



Estates and Neighbourhoods Management Policy

May 2025 - 2028

Version Control

Document Owner(s)	Head of Home Services
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Version Control:

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
1.0	May 2025	Head of Home Services	Whilst a previous version of 'estates inspection policy' exists, a full re-write has been necessary to bring in line with current standards of policy writing

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Pickering and Ferens Homes (PFH) has a responsibility to ensure that all our estates and neighbourhoods are safe, functional and maintained to a good standard. PFH is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of everybody living, working or visiting our buildings, estates, and neighbourhoods and to protecting our property.
- 1.2. This policy sets out the approach to maintaining estates and neighbourhoods.

2. Scope, Aim & Purpose of Policy

- 2.1. The terms estates and neighbourhoods are used interchangeably throughout this policy and refer to communal parts, facilities and grounds of property that is owned or under the management of PFH. This includes, communal buildings owned by PFH, such as blocks of flats, communal grounds including unadopted roadways, paths and car parking areas, and grassed or shrubbed areas.
- 2.2. The policy seeks to outline the approach to PFH's inspections and maintenance of these areas to ensure the policy statement above is met.
- 2.3. This includes compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards for Safety and Quality, and Neighbourhood and Community. It also includes compliance with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), The Decent Homes Standards (DHS), Health and Safety at Work regulations and Fire Safety regulations.
- 2.4. We will manage the environment in and around our developments so that they are safe and well maintained and will deliver services that provide value for money to our residents. We will carry out regular inspections and encourage residents to report areas of concern to us.
- 2.5. We will work proactively and reactively with residents to support them to maintain the good environment of their estate or neighbourhood.
- 2.6. Residents will meet the cost of services received through their weekly maintenance contribution and service charges except for where recharges are applicable.
- 2.7. This policy does not cover anti social behaviour (ASB) or neighbour disputes as these are covered in the specific ASB policy. There are also separate policies in place covering compliance areas such as gas, electricity, lifts, asbestos, fire safety, water hygiene, damp and mould, and health and safety. Other related policies include the Planned Maintenance Policy, Asset Management Surveying Policy, Pre and Post Inspections Policy, and Repairs and Maintenance Policy, along with the Homes Strategy, and Corporate Plan.
- 2.8. This policy should be read in conjunction with the PFH Estates Standard which details the approach to proactive updates and maintenance of neighbourhoods and estates.

3. Delivery

- 3.1. In order to ensure the condition and maintenance of PFH property is in good condition and fit for purpose, PFH will maintain an inspection regime. The frequency and scope of these inspections is detailed below and varies according to risk and requirements such as the Fire Safety Order.
- 3.2. The following are the general areas for inspection;

- 3.2.1. Communal Areas internal to PFH+ Schemes
 - 3.2.2. Communal Areas internal to other blocks (e.g. flats)
 - 3.2.3. Communal Grounds/Landscaped Areas
 - 3.2.4. General Neighbourhood Areas including roadways, pathways, carparking, boundary fencing
 - 3.2.5. Building Fabric and components (note this is covered in the Asset Management Surveying Policy)
 - 3.2.6. Communal Facilities (e.g. Pop-in Centres)
- 3.3. Communal Areas internal to PFH+ Schemes are visually inspected daily (when a Scheme Manager is present on site) for any obvious issues. These include reviewing Fire Alarms for any faults, checking floors and corridors are free from obstructions, and that areas are well lit (note this is not an exhaustive list). More detailed checks are conducted weekly including completion of fire alarm testing, first aid provision checks, completing any little used outlet regimes, external checks for drainage, rainwater goods, or fly-tipping issues, and reviewing the health and safety file for any upcoming or expired certification. Monthly checks include checking emergency lighting for issues and checking Automated External Defibrillator (AED) devices.
- 3.4. Communal Areas internal to other blocks are visually inspected monthly by staff. These checks include reviewing the fire alarm for faults, checking floors and corridors are free from obstructions, checking areas are well lit, checking first aid provisions, completing any 'little-used-water-outlet' flushing regimes, reviewing and updating the health and safety files on site for any upcoming or expired certification, fly tipping, and checking emergency lighting and AED devices (if applicable). These checks will include bin stores and communal drying areas.
- 3.5. Grounds and Landscaped areas are attended fortnightly (weather and resource permitting) as outlined in the Grounds Maintenance Specification. These visits include the contractor's health and safety checks before starting work on site, grounds maintenance (as outlined in the Grounds Maintenance (GM) Specification), the removal of general litter, removal of excessive or dangerous leaf droppage, and the reporting of any unresolved hazards to PFH. In addition, PFH staff, and GM contract supervisors complete spot checks, and health and safety audits on these areas periodically. PFH will also implement 'resident inspectors' as per 2025 GM Resident Scrutiny recommendations.
- 3.6. General Neighbourhood Areas including roadways, pathways, carparking, boundary fencing to estates are inspected as part of the PFH Walkabout Programme. The programme ensures that inspections are carried out at approximately 15 monthly intervals to ensure seasonality is considered. These walkabouts should generally be attended by a property surveyor and a member of the resident services teams. This is to ensure the presence of both technical skill, and resident/neighbourhood knowledge are applied to the visit. These inspections include the inspection of unadopted roadways for defects, unadopted pathways for defects such as trip hazards, general grounds maintenance issues, site boundary fencing (not dwelling fencing), any communal lighting or benches. Note that this is not an exhaustive list. These visits also provide an opportunity to review the general area for look and feel meaning identifying any properties that could highlight residents struggling to maintain (such as overgrown private gardens) and any recommendations for funding to support regeneration projects or neighbourhood improvements. Walkabouts are publicised in advance and residents can request a 'door-knock' if they are unable to attend for any reason, including those of accessibility.
- 3.7. PFH provide grit bins for resident use in areas that are not close to a local authority grit bin. A programme of refilling and agitation of grit bins is carried out annually ahead of the Winter season to reduce the risk of slips. Gritting is carried out on a reactive basis through a call-down service when weather conditions indicate a prolonged period of below zero temperatures are expected. As a minimum, this gritting regime applies to heavy traffic, high risk areas, such as around PFH+ schemes, their entrances, and car parking areas.
- 3.8. Tree surveys will generally be conducted at a frequency of five years and will involve a

competent contractor inspecting any trees on PFH communal land for risk and recommended maintenance.

- 3.9. Private Gardens are the responsibility of residents to ensure the upkeep of. However, PFH will work with its residents to ensure their obligations to maintain to a reasonable standard are upheld and there are no significant detriments to the neighbourhood from a lack of maintenance. Issues with overgrowth from one private garden to another will result in residents being encouraged to resolve issues between them, unless there deemed to be a significant risk, or a risk to PFH property. We will support residents with these issues if required. Residents have access to the PFH Recommended Contractor service through our More Than A Landlord initiative to support them in maintaining their gardens.
- 3.10. From time-to-time PFH staff visit individual properties for various reasons. During these visits the general neighbourhood is observed and any issues highlighted. In addition to this, PFH encourages its residents to report issues to them for remediation. These are generally managed through the repairs and maintenance policy.
- 3.11. PFH will routinely inspect the internal and external fabric of individual dwellings, along with components, through its asset management surveying policy and procedures.
- 3.12. Paving defects of more than 25mm, or where there is deemed to be a significant risk, will be routinely repaired. Kerb edging or steps are not considered defective as they are a delineation by design.
- 3.13. Additional H&S checks will be undertaken periodically by PFH's appointed H&S advisor on a scheduled basis, or as required when issues are raised that warrant this.
- 3.14. Any hazards that are identified as presenting a significant risk should be suitably repaired as quickly as possible. Generally, this means that they should be repaired, or made safe within 24 hours, including where required, cordoning or marking of unsafe areas to highlight and minimise any immediate risk.
- 3.15. PFH hold a 'Neighbourhood Improvement Fund' where residents have delegated budget available to invest in neighbourhood or estate improvements that PFH wouldn't undertake as a matter of course. This fund is governed by the Resident Committee and considers applications for works submitted by residents directly, and by PFH staff.
- 3.16. Environmental issues such as fly-tipping and dog-fouling can have a significant detrimental impact on estates, neighbourhoods and residents. It can also damage our ability to allocate homes and achieve community cohesion. We will therefore aim to respond effectively to reports of environmental issues including (but not limited to) fly-tipping, dog-fouling, littering, graffiti, and abandoned vehicles. We will encourage residents to report these issues so that PFH and its partners can take swift action. If our residents are responsible for the behaviour we will take the necessary action by enforcing the terms of the licence agreement or through our ASB Policy. If other agencies have legislation and powers we will encourage their use, through effective partnerships.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. The board will have overall governance responsibility for ensuring the policy is fully implemented to ensure full compliance.
- 4.2. The Property and Compliance Manager will hold responsibility for the implementation of this document, and supporting procedures, as well as ensuring compliance is achieved and maintained.
- 4.3. The Planned Maintenance and Asset Manager has responsibility for supporting the Property and Compliance Manager in achieving the goals of this policy through effective planned maintenance and asset maintenance regimes.

- 4.4. The Customer Experience Manager has responsibility for planning the walkabout regime.
- 4.5. Property Surveyors should be trained in HHSRS or working towards qualification to ensure suitable competency for assessing hazards and raising required works. Property Surveyors and colleagues from the Property Services Team will complete inspections as outlined in this policy.
- 4.6. The Resident Services, and Independent Living teams will provide key support in gaining access into properties where access is proving difficult and use standard methods to do so including facilitating the legal process to gain access as necessary. Members of these teams will complete inspections as outlined in this policy.
- 4.7. All PFH staff who visit neighbourhoods have a responsibility to identify any hazards, risks, or improvements and raise these accordingly.
- 4.8. PFH shall appoint a suitably qualified and competent person as a Health and Safety representative to ensure access to suitable support, guidance, and assurance is available as required.

5. Performance Monitoring and Reporting

- 5.1. PFH ensures compliance with this policy is formally reported at Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Board level as required, including the details of any non-compliance, and planned corrective actions.
- 5.2. There is a robust procedure in place for monitoring compliance and validating asset lists. Asset lists are reviewed quarterly by the Planned Maintenance and Asset Manager who compares asset lists from the Asset Management System, and the Housing Management System to ensure alignment.
- 5.3. PFH will incorporate the requirements set out in this policy, into its performance management framework. The Property and Compliance Manager has operational responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of this policy are being met, and providing assurance through the performance framework, to other members of staff and the board.
- 5.4. The Board will receive performance management information regarding compliance with this policy as part of its performance reporting, including information regarding the performance trend and a commentary relating to performance or any risk exposure. Specific performance indicators will be reported as follows:
 - 5.4.1. TSM TP11 Satisfaction that PFH make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
 - 5.4.2. TSM TP05 Satisfaction that the home is safe
 - 5.4.3. TSM TP10 Satisfaction that communal areas are clean and well maintained
 - 5.4.4. Estate inspections completion %s
- 5.5. The SLT will receive performance management information as described in 5.2. Specific performance indicators will be reported as follows:
 - 5.5.1. All outlined in 5.4
 - 5.5.2. Remedial Action Completion
- 5.6. In addition to the above, assurance will be obtained through the annual health and safety report, and any other compliance related reporting to SLT and/or Board.

6. Our Commitment To Equalities

- 6.1. PFH seeks to ensure that our actions do not lead to unlawful discrimination. Deliberate acts of discrimination, including victimisation, harassment, instruction, or pressure to discriminate, will result in disciplinary actions and/or termination of contracts with external agents.

- 6.2. Through our PFH Flex approach, PFH can improve accessibility to information and services, for example, we can provide access to interpreters for minority languages including sign language, and we can arrange written material in large print, Braille and first languages. We can also offer female operatives or have contractors accompanied by a female if residents need that form of reassurance.
- 6.3. PFH will aim to ensure that no individual or group is treated less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. We aim to recognise the needs of individuals and treat each person through the complaints process with dignity and respect.
- 6.4. We will consider the individual needs of residents who may require additional support and make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 and in accordance with our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

7. Review

- 7.1 The policy will be reviewed every three years by the SLT, or sooner if there is a change in regulation, legislation, or codes of practice.