



Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG) Good Neighbourhood Management Policy

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Responsible director	Executive Director – Customers and Communities
Policy monitoring body	Customer Experience Committee
Resident input into Policy date	Resident engagement as part of Independent Community Safety Review & Customer Experience Committee - September 2023
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Linked strategies/policies	See Section 14
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Owner	Bernie Woodward - Community Safety Manager

1. Introduction

1.1 Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG) recognises that Good Neighbourhood Management (GNM) is an integral part in its role as a landlord and that well managed neighbourhoods provide a better quality of life for residents and can act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and crime.

1.2 WCHG is committed to providing excellent services, creating safe and sustainable communities and promoting pride in its neighbourhoods. WCHG will comply with the Regulator of Social Housings' Neighbourhood and Community Standard through partnership working with its tenants and other agencies as part of its commitment to keeping neighbourhoods and communal areas clean and safe.

1.3 The overall purpose of the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy is to:

- Provide excellent quality services, ensuring neighbourhoods are well managed and maintained so that all WCHG tenants and wider residents feel safe and proud to live there.
- Work in partnership with customers and external organisations to provide safe, clean, and sustainable neighbourhoods.
- Encourage active customer engagement in all aspects of neighbourhood management.

1.4 On the 24th October 2022 the Housing Ombudsman published a report "Time to be Heard" that particularly focused on how noise complaints are managed by landlords. The outcome of the report called for a fresh way of thinking where landlords manage non-statutory noise complaints differently to avoid neighbourhood disputes and to manage expectations. A key aspect of the report recommended that landlord develop a Good Neighbourhood Management Policy, which lead WCHG to develop this policy

1.5 This policy supports WCHG's purpose to provide good quality homes and services to our tenants and leaseholders and to play a leading role in creating safer, healthier communities.

2 Scope

2.1 This policy sets out the ways in which WCHG will deliver Good Neighbourhood Management by working with tenants, residents, stakeholders, and partner agencies

2.2 This policy details the approach that WCHG will take should our customers experience upset or frustration resulting from a person's behaviour or actions that are not deemed to be Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) or a tenancy breach.

2.3 This policy applies to people who live in our general needs accommodation, supported and elderly persons schemes, leaseholders, as well as people who live in other tenures (where their behaviour or conduct is having a direct impact on our housing management function)

3. Definition

3.1 This policy is designed to run along-side our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. The deciding factor of whether a person's behaviour and associated actions falls under the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy or the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy is whether the behaviour is deliberate or intended to cause annoyance, alarm or distress.

- Where there is no deliberate intention, the incident will be handled firstly through the Good Neighbourhood Management (GNM) Policy.
- Where there is no deliberate intention, but the behaviour lasts longer than 30 minutes at a time for more than 5 days in a row, this will be handled through the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
- Where there is deliberate intention, the incident will be handled through the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

3.2 As part of our revised approach when a Good Neighbourhood Management issue has been raised, WCHG will record the issue and assess the type of issue being complained of and triage it into one of the following categories and utilise the relevant policy and procedure to address it.

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) eg. race/hate crime/threats or use of violence, drug dealing, harassment, foul and abusive language/behaviour

or

- Good Neighbourhood Management (GNM) e.g., noise from neighbouring properties, untidy gardens, neighbour disputes.

3.3 WCHG recognises that reported behaviour can change in terms of severity and that something initially assessed as falling under the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy can evolve into Anti-Social Behaviour. We will continually reassess our cases each time a report is received, making sure that all cases are correctly handled under the correct policy

3.4 The following (non-exhaustive) list of behaviours and actions fall under the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy:

- Parking disputes
- Dogs barking
- Dog fouling
- Cooking smells
- Babies crying
- Placement of bins
- Children playing ball games/bikes
- People looking/staring at each other
- Littering
- Fly tipping
- General living noise (flushing toilets, closing doors, talking)

- One – off celebrations
- Cultural differences
- Occasional noise made by a tenant or their household member who has protected characteristics, e.g. a mental health condition, learning difficulties or physical disability

3.5 WCHG will consider all the options available when exploring Good Neighbourhood Management issues and will use a range of informal and formal tools, some of which are delivered in partnership with other agencies, these include:

- Early interventions/referrals for support – including referrals to WCHG's Living Well team, the Early Help Hub, Mental Health and Adult services
- Mediation
- Community Conferencing
- Restorative Practices
- Informal undertakings
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
- Noise Abatement Notices
- Community Protection Warnings/Notices.

4. **Policy Statement**

4.1 WCHG recognises the importance of creating safe, sustainable neighbourhoods whereby people from all different backgrounds and groups can live side by side within a culture of co-operation and respect.

4.2 By responding positively to issues that customers raise, WCHG will continue to maintain and develop neighbourhoods that foster strong and positive relationships, enables quiet enjoyment of homes, and are neighbourhoods that all can be proud of.

4.3 WCHG will seek to:

- Make it easy and accessible for tenants and residents to report Good Neighbourhood Management issues or incidents.
- Offer customers an interview in a safe place of their choice
- Have in place a robust tenancy agreement clearly outlining our stance on neighbour nuisance, use Starter Tenancies, and adopt sensitive local lettings where appropriate
- Impress upon new tenants and leaseholders their rights and responsibilities as detailed in the tenancy agreement.
- Encourage customers to develop positive relationship and adopt good neighbour principles.
- Promote community engagement and mutual responsibility and encourage and provide advice to customers to find their own solutions in the first instance by taking responsibility and ownership where appropriate
- Treat all Good Neighbourhood Management issues seriously and take appropriate action to address issues that have been identified or reported.
- Adopt a harm centred approach ensuring that customers have access to appropriate support services and feel able to work with WCHG Colleagues.

- Map and monitor Good Neighbourhood Management issues and incidents to identify any trends using the PULSE, Case Management System.
- Undertake neighbourhoods' activities such as action days, clean up campaigns and awareness campaigns to address issues, encourage reporting and increase confidence in the wider community
- Support those who are experiencing Good Neighbourhood Management issues, and stay in contact with them, keeping them informed of progress throughout their case.
- Use a risk assessment tool to assess levels of risk and vulnerability and identify appropriate levels of support.
- Liaise with partner organisations and work together to find solutions.
- Identify additional support needs of customers and make appropriate referrals to specialist agencies with their consent
- Undertake action that is reasonable and proportionate and be clear with customers on the range of interventions and solutions available.
- Ensure colleagues are trained, resourced and supported to enable them to identify and respond to Good Neighbourhood Management incidents. Colleagues will be trained to recognise the difference between a Good Neighbourhood Management issue and ASB and how to respond to it. The training will be ongoing and will consider best practice and changes in legislation
- Where appropriate, and with the permission of the complainant, publicise successful actions and initiatives taken to resolve Good Neighbourhood Management issues wherever possible.
- Keep all information confidential and only pass it on to other agencies with the permission of the complainant, where required to by law or, where necessary for the protection of children and vulnerable adults
- Refer any cases to safeguarding where it is believed any child or vulnerable adult is at risk.
- Offer a wide range of measures to support customers which includes, out of hours support, professional witnesses, CCTV cameras and noise recording equipment.
- Offer a range of measures i.e., flooring, vibration mats under washing machines, door closers, and sound insulation wherever reasonably possible to alleviate general household noise.

5. Customer Responsibilities

- 5.1 WCHG will have an expectation that our tenants and residents will take responsibility for their own behaviours and actions. In situations where there is a dispute or disagreement between neighbours, we will firstly encourage those customers to try and resolve things themselves, (unless there is a serious risk of harm/violence or abuse).
- 5.2 We will offer them advice on how they might approach their neighbour to resolve the conflict and use our specialist mediation service to support them in reaching a resolution
- 5.3 We will engage with our customers and encourage them to take responsibility for minor personal disputes with their neighbours and resolve problems in a reasonable manner

6. Complaints

6.1 Any party involved in a Good Neighbourhood Management case can make a complaint directly to WCHG if they are not satisfied about how their case has been handled. When a complaint of this type is made WCHG will follow the process set out in our complaints policy and process.

7. Data Protection, Confidentiality and Information Exchange.

7.1 WCHG will not disclose any information about, or provided by, a Complainant without their consent unless there are safeguarding issues that could impact on the safety of children or vulnerable adults or where there may have been a crime committed.

7.2 All information shared in respect of perpetrators will adhere to the principles of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018, as it relates to information sharing between agencies for the purposes of the reduction of crime and disorder.

8. Responsibility

8.1 The Executive Director of Customers & Communities shall be responsible for the implementation and review of this policy. The operational day to day delivery of the policy is the responsibility of the Head of Housing.

9 Consultation, Monitoring and Review

9.1 We will monitor and learn from the feedback we receive about how we manage and respond to all incidents and issues raised under the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy, to ensure a high standard of our services, in line with the Tenants Satisfaction Measures Standard introduced in April 2023 by the Regulator for Social Housing

9.2 We will invite customers to scrutinize our service and give us feedback for improvements. WCHG will also ensure we benchmark our Neighbourhood services to understand how we are performing and to share and gather best practice. We will from time to time share the benchmarking results with our customers.

9.3 Indicators that will be monitored include but are not limited to:

- Number of new GNM cases arising including by type and locality
- Percentage of cases successfully resolved.
- Satisfaction with the outcome of the case
- The time taken to resolve GNM by type
- The use of non-legal action actions to remedy GNM cases
- Case studies and customer experiences
- Equality, Diversity and inclusion indicators

9.4 An annual report to the Customer Experience Committee and Board will provide an assurance of our compliance with the policy and our customer engagement

9.5 The Good Neighbourhood Management policy will be reviewed on a 3-year cycle dependant on any significant changes in legislation

10. Equality & Diversity

10.1 WCHG will ensure that the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy and procedure is accessible to its diverse customers

10.2 WCHG will consider the different needs of our customers when considering action.

10.3 WCHG recognises that customers of all races, ages, religions, gender, sexual orientation, literacy levels and disability should be treated equally and fairly and will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no-one is discriminated against on the basis of any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

10.4 WCHG will provide information in languages other than English, in braille, large print, easy read and Audiotape. Our receptions and interview rooms are fitted with a hearing loop system.

11. Legislative Framework

11.1 This policy statement incorporates a number of legislative and regulatory requirements, which includes but not limited to:

- ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing Acts 1985, 1988, 1996 and 2004
- ASB Act 2003
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- GDPR 2018
- Data Protection Act 2000
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Human Rights Act 1998

12. Associated Policies & Strategies

- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Empty Homes Policy
- Environmental Services Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Allocations Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Hate Crime Policy
- Complaints Policy

- Community Safety Strategy
- Community & Neighbourhood Development Strategy
- Living Well Strategy
- Resident Engagement Strategy