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# The Trust

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## Good Neighbourhood Management Policy

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18<sup>th</sup> November 2024

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                              |          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>1. INTRODUCTION &amp; POLICY OBJECTIVES.....</b>          | <b>1</b> |
| <b>2. SCOPE .....</b>                                        | <b>1</b> |
| <b>3. LEGAL &amp; REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS .....</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| <b>4. DEFINITIONS.....</b>                                   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>5. HOW WE WILL ADDRESS ISSUES UNDER THIS POLICY .....</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Encouraging proactive resolution .....                       | 3        |
| Making a report & triaging Reports .....                     | 3        |
| Managing Customer Expectations .....                         | 3        |
| Customer Cooperation .....                                   | 3        |
| Vulnerabilities and Support Needs.....                       | 3        |
| Property Inspections.....                                    | 3        |
| Physical measures to reduce noise transfer.....              | 4        |
| Void Standard.....                                           | 4        |
| Hard Flooring.....                                           | 4        |
| New Builds.....                                              | 4        |
| Requesting review .....                                      | 4        |
| <b>6. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY &amp; INCLUSION .....</b>          | <b>4</b> |
| <b>7. RESPONSIBILITIES .....</b>                             | <b>4</b> |
| All Staff, contractors and volunteers .....                  | 4        |
| [TBC] Team.....                                              | 4        |
| Head of Neighbourhoods.....                                  | 4        |
| Executive & Board.....                                       | 5        |
| <b>8. MONITORING AND REPORTING .....</b>                     | <b>5</b> |
| <b>9. CONSULTATION .....</b>                                 | <b>5</b> |
| <b>10. REVIEW .....</b>                                      | <b>5</b> |
| <b>11. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS.....</b>                         | <b>5</b> |
| <b>12. POLICY INFORMATION.....</b>                           | <b>6</b> |



## 1. INTRODUCTION & POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Peaks & Plains Housing Trust ('the Trust') is dedicated to creating communities where residents feel safe, supported, and content. Our goal is to foster positive relationships between our customers and promote understanding and compromise.
- 1.2. The objective of this policy is to help our customers, employees and partners understand how the Trust will approach neighbourhood issues that do not fall within deliberate acts of anti-social behaviour (ASB). The policy distinguishes between issues that are deliberate (ASB) and those which are non-ASB issues and therefore not likely (at least initially) to be a breach of tenancy. We set out in this policy how the Trust will seek to deal with non-ASB issues that are covered by this policy, this may include dealing with the issue in a different way to if it was an ASB incident or persistent breach of tenancy. In developing this policy we have taken into account the Housing Ombudsman's "Spotlight on: Noise Complaints" Report (2022).
- 1.3. This policy addresses behaviours that are not initially classified as ASB or tenancy breaches but may still require some form of action or intervention because they are or may lead to tensions between neighbours. Our goal is to manage these situations with sensitivity and proportionality and to alleviate these potential tensions.
- 1.4. Some behaviour may impact a customer but there is no intention by the other customer to offend / cause upset or frustration, and therefore such behaviour may not be considered as unreasonable.

We will therefore use the following criteria for determining whether an issue falls under this policy or the ASB and Hate Crime policy:

**Unintentional Disturbance:** Addressed under this policy.

**Persistent, Unintentional Disturbance:** If such behaviour continues for more than 30 minutes at a time over 5 consecutive days, it escalates to the ASB and Hate Crime Policy.

**Intentional Disturbance:** Managed under the ASB and Hate Crime policy.

- 1.5. We recognise that behaviours can escalate and will regularly reassess cases to ensure that they are being handled appropriately and under the correct policy.
- 1.6. This policy complements our Anti-Social Behaviour & Hate Crime Policy (ASB policy).

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy is to be used by all employees, contractors and volunteers of the Trust.
- 2.2. This policy applies specifically where the Trust provides a service to its customers and any additional service users within its accepted remit. It applies to all tenure types.

- 2.3. The Trust ensures that comprehensive policies and procedures are in place that are both compliant with legislation and best practice and will remain flexible to the needs of the communities we serve. This policy reflects good practice and meets current legal and regulatory requirements and will be delivered in a non-discriminatory way.
- 2.4. The Trust reserves the right not to investigate or take any action under this Policy in relation to complaints that we are of the view are vexatious and/or unreasonable and/or fall under our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

### 3. LEGAL & REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1. The Trust must operate within the framework created by legislation. This policy has been written having regard to relevant legislation which includes the following (non-exhaustive) list:
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
  - Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
  - The Care Act 2014
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
  - The Children Act 1989 & 2004
  - Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
  - Human Rights Act 1998
  - Crime and Disorder Act 1998
  - Crime and Security Act 2010
  - Criminal Justice Act 2003
  - Data Protection Act 2018 and subsequent Regulations
  - Housing Act 1988
  - The Regulator of Social Housing – Consumer Standards
- 3.2. This policy complies with the Regulator of Social Housing's Standards, particularly the Neighbourhood and Community Standard and the best practice suggested by the Housing Ombudsman Service, for example Spotlight on Noise Complaints 2022

### 4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1. For incidents covered by this policy, we will not refer to individuals as "alleged perpetrator" or "victim," nor will we typically consider employing legal measures available for ASB cases (unless the issue(s) are escalated to our ASB policy). Instead, we will use the terms: Customer(s) 1 and Customer(s) 2 so that we can try to build relationships between customers.
- 4.2. Examples of behaviours covered under this policy include:
- Parking disagreements (if the other driver is parking in accordance with all contractual/legal requirements)
  - Smoking

- Boundary issues
- Dog barking
- Cats in gardens
- Untidy gardens
- Cooking smells
- Bin placement
- Children playing ball games
- Littering
- General household noise (babies crying, closing doors, talking, flushing toilets, walking in their homes, vacuuming, using white goods, DIY)
- One-time celebrations
- Sporadic noise made by customer or a member of their household who has a protected characteristic, e.g., mental health condition.

## 5. HOW WE WILL ADDRESS WITH ISSUES UNDER THIS POLICY

- 5.1. **Encouraging proactive resolution:** We aim to equip customers with the necessary information to address neighbourhood issues, including how to communicate with neighbours and guidance on acceptable noise levels and reduction strategies.

When needed, we will provide guidance on how to escalate concerns to us.

We encourage customers to proactively reduce tensions arising from behaviours covered by this policy. This means we expect that where we feel that it is reasonable to do so, customers will speak with their neighbours to address non-ASB issues which fall under this policy.

Where customers require extra support due to vulnerability or where we feel our assistance will result in a positive resolution of the issue, we will work with customers to find an appropriate resolution.

To support effective resolution when initial efforts fail, we may direct customers to, or fund, mediation services.

In certain situations, with permission, we will collaborate with partner agencies to share information and determine the best support and guidance to resolve the issue.

- 5.2. **Making a report & triaging reports:** We will provide accessible and inclusive methods for our customers (and non-Trust residents) to report a neighbourhood issue.

We will triage reports of issues from customers to ensure our team, partners, and customers understand the criteria for deciding whether a matter falls under our ASB policy or the Good Neighbourhood Management policy. This will ensure low-level neighbourhood issues are addressed appropriately.

- 5.3. **Types of interventions we may use/expect our customers to use:** The following is a non-exhaustive list of interventions that the Trust may use or which we would expect our customers to use to resolve issues; formal and informal mediation, self-help through both parties speaking to one another, positive letters/means of communication (e.g. emails etc.) to all parties to seek consensus and cooperation, good neighbour agreements, joint agency meetings.
- 5.4. **Managing Customer Expectations:** We will manage unreasonable expectations early by clarifying the actions we, as landlord, can and cannot take, and will inform customers of their available options.
- 5.5. **New Customers:** On signing up new customers for tenancies, we will clearly outline their rights and responsibilities as detailed in the tenancy agreement and encourage customers to develop positive relationships and adopt good neighbour principles
- 5.6. **Customer Cooperation:** This policy aims to develop and strengthen relationships among customers living in the same neighbourhood/ community. If a customer refuses a reasonable request either made by us or the other customer(s) involved, we may be unable to assist further.
- 5.7. **Vulnerabilities and Support Needs:** We will consider the support needs of customers at all stages. We recognise that personal circumstances may impact a customer's tolerance, perception, or ability to handle certain situations. When identified as a contributory factor, we will work with partners to find appropriate support.
- 5.8. **Property Inspections:** We may inspect properties to determine if unresolved repair issues contribute to noise transfer. Although we cannot commit to soundproofing properties, we will consider measures to reduce noise transfer when other options are exhausted, and the impact on the customer is severe.
- 5.9. **Physical measures to reduce noise transfer:** We understand that noise transfer between properties, due to poor sound insulation or thin walls, can significantly affect customers. We will consider options to reduce noise and assess if remedial work or improvements are necessary either to the properties or the environment around the properties.
- 5.10. **Void Standard:** Carpets will only be removed if in poor condition or if requested by the incoming customer. Generally, hard and laminate flooring will be removed. We may choose to install anti-vibration mats which can be installed in the washing machine spaces of flats above the ground floor.
- 5.11. **Hard Flooring:** Hard flooring is not permitted in flats above ground level. We will ask the customer to remove such flooring if noise complaints are linked to it.
- 5.12. **New Builds:** We will ensure that, flats above the ground floor do not have hardwood or laminate flooring.

- 5.13. **Requesting review:** Customers can make a request to us if they believe their issue is being handled under the wrong policy. If they disagree with our decision, we will inform the customer of our complaint procedure.

## 6. **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

- 6.1. The policy complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that customers are treated fairly without discrimination or prejudice.
- 6.2. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on this policy. On request, the Trust will provide translations of all its documents, policies and procedures in various languages and other formats such as large print, Braille etc.
- 6.3. The Trust has a Reasonable Adjustments Policy which will be applied.

## 7. **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### 7.1. **All Staff, contractors and volunteers**

- 7.1.1. Responsibility for the implementation of this policy includes all staff, volunteers and contractors working on behalf of the Trust, whether that work is paid or voluntary. Responsibilities include the reporting of and/or the management of any incidents.

### 7.2. **The Neighbourhood Team**

- 7.2.1. The Trust's Neighbourhood team, led by the Neighbourhood Manager will be responsible for the operational implementation of measures contained within this policy. Neighbourhood Officers will be expected to deal with initial reports under this policy with escalations to the Neighbourhood Manager in the first instance and the Head of Neighbourhoods thereafter.

### 7.3. **Head of Neighbourhoods**

- 7.3.1. As legislation and best practice are formulated it will be the responsibility of the Head of Neighbourhoods, to ensure any necessary updates to this policy are made in a timely manner.

### 7.4. **Executive**

- 7.4.1. The Trust's Executive team will be responsible for the approval of this policy and will receive reports that demonstrate compliance with this policy.

## 8. **MONITORING AND REPORTING**

- 8.1. The Trust will measure customers satisfaction to ensure cases are managed effectively. Key performance monitoring information will be shared with the Trust's senior Managers, Executive Management Team, involved tenants, and Board, and will be publicised through a variety of media channels.

- 8.2. The Trust will use the following non-exhaustive list to measure and monitor performance:
- Analysis of reported cases and their outcomes
  - Utilisation of the Noise Monitoring App
  - Reduction in number of reported noise related incidents
  - Feedback from colleagues
  - Increased customer satisfaction
  - Better outcomes for vulnerable customers

## 9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1. This policy has been reviewed in consultation with customers, staff voice and partner agencies of the Trust.

## 10. REVIEW

- 10.1. The Trust will review this policy every 2 years, or earlier if required by statutory, regulatory, legislative or best practice requirements or the need to update this policy following reviews of other Group wide policies or improvements identified by service reviews, scrutiny or feedback from customers.

## 11. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- 11.1.
- Anti-Social Behaviour & Hate Crime Policy
  - Safeguarding Policy & procedure
  - Code of conduct
  - Complaints and Compliments Policy
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Whistleblowing Policy
  - Workplace Violence and Abuse Policy
  - Unacceptable Behaviour Policy
  - Red Flag Procedure

## POLICY INFORMATION

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|-------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Policy Name:      | Good Neighbourhood Management Policy     |
| Status:           | Approved/Final                           |
| Approved by:      | Executive Management Team                |
| Drafted By:       | Steffanie Goalen, Head of Neighbourhoods |
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