests in line with the Human Habitation Act
Communal Areas	Communal areas include lobbies, hallways, staircases, landings, bin stores, boiler rooms, drains, communal kitchens, car parks and roof spaces

5.0 The Policy

5.1 Customer Responsibilities

It is our customers responsibility to:

- Check their tenancy or lease agreement to establish responsibility for treatment of the pests. They can also review the pest control section of our website: [Pest control | SNG, formerly Network Homes](#)
- To seek advice where it is customer responsibility and take their own action to deal with any pests or infestation. This could include using powder to deal with ants, setting mousetraps etc.
- Ensure that that all communal areas are kept clean and clear of clutter to help prevent pest infestation.
- Report any pest problems they notice in communal areas. [Contact Sovereign Network Group | SNG, formerly Network Homes](#)
- To provide access to the property for colleagues and contractors to assess and treat the infestation. Where access is withheld, Sovereign Network Homes will consider taking action against by using our tenancy agreement to ensure it meets its legal and contractual obligations.
- To complete any measures advised by the contractor or us after the visit and before the next visit, if applicable. If the tenant fails to do so and the infestation continues or becomes quickly re-infested, we will issue warnings and may recharge the customer.

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- To keep balconies clean, and free from rubbish to deter pigeons.
[Reducing the risk of birds damaging your home | SNG, formerly Network Homes](#)
- To keep balconies free from pigeon mess.

5.2 Controlling Pests within a home or communal area

We will:

- Provide pest control help and advice to our customers for pest control queries as per our tenancy agreements. Customers can contact us by:
[Contact Sovereign Network Group | SNG, formerly Network Homes](#)
- Signpost customers to their Local Authority when required.
- Signpost our contractors’ preferential rates to customers when an infestation is their responsibility.
- Eradicate pest infestations in communal areas.
- Complete pest treatments in customer homes, if the customer has recently moved in.
- Treat infestations caused by a structural issue or flaw with the property, such as a gap in the roof.
- Arrange for the removal and destruction of Japanese Knotweed and other invasive species which may cause structural and environmental damage. Removal and destruction of these species need to be dealt with in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Manage the performance of our Pest Control Contractor and ensure they comply with The Chartered Institute for Environmental Health) and CRRU (Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use) guidance.
- Manage infestations in customers’ homes where there is a statutory nuisance.
- In our Older Persons schemes or for customers over pensionable age, we will treat any bed bug infestations.
- Complete remedial works at customers’ homes to stop pest access where this is recommended by the Local Authority or our Pest Control Contractor.
- Recover the cost of all pest control works carried out in communal areas through service charges.
- Determine whether the tenant may be responsible for infestations because of lifestyle or other choices. If this is the cause, it may be considered and managed under our Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure. We may seek to recover the cost of any required interventions.
- To manage and rectify any Local Authority Enforcement Notices in accordance with the notice timescales.
- Complete regular inspections of our estates to help identify the presence of pests.

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- We will take reasonably prompt action to manage pest infestations which we have responsibility for.

5.3 Local authority responsibilities

5.3.1 Under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure their borough is kept free from rats and mice as far as is practically possible.

6 Complaints

Any customer who is dissatisfied with how we have managed their pest control request is able to submit a complaint using our Complaints process. Once our Complaints policy is complete and if they remain dissatisfied then they can contact the Housing Ombudsman.

7. Compliance

7.1 We hold regular meetings with our Pest Control contractors.

At these meetings the types of information will may be reviewed includes, but is not limited to:

- Update on PPM sites, and reactive works,
- Follow up works.
- Minor proofing works
- Complaints

8 Sustainability

8.1 At Sovereign Network Homes, we recognise the critical importance of sustainability in our operations and services. We are committed to embracing sustainable practices that contribute to environmental protection, social equity, and economic viability. Examples of sustainability may include thorough ethical sourcing, energy efficiency, community engagement, customer empowerment, long term investment, risk mitigation etc.

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9 Responsibilities

Executive Director of Operations in London and Hertford	Approving the Policy
Director of Housing and Heads of Neighbourhood	Communicating the Policy
Team Leads	Communicating and implementing the Policy
Operations and Housing Management Contracts Team	Implementing the policy and managing performance
Staff	To follow the policy
Contractors	To complete pest control proofing works and recommend necessary remedial works to prevent further infestations.
Investigations Manager	To manage Environmental Health Enforcement Notices

10. Related Documents

- Sovereign Network Homes Tenancy Agreement documents
- Sovereign Network Homes Lease Agreements
- Allocations and Lettings Manual
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- Estate Inspection Policy
- Pets Policy
- Repairs Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Pre and Post Treatment Advice information

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- Reasonable Adjustments Policy

11. Legislation and Regulation

- Public Health Act 1936 & 1961
- Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Common Law Nuisance
- Regulator of social Housing – Regulatory Framework
- Wild Mammal Protection Act 1996
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986
- Homes (Fitness for Habitation) Act 2018

12. Equality and Diversity

11.1 We will apply this policy consistently and fairly and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010.

13 Review

12.1 All policies should be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum, or sooner if there is a specific legislative, regulatory or service requirement or change in guidance, law or practice.

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