

# Communal Areas Policy

## A Sovereign Network Homes Policy

**December 2023**

### **Important**

**Policies and procedures must be coordinated through the Business Development Team for compliance, auditing and control purposes. A Policy Registration Form must be completed before any revisions are made by contacting the Business Development Team at [NH.Policy@networkhg.org.uk](mailto:NH.Policy@networkhg.org.uk)**

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Issue Date: August 2016	Review Date: March 2024	Revision Date: March 2021

**Title: Communal Areas Storage Arrangement Policy**

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<b>Policy owner</b>	<b>Executive Director of Customer Services</b>	
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**Version Control – Change Record**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>version</b>	<b>Reason for change</b>
<b>19/03/2021</b>	<b>Customer Services Graduate</b>	<b>Version 1.1</b>	<b>3 year review of policy</b>
<b>20/12/2023</b>	<b>Service Quality Manager</b>	<b>Version 1.2</b>	<b>Rebrand</b>

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Given the preliminary outcomes from the Grenfell fire it is important there is a zero-tolerance approach to items left in communal areas. The communal areas of blocks (entrance halls, landings, corridors, lobbies, staircases, under stair cupboard and electrical cupboards) must be kept clear of resident's personal property as they are a fire hazard. This includes prams, buggies, bicycles, plants and any other item of resident's property. Any authorised contractor or Sovereign Network Homes Officer shall remove and dispose of any items of resident's property which has been left in communal areas immediately. This will be followed by the placement of the Tort Notice in the Communal Area which informs the resident's what has happened. The Tort Notice can be found on Apollo. The Officer should complete the Tort Notice with the address and sign and date it.
- 1.2 In addition, we comply with the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and the Housing Act 2014, which says we have a duty to ensure our buildings are free from hazards. As such, it is necessary to remove and dispose of items which cause obstructions to and in communal corridors and hallways. These items cause obstructions which not only increase the risk of slips and trips, but also increase the risk of a means of escape being blocked in the event of a fire, not only blocking the escape route for those within the property, but also blocking the entry routes for fire fighters entering the premises in the event of a fire or emergency.
- 1.3 This policy complies with the Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community Standard.

## 2.0 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 This Arrangement sets out our approach to protecting our residents and the emergency services through controlling the storage of items in all communal areas, including communal landings, hallways, stairs, corridors, utility and riser cupboards. This arrangement covers all properties with communal areas, including residents in our older persons schemes.

## 3.0 Policy Statement

- 3.1 Sovereign Network Homes has developed this arrangement, which is also supported by our Fire Safety Policy. The Fire Safety Policy prohibits the storage of items in communal areas due to the problems they can cause in the event of a fire. As a result of these risks, a zero-tolerance approach has been adopted by the Housing Management Team and our authorised Contractors to ensure the safety of our residents, visitors and those entering our premises. All resident items left in communal areas will be removed and disposed of immediately. A Tort Notice will be placed in the communal area. A comprehensive communication campaign has been run for our residents. This explains the reasons for the removal and disposal of the items. Communications include:
- Letters

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- Newsletter articles
- Communication at sign-up for tenants. Leaseholders /Shared Owners will be notified in the welcome letter or as part of the resales process.

Reminder at 6 weekly new tenant contact

#### 4.0 Arrangement

4.1 Therefore, all items must be removed immediately from communal areas, these items include but are not limited to:

- prams, buggies
- door mats
- plants
- pictures
- bicycles
- refuse bags & recycling boxes/items including but not limited to bulky items such as discarded electrical goods (e.g. fridges / freezers / washers / dryers / televisions), furniture or bedding for collection / disposal / removal
- toys & furniture
- mobility scooters – (permission for a scooter will be considered on a case by case basis and the affected resident must ensure they receive written permission from Sovereign Network Homes)
- parcels (if left in communal areas by postman or delivery person, these must be collected promptly by residents)

#### 5.0 Enforcement

5.1 Sovereign Network Homes Officers and any authorised contractor are responsible for identifying items that have been stored in any communal areas or utility cupboards, during their estate inspections and enforcing their removal immediately with residents/leaseholders. At all future sign ups residents will be advised that storing items in communal areas is not permitted and that any items found will be removed without notice and disposed of.

### 6 Removal and disposal of stored/displayed Items

6.1 On inspection of the premises and the identification of items in the communal areas:

- The Officer / contractor is to remove the item immediately
- They will place a signed Tort Notice in the Communal Area stating that the item(s) have been removed and disposed of....
- Where possible, the Officer will take a photograph of the items(s) to detail its condition and its location for our records.

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6.2.1 Sovereign Network Homes does not have storage facilities; therefore, any item(s) removed , will be destroyed.. Communication will be issued to all residents of this decision (including placing notices on noticeboards where applicable), Sovereign Network Homes will not accept liability of any kind in relation to loss of items.

## 7.0 Complaints

7.1 Any resident who is dissatisfied with how we have managed the removal of their items from our Communal areas 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.

## 8. Performance Monitoring and Responsibilities

8.1 We will monitor the impact of this policy to ensure appropriate and consistent application using the following reports:

- Number of items removed
- Types of items removed
- Number of requests received to keep a mobility scooter in a communal area

## 9. Related Documents

- Sovereign Network Homes Health & Safety Policy
- Sovereign Network Homes Fire Safety Policy
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, 2005
- Housing Act, 2004
- Building Act,1985
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, 1974.
- LACORS Housing Fire Safety
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations, 2006
- Estate Inspection Policy

## 10.0 Legislation and Regulation

The legislation listed in this policy is not intended to cover all legislation applicable to this policy. The legislation listed within this policy was considered at the time of the development of this policy, but subsequent primary and secondary legislation, case law and regulatory or other requirements will be considered and the policy reviewed and adopted in accordance with the requirements set out therein, even should such subsequent legislation not be explicitly listed within this policy.

Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

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Housing Act 2014, Network Homes  
Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community Standard  
Regulator of Social Housing Home Standard  
Fire Safety Bill 2020  
Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

## **11.0 Equality and diversity**

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.

## **12.0 Review**

We will monitor this Arrangement to ensure it meets good practice and current legislation and will review it in accordance with our review timetable for all policies. Following an incident or in response to a change in legislation or approved guidance.

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