

# ESTATE INSPECTIONS AND CUSTOMER WALKABOUT POLICY

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EIA Required? No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Revision number:	4
Lead officer:	Jane Allen

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The aim of this policy is to make a real contribution to Stockport Homes' (SHG) wider strategic and housing objectives; helping to enhance community cohesion and enabling customers to have an opportunity to get involved in identifying and resolving issues within their local area.

1.2 Estate Inspections and Customer Walkabouts are defined as:

1.2.1 An Estate Inspection is an audit of a particular site at a point in time, with action taken to resolve any issues identified.

1.2.2 A site is defined as a street, a garage, a block of flats, or sheltered scheme.

1.2.3 A Customer Walkabout is a pre-arranged inspection of a group of sites within a neighbourhood which can be attended by customers and stakeholders (e.g. elected members, Stockport Council employees, partners and Police).

1.3 The roles of the Neighbourhood Housing Officers (NHO), Older Persons Housing Officers (OPNHO) and Independent Living Co-ordination (ILC) include to have a regular regime of Estate Inspections and Customer Walkabouts (only NHO/OPNHO) to highlight any issues which affect a street or neighbourhood, such as litter, abandoned vehicles, graffiti and untidy streets. Such issues can have a negative effect on the surrounding area.

1.4 Involving customers and dealing with issues at an early stage, can help to maintain a well-kept area that people want to live in, reducing customer complaints and dissatisfaction.

## 2 STRATEGIC LINKS

2.1 This policy links to;

- SHG's Eyes Wide Open Policy Statement
- ASB Strategy and Policy
- Greenspace Strategy
- Individual Garden Maintenance Policy
- Abandoned Vehicles Policy
- Keeping Pets Policy
- Difficult to let policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Tenancy Visit Policy
- Squatting Policy
- Abandonment Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy
- Tree Policy
- Hoarding Policy
- Managing Tenancy Breaches Policy.

2.2 The 'Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England' sets out that 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'. This Policy ensures that by undertaking regular estate inspections and customer walkabouts, SHG helps to improve the community and enables customers and stakeholders to have an opportunity to get involved in identifying and resolving issues within their local area. By involving customers ensure areas are well-kept and a place people want to live in. SHG will always raise issues with other agencies, such as the Council, in instances where issues identified are beyond SHG's responsibilities.

### **3 KEY FEATURES OF THE POLICY**

3.1 NHOs, OPNHOs and ILCs will visit and inspect each street/site managed within their patch on at least a three monthly basis, with the exception of multi-storey blocks, which will be inspected every month.

3.2 Sites that are graded poor or very poor will be automatically prioritised to be re-inspected within one month.

3.3 Issues identified by the NHO/OPNHO/ILC will be recorded on a mobile device and they will then take appropriate action to address any issues.

- 3.3.1 Other agencies involved in the management of the neighbourhood or specific area i.e. grounds maintenance contractors, Stockport Council's Neighbourhood Project Officers, (formerly Public Realm Team), Local Councillors and Police will be encouraged to actively participate in the identification of issues within an area during Customer Walkabouts.
- 3.3.2 Customer Walkabouts will be advertised via various communication methods including the Customer Newsletter and Social Media.
- 3.3.3 Customers have the opportunity to attend a Walkabout in order to highlight any specific issues or to take an interest in the neighbourhood they live and want to make a contribution.
- 3.3.4 A Customer Walkabout can be arranged by either an NHO/OPNHO or by a customer who wishes to arrange one for their particular street/site in order to discuss or explore a specific issue.
- 3.3.5 SHG, through NHO/OPNHOs will provide updates to customers who attend Customer Walkabouts explaining what action will be taken to tackle any issues identified.
- 3.3.6 Estate inspections and the appearance of neighbourhoods are monitored corporately through the performance scorecard. This gives a reliable metric to demonstrate how the organisation is performing in creating sustainable estates.

## **4 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 An equality impact assessment has been carried out that identified the need to improve the promotion of Customer Walkabouts. This has resulted in additional communication methods being used, such as the Customer Newsletter, various Social Media managed by SHG and the continuation of posters being placed within the blocks of flats. In addition, in order to ensure accessibility and convenience for the customer and to maximise attendance, Customer Walkabouts are held in the morning afternoon or early evening (in the summer months).

## **5 OWNERSHIP, MONITORING & REVIEW**

5.1 The policy is owned by the Head of Neighbourhoods will be monitored by the Operational Services Policy Review Group through the schedule for review.

5.2 Any queries with this policy should be directed to the Project Officer on 474 4151.