



Neighbourhood Management Policy

1.0 Background and context

1.1 Irwell Valley is founded on the values of a traditional housing association but is more than just a landlord.

1.2 Core housing management activities include:

- Lettings
- Rent arrears and collection
- Tenancy management
- Anti-social behaviour
- Customer involvement
- Estate services

1.3 Our core activities are delivered in conjunction with a number of other specialist teams, partners and agencies:

- Repairs and Planned Maintenance
- Finance
- IT
- External contractors e.g. grounds maintenance, cleaning and window cleaning, concierge
- Police
- Local authorities
- Strategic partnerships

1.4 Some examples of how this works in practice can be found within the table below:

Service	Internal Lead(s)	External Partners/ Agencies
Tenancy Management	Tenancy Management Officers Estate Officers	Police Local authority Statutory services
Rent Arrears and Collection	Rents Team and Rent Support Officers	Neighbourhood Management Local authorities DWP CAB Manchester Credit Union
Customer Involvement	Tenancy Management Officers Customer Voice Manager and Officer	Relevant partnerships e.g. Sale West and Ashton Partnership (SWAP), Our Sale West, RSP
Anti-social behaviour	Tenancy Management Officers	Police

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	Community Safety Officers	Local authority Statutory services
Lettings	Lettings	Neighbourhood Management Repairs and Maintenance RP's Private landlords Employers

1.5 In addition to our core role of providing high quality homes for those who need them we are also well placed to improve opportunities and life chances to our customers, their surrounding neighbourhoods and wider communities – activities of this nature include:

- Environmental improvements
- Employment & training initiatives
- Financial inclusion
- Community centres
- Digital inclusion
- Youth diversionary activities
- Support for social enterprise
- Support for customers groups and voluntary organisations
- Healthy living projects

1.6 The above is delivered to almost over 7500 properties, circa 15,000 customers across 8 local authority areas within a number of different contexts.

2.0 Policy Aim

2.1 Our aim is to create fantastic homes and neighbourhoods for people to live in and fulfil their potential.

2.2 We are committed to delivering neighbourhood services that make our neighbourhoods great places to live, feel safe and promote wellbeing.

2.3 We will work to improve the appearance of our neighbourhoods and build positive relationships with neighbours and partners to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing.

2.4 We will be clear about the services we do or do not provide to ensure that our relationship with customers does not become unbalanced and we take responsibility for services for which we have no authority.

3.0 Partnership Working and Customer Engagement

3.1 We recognise that effective partnerships are key to the delivery of sustainable communities and neighbourhoods and that no one organisation can or should try to deliver alone.

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- 3.2 Through partnership working we will aim to ensure we build and maintain relationships in order to identify and pursue opportunities for community and economic development within neighbourhoods e.g.
- Service delivery harmonisation
 - Neighbourhood charters or Neighbourhood Plans
 - Employment & training initiatives
 - Projects to tackle ASB
 - Health initiatives
- 3.3 We will promote and carry out regular Estate Inspections and work together with customers and partners to identify and resolve neighbourhood issues
- 3.4 We will work closely with engaged customers to improve our neighbourhoods and ensure the views of customers are represented and help us deliver what really matters.
- 3.5 The Tenancy Management Officers will work with customers and partners to deliver improvements, where possible and ensure that customers know what progress has been made by providing regular updates. We will work with customers to improve the neighbourhood.
- 3.6 We will deliver events and opportunities for our customers to engage in their neighbourhood to influence and shape neighbourhood services.
- 3.7 We will consult with customers on the services we offer and share how we are performing in relation to what we offer.
- 3.8 We will consult with customers in developing and reviewing our customer facing policies.

4.0 Customer Access-Voice

- 4.1 The delivery of our Tenancy Management service is consistent with our Customer Voice Strategy ensuring our customers have a say in the levels of service and customer care we provide to our customers.

5.0 Neighbourhood Visits

- 5.1 Our Tenancy Management Officers will build professional relationships with customers and partners within our neighbourhoods to develop excellent local knowledge enabling them to identify, understand and tackle issues effectively.
- 5.2 During the life of a tenancy we will undertake the following visits:
- Sign-up – undertake the sign-up visit with all new customers
 - Initial visit – undertaken with new customers within 3 to 6 weeks of them moving into their home
 - Conversion visit – usually undertaken after 9 months and prior to a tenancy converting from a starter to an assured tenancy
 - Tenancy visit – conducted on a biennial basis

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- Pre-tenancy termination visit – undertaken during a notice period and prior to the tenancy end date
- Ad-hoc visits - in accordance with our Tenancy Agreement and Customer Access policy or in agreement with the resident

5.3 We will aim to carry out a tenancy visit every other year with each customer to review their circumstances, identify any support they may need, ensure they are keeping to terms of their tenancy agreement, and address any issues with their home and neighbourhood. However, they will be done more frequently if a customer is identified as Red or Amber in the RAG system.

6.0 Neighbourhood Management and Upkeep of Common Parts

6.1 We recognise that the upkeep of our neighbourhoods and common parts is fundamental to the quality of life for our customers. Our aim is to create a clean, safe and desirable neighbourhood in which our customers can take pride and ownership.

6.2 In order to monitor and maintain the upkeep of our neighbourhoods and common parts we will:

- Carry out bi-monthly neighbourhood (estate) inspections (to include the inspection of communal facilities) to which customers and partners are invited
- Consult with customers with regards to service quality, specifications and contract reviews
- Agree and make available a service specification standard detailing frequency, task list and name of contractor for each service e.g. cleaning, grounds maintenance
- Monitor the performance of contractors through agreed contract management mechanisms
- Work with local authorities and relevant partners to raise and address specific issues as and when they arise

7.0 Breaches of Tenancy

7.1 We will work to ensure that customers understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to their tenancy agreement; we will provide advice and support to resolve any breach of their tenancy agreement; where customers fail to resolve the breach or engage with support, we will take enforcement action.

7.2 Irwell Valley Homes aim to assist customers to maintain and sustain a tenancy. Providing customers do not breach the conditions of their tenancy, they are entitled to stay in the property for as long as they wish (subject to tenancy type).

7.3 Our approach to managing an individual tenancy will be informed by the RAG rating (Red, Amber, Green) of each individual resident which in turn are informed by a number of key tenancy related indicators e.g:

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- Arrears
- Property condition
- Gas servicing status
- Anti-social behaviour
- Vulnerability
- Untidy garden
- External agencies e.g. police

7.5 Our Tenancy Management Officers will complete visual inspections of properties and neighbourhoods. Where breaches of tenancy are identified we will work with the customer to develop an action plan to bring the property or garden to an acceptable standard. Where improvements are not maintained then enforcement action will be considered in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement.

7.6 A high proportion of tenancy breaches are usually due to rent arrears and Tenancy Management Officers will work very closely with the Rent Support Officers to ensure that any action taken to tackle rent arrears is efficient and effective and compliments existing and bespoke Rent Policies and Procedures.

7.7 We will respond quickly when we are aware that a property may have been abandoned, investigate the circumstances and take appropriate action where we can find evidence that the customer is not using the property as their main and principle home.

8.0 Anti-Social Behaviour

8.1 To ensure that our neighbourhoods feel safe we will work in partnership with other agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) in accordance with our ASB Policy and Procedure.

8.2 We are open and honest with customers in relation to what we can and cannot achieve in tackling ASB. Customer opinion on what constitutes ASB and their expectations as to what Irwell Valley can do to tackle a problem can often be unrealistic. Our experience is that though this may be a difficult message it is better to be up front about it with customers to ensure expectations are appropriately managed.

9.0 Regulation

9.1 We will ensure that our approach to neighbourhood management meets the regulatory requirements of the Neighbourhood and Community Standard set out by the Homes and Communities Agency.

10.0 Responsibility and Review

10.1 The Director of Customer Services is responsible for the overall implementation of this policy.

10.2 We will monitor the effectiveness and implementation of this policy to ensure that we

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continue to create fantastic homes and neighbourhoods for people to live in and fulfil their potential.

- 10.3 We will review and update this policy to reflect changes in legislation, best practice or improvements identified by service reviews, scrutiny or feedback from customers.

11.0 Performance Indicators.

- 11.1 The following performance indicators are monitored and reported weekly via the Corporate Dashboard:
- Rent receivable
 - Current tenant arrears
 - Former tenant arrears
 - Account balance
 - Empty properties – available/unavailable
 - Turnover – relets/new lets
 - Relet times
 - Average relet repair cost
 - Void rent loss

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 Irwell Valley is committed to treating people with honesty, dignity, respect and trust and undertakes not to discriminate directly or indirectly or victimise because of race, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion and belief. Colleagues also will ensure that they take into consideration a person's faith and cultural beliefs when dealing with tenancy and tenancy management related issues.

13.0 Cross Reference Documents

- 13.1
- Customer Voice Strategy
 - Customer Involvement Framework
 - Tenancy Policy
 - Safeguarding Policy and Action Plan
 - Dealing with Violence and Aggression Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Income Management Policy
 - Allocation and Empty Home Policy
 - Repairs and Maintenance Policy
 - Hoarding Policy
 - Aerials and Satellite Dishes Policy
 - Complaints Policy and Procedure
 - GDPR
 - Data Breach Policy
 - IT Policy
 - Disaster Recovery Plan
 - CCTV Policy
 - Financial Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan
 - Tenancy, Lease and Licence Agreements
 - RSL Charter for Tenancy Fraud
 - Equality Impact Assessment
 - Financial Standing Orders and Regulations and Officers Authority

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14.0 Procedures

- 14.1 All Neighbourhood and Tenancy Management Procedures
Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure

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