

Paradigm Housing Group

Estate management policy

September 2014

The logo consists of a white speech bubble shape pointing downwards and to the left, containing the word "Paradigm" in a blue, italicized sans-serif font.

Paradigm



Estate Management Policy

Policy ref. number

Policy statement

Paradigm is committed to delivering clean, green and safe estates. The way we manage our estates directly affects the quality of life and environment enjoyed by our residents.

The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to the delivery and management of estate services to internal and external communal areas. Where we refer to an estate within the service this can refer to a block of flats or a collection of houses with shared internal and/or external areas.

The standards and policy principles outlined refer to where Paradigm is the freeholder or service provider for that estate. On some estates we may be a leaseholder or there may be a management company responsible for the delivery of the services. Where this is the case Paradigm commit to working with the relevant parties to agree a set standard of delivery; which will be published to residents where appropriate.

As a developing housing association we are committed to working with developers on new build sites to ensure the estates meet Paradigm's standards, alongside being mindful of the management services required and focussing on keeping service charge costs reasonable and in line with our service charge policy.

Estate management is the responsibility of several teams within Paradigm and external companies and this policy will support a common understanding and consistent delivery. There will be an agreed Paradigm estate management standard that details specifications of the standards that will be delivered.

As a business we take environmental crime (which is the misuse of communal areas, so for example fly tipping) seriously and will work with relevant agencies in ensuring these are dealt with quickly. Our intention is to minimise negative impact on the environment in delivering our estate management service and this forms a key part of our procurement policy and process.

All estate service contracts will be procured in accordance with our procurement policy and in line with the relevant section 20 consultation requirements. We will focus on value for money and be mindful of keeping service charge costs reasonable for our residents.

Legal and regulatory Framework

Legal requirements are detailed in:

Landlord and Tenant Act 1985

Common and Leasehold Reform Act 2002

Housing Act 1996

Housing and Regeneration Act 2008

	<p>Regulatory Framework:</p> <p>HCA Regulatory Framework – The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England 2012:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer Standards, Neighbourhood and Community Standards: <p><u>Neighbourhood management</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Registered providers shall keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so. 2). Local area co-operation - Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties. <p><u>Specific expectations</u></p> <p>1.1 Registered providers shall consult with tenants in developing a published policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes. This applies where the registered provider has a responsibility (either exclusively or in part) for the condition of that neighbourhood. The policy shall include any communal areas associated with the registered provider’s homes.</p> <p>2.1 Registered providers, having taken account of their presence and impact within the areas where they own properties, shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and publish the roles they are able to play within the areas where they have properties • co-operate with local partnership arrangements and strategic housing functions of local authorities where they are able to assist them in achieving their objectives
<p>Scope</p>	<p>The areas covered within the policy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service contracts • Cleaning • Grounds maintenance • Tree management • Window cleaning • Parking • Garages • Communal bins • Bike sheds • Use of communal areas (including environmental crime) • TV Aerials/satellite dishes • Invasive plants • CCTV • Fire management • Testing of equipment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage • Play areas • Pest control in communal areas <p>For the purpose of this Policy the following areas will not be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communal repairs and maintenance (including fencing, street lighting) • Investment works (planned works relating to communal decoration, window replacement, flooring replacement) • Anti-social behaviour • Service charge policy and approach • Approach to land disposal <p>All of the above have polices within their own right and should be read in conjunction with this policy.</p> <p>Others areas excluded from this policy are services that are delivered by other Partners/agencies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of recycling • Highway issues • Parking outside of Paradigm land • Street lighting
<p>Service Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain a high standard that delivers value for money in the upkeep of clean, green and safe estates • To have estates that Paradigm and our residents are proud of • To ensure we have clear standards, that residents know what to expect from the estate management service, including obligations for both Paradigm and residents • To ensure our services deliver value for money and we are clear on what we are service charging for • To maintain a regular, visible presence on estates • To ensure we comply with all Health & Safety requirements • To encourage residents to take responsibility for their environment/estate
<p>Links to other Paradigm policies</p>	<p>The estate management policy links to several other Paradigm polices and strategies, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy and Estate Management Statement of Approach • Tenancy management policy • Anti-social behaviour policy • Repairs and maintenance policy • Service charge policy • Procurement policy • Development design guide • Garage Lettings Policy • Tree Policy

<p>Policy principles/ positions</p>	<p><u>Service Contracts</u></p> <p>Each service contract will be procured following our procurement policy. There will be a clear focus on value for money to ensure the right service is acquired and to keep costs at reasonable level for service charging.</p> <p>These are split in to two categories hard and soft:</p> <p>Hard contracts (mainly building or integral equipment/material) include:</p> <p>Lifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain/repair • Carry out monthly checks to ensure fully operational • Service quarterly/annually <p>Water and sewerage pumps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain/repair <p>Legionella testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work with specialist contractors who enable us to take a risk based approach by following guidance on a site by site basis <p>Fire equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We carry out monthly testing of fire equipment (see fire management section for more detail) <p>New technology (including electric car chargers and car stackers):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With new technology we will set up relevant service contracts as and when required <p>Soft contracts (service contract driven) include:</p> <p>Cleaning:</p> <p>We carry out regular cleaning to our blocks with communal areas. The cleaning is based on the individual requirements of each block, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hallways, stairs and landing floor • Skirting • Front entrance doors • Internal doors • Lifts • Bin stores <p>The frequency of visits will depend on the need of each block, i.e. larger blocks will have more frequent cleaning due to the level of people using the communal areas</p> <p>The cleaning frequency and summary of the specification will be displayed on the notice board in each block. The full specification can be found on the Paradigm website.</p> <p>Grounds Maintenance:</p>
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We will ensure that the communal land looks clean and tidy, hedges/shrubs cut back and grass maintained. Our communal land is broken into three key types for our grounds maintenance specification - Sheltered Schemes, General needs stock, Amenity land (land that is not part of an estate and includes grass verges, and small community grass areas). See Appendix A for the summary specification expected for each of these types.

The grounds maintenance summary of the specification will be displayed on the notice board in each block. The full specification can be found on the Paradigm website.

We will not maintain private or individual gardens. This will be the responsibility of the resident/owner as detailed in their tenancy/licence agreement (where applicable).

Window Cleaning:

Paradigm will carry out window cleaning in communal areas and on the external panel of individual flats. Paradigm will also clean the external part of individual flat windows where the design is such that they cannot be cleaned by the resident (i.e. the resident cannot reach the external face of the window). All window cleaning is service chargeable to the residents.

For Sheltered schemes all window are cleaned and service charged.

Parking:

Car parks are designed for resident use only. Where there is provision then visitor's spaces will be allowed. All vehicles parking within our car park must have current valid road tax and be roadworthy. Where the car has a tax disc this must be displayed (legislation due October 14 to change this to digital).

Where practical, controlled car parking schemes will be introduced across estates to minimise non-resident parking. If any cost is incurred by Paradigm to run these schemes residents will be charged. If a cost is to be incurred by residents Paradigm will consult with residents and a simple majority (of those voting) will determine the scheme. Paradigm will allow the parking contractor to use all legal measures to deter parking that contravenes the scheme and to set charges in agreement with Paradigm.

Tree management

The grounds maintenance contractor will cut nuisance growth in communal areas (detailed further in the contract specification). All other communal works will be carried out as detailed in our tree policy.

Garages

Our garages are managed by a specialist garage management company, Secure Parking and Storage (SPS). SPS are responsible for all aspects of garage management including:

- Lettings
- Day to day management of licence, including breaches
- Repairs
- Rent collection
- Site re-development

There is an agreed garage standard covering four key areas:

- In good repair
- Secure
- Well lit
- Well drained

Communal bins

Communal bins are for use by residents only and must be used in accordance with local authority guidelines. Where guidelines are not followed and a resident contravenes this, Paradigm may recover the costs for any rectification through re-charging both individuals and residents of a block.

Where non-residents are the cause of the contravention we will deal with this as fly tipping (please see section regarding misuse of communal areas).

Bike sheds

Bike sheds are for use of residents only and bikes are left at the resident's risk. Any items other than bikes left in bike sheds may be removed and the cost associated to this will be recharged to the owner where possible. Bikes that do not appear to be in reasonable working order may be removed after attempts to identify and notify the owner.

Use of communal areas (internal and external)

Bulky and personal items:

Communal areas must be kept free of bulky items and nothing should be stored in communal areas, including cupboards with shared access. We want our estates to be safe and items within communal areas can cause both fire hazards and restrict escape routes. Paradigm operate a zero tolerance approach to this, with the exception of:

- Door mats
- Potted plants that do not impede emergency escape from the building

The cleaning and grounds maintenance contractors are not expected to move these objects and will carry out their tasks around them.

Paradigm retains the right to remove such items as detailed in 'items in a communal area' processes.

Any items left in internal or external communal areas that are damaged or causing a fire/health & safety risk will be removed immediately and re-charges made where applicable.

Communal gardens:

Communal gardens are for the enjoyment of all residents who have a right to access these. There must be no fences, barriers, locks or obstructions put in communal gardens that stop residents accessing it. Residents must not use the communal gardens for their own use (i.e. – planting shrubs and beds) unless agreement is given in writing.

We take a zero tolerance approach to environmental crime; which includes fly

tipping, littering, animal faeces and abandoned cars. We will work in partnership with local enforcement agencies; which could include legal action against those committing such crimes on our land.

TV Aerials/satellite dishes

Individual property installations are the responsibility of the resident. Paradigm provides a communal aerial for blocks and this is service charged to residents. Permission needs to be sought from Paradigm to install satellite dishes. These arrangements are detailed in tenancy agreements.

Invasive plants

Invasive plants can cause severe damage to communal grounds and can take several years for successful removal. Such plants include:

- Japanese knotweed
- Hogweed
- Ivy

Paradigm will take reasonable steps to ensure invasive plants are identified and treated / removed at the earliest opportunity. These plants will be removed in line with good horticultural practice and legislation where applicable. Residents will be service charged for the removal and ongoing treatment of invasive plants.

Any resident found to have planted, introduced or caused spread of these plants will be liable for the cost of the removal.

CCTV

A small number of blocks/estates have CCTV in place. Paradigm will recover all reasonable costs via service charges. CCTV is passively monitored, which means that footage is only viewed when needed. If CCTV is to be installed or replaced Paradigm will consult with residents over the requirements for the facilities.

Paradigm may use CCTV on occasion to aid investigations of anti social behaviour and criminal behaviour. The use of CCTV evidence in such circumstances will be in line with legislation and regulation.

Fire management

Fire safety equipment includes:

- Emergency lighting
- Fire alarms
- Smoke alarms
- Smoke detectors
- Smoke vents
- Door magnets
- Door closures
- Fire exits

We will manage this equipment through:

- Monthly estate tests (fire safety equipment where appropriate and Health & safety hazards)
- Quarterly more detailed fire safety equipment testing
- Fire risk assessments are conducted for every block every two years by an

	<p>approved, qualified Fire Risk Assessor</p> <p>We will have a fire action plan in each block with internal communal parts.</p> <p><u>Testing of estate standards</u></p> <p>Estates will be visited each month to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Test contract compliance 2. Test equipment 3. Assess health and safety 4. Identify, remedy or report any defects, such as <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Repairs b. Graffiti c. Abandoned vehicles <p><u>Signage</u></p> <p>Paradigm will not 'brand' any estate; however, name signs will be erected for each block.</p> <p>Requests for signs on estates (e.g. – 'no ball games') will normally be refused due to them being non-enforceable and that they can create a detrimental view of an estate.</p> <p><u>Play areas</u></p> <p>We have very few play areas; however, where we are responsible for the maintenance and management we will carry out regular inspections.</p> <p><u>Pest control in communal areas</u></p> <p>Where pest infestations are identified within communal areas Paradigm will be responsible for organising treatment. If during investigations it is found the pest infestation is from a resident's property Paradigm will expect to recover the costs of the treatment.</p>
<p>Service standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly estate tests will be carried out internally and externally to residential blocks ensuring Health & Safety and contract compliance • Housing Officers will conduct estate visits (such as walkabouts, housing surgeries) on a risk based approach, advertising dates to residents • All residential blocks will have clear emergency plans published in the communal area • Complete fire risk assessments of interior communal areas every two years • Clean internal communal areas on a regular basis to an agreed specification providing details on noticeboards in communal areas • Estates will be visited by grounds maintenance contractors 17 times during summer months and 4 times during winter months (there are exceptions; where this is the case it will be clearly identified as part of the contract) • Remove any items blocking fire escapes when discovered by Paradigm staff or the contractor

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for needles and dangerous objects to be removed within the same working day of receiving notification of their location • Remove offensive graffiti within one working day of being notified and all other graffiti within five working days unless specialist cleaning is required • Animal faeces on external grounds will be removed on the scheduled grounds maintenance visit only <p>Service standards will be monitored throughout the year using various methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance indicators • Service contract monitoring • Spot checks • Estate testing • Resident Quality Inspectors
<p>Responsibility</p>	<p>The Executive Regional Director (West) will have overall responsibility for the policy.</p> <p>The Service Lead is the Head of Operations (West).</p> <p>Estate management services are delivered by various teams within the business including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estate Services • Regional Housing Teams • Supported Housing Teams • Property Services
<p>Equality and Diversity</p>	<p>An equality impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of this Policy. The key outcomes are:</p>
<p>Customer focus</p>	<p>This policy has been discussed and considered by:</p> <p>Housing Services Committee Residents Forum Readership panel Resident Quality Inspectors</p> <p>A copy of the Policy has been provided to various partners/agencies involved in delivering our estate management services and they were invited to comment.</p> <p>As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we will work with resident quality inspectors to continue to review our service and standards.</p>
<p>Risks</p>	<p>This policy is designed to mitigate the risks associated to our estate management service. However, we have identified the following that should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors not meeting standards and not delivering to specification • Reliance on other agencies/partners for enforcement of some environmental

	<p>crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not complying with best practice and guidance regarding estate testing • Weather changes could affect delivery of contract specification for grounds maintenance • Removal of personal items from our estates/blocks may result in increased compensation claims • Specialist contractors withdraw their services
Definitions	<p>Estate/block: A block of flats or a collection of houses with shared internal and/or external areas</p> <p>CCTV (closed circuit television): A television system used for surveillance and/or monitoring</p> <p>Tenancy agreement: A legally binding contract between a tenant and Paradigm, it sets out the conditions upon which the property is let and includes rights and responsibilities of both the tenant and Paradigm. Where we have referred to tenancy and/or tenancy agreement within this document this also includes licence agreements for the purposes of the policy unless stated otherwise</p> <p>Anti-Social Behaviour('ASB'): is the deliberate and intentional acts including the failure to address inconsiderate behaviour that may result in nuisance, harassment, alarm and distress as defined in our ASB policy</p>
Policy Owner	Tracey Gray, Executive Regional Director, West Region
Prepared by	Kirsty Pepper, Head of Operations (West)
Approved by	Housing Services Committee (September 2014)
Date of Board approval (if approved by Board)	Paradigm Board – 24 September 14 Final amendment with change to service standards accepted by HSC November 14
Effective date	November 14
Review date	November 16

Appendix A:

Grounds maintenance summary specification

Sheltered Schemes

These will be visited 17 times between March and October – on each visit the grounds person will ensure the communal grounds are neat and tidy. This will include:

- Cutting the grass and removing cutting
- Trimming and shaping shrubs and hedges
- Clearing litter
- Clearing paths of litter and moss

General needs stock

This is the same as Sheltered Schemes with the exception that other than the first and last visits of each year, grass will be cut and mulched (where the grass is cut several times and left).

Amenity land

Amenity land is land that is not part of an estate and includes grass verges, and small community grass areas. These areas are maintained on a frequency based upon the need of each sites – e.g. highly visible areas will be visited 10 times each year, where woodland areas are visited once each year.