Sanctuary

Looking after your neighbourhood: what you can expect from us

A customer guide to shared spaces, neighbourhoods and estate services

This guide explains how we look after the shared spaces on Sanctuary-owned estates and schemes. It covers affordable housing, independent living and Sanctuary Supported Living. It also explains what you are responsible for, when you may need to pay for work and how we respond to safety concerns.

Our aim
We want you to feel safe and comfortable where you live. We inspect estates, respond when you tell us about a problem and work with other organisations when they are responsible.

How we check your estate

We inspect every scheme at least once a year, and more often if we find problems. We check shared areas, lighting, paths, stairs, parking, bins, buildings, gardens, garages, play areas, boundaries and repairs. We also look for signs of vandalism or antisocial behaviour.

- We may invite you to join a planned inspection.
- You can also ask to join an inspection or tell us about anything you are concerned about.
- Where we can, we will agree how and when to update you about any relevant action.
- We will remove dangerous waste, such as needles, straight away where possible. If specialist cleaning is needed, we will arrange it as soon as practical and inspect the area again within one working week.

Keeping shared areas safe and clear

We look after the shared areas we are responsible for. This may include general maintenance and cleaning, including window cleaning in blocks of flats.

- • Please do not leave items in lounges, passageways, stores or other shared areas. They must be kept clear so everyone can use them safely.
- • We will give you an opportunity to remove any items. If you do not, we may remove them. For larger or valuable items, we must serve a TORT Notice before we remove them.
- • Please do not keep mobility scooters or aids in shared areas unless we have given you temporary permission. You need our written permission to store a mobility scooter inside or outside your home. If there is no suitable storage space, we will talk to you about other housing options.
- • Please report damaged fences, gates, security doors, paths, stairs, shared lighting or unsafe building exteriors to us as a repair.

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Rubbish, litter, graffiti and damage

Please tell us about rubbish, graffiti or damage on land we own. We will arrange the right action or repair. If another organisation owns the land, we will report it through the right route or let you know who to contact.

- We treat offensive graffiti as an emergency and aim to remove it within 24 hours wherever possible. If the graffiti targets someone, we may also deal with it as harassment or a hate crime.
- We prioritise rubbish that could cause harm and aim to clear it within 24 hours. It may take longer if we need a specialist environmental contractor.
- If the rubbish is on your property, we may let you know which agency to contact and inspect the area again within one week.
- If you are responsible for graffiti, dumped rubbish, litter or misusing a bin store, we will ask you to put it right. If you do not, we may arrange the work, charge you and consider tenancy action.
- If vandalism has damaged your own property, please report it to the police. We will repair damage to property we own.

Gardens, trees, pets and pests

- We cut grass we are responsible for during the growing season. Housing schemes normally receive 16 cuts between March and November, although some services may have different contract arrangements.
- Some schemes may take part in No Mow May. We will let you know if this affects your scheme.
- You are responsible for looking after your own garden. We may contact you if its condition is not acceptable.
- You are responsible for trees in your garden. We will only step in in exceptional circumstances, such as when there is a risk to health and safety or to our property.
- We will look into reports of nuisance caused by pets or other animals. We may ask you to keep records, contact relevant organisations or withdraw permission to keep a pet if tenancy conditions have been broken.
- You are normally responsible for pests in your home or private garden. We are responsible for bed bugs, infestations in empty homes, and infestations in shared areas that could cause serious health risks. Please contact your local authority about rats, mice or other public health concerns.

Parking, vehicles and garages

- Most parking spaces are available on a first come, first served basis unless there is a parking scheme in place.
- You are responsible for looking after your designated bay, bollard, padlocks and keys.
- We may investigate repeated obstructive or inconsiderate parking as antisocial behaviour.
- We take action on vehicles that are abandoned, untaxed or not roadworthy. The local authority may be responsible if the vehicle is on an adopted road.
- You can ask your local office for a garage application form.

Keys and fobs

- We charge to replace lost keys and fobs. You will need to pay before we provide the replacement.
- If your key or fob has been stolen, please give us a police crime reference number. Without one, we will charge for a replacement or for forced access.
- We will replace a faulty fob free of charge when you return it. If you cannot return it, we will charge for the replacement.

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Play areas, signs and estate improvements

- Where we are responsible for play areas, we keep them in good condition and arrange safety inspections.
- Please only play ball games in designated spaces, not in car parks or areas next to buildings or garages.
- We aim to keep estate signs clear, easy to read and free from damage.
- Where possible, we will involve you in proposed changes to your estate. You, resident panels and local groups can suggest improvements to landscaping, security and the neighbourhood.

Your responsibilities

Your tenancy agreement or other agreement may include more detail. You are responsible for:

- keeping your home, garden, pets, parking space and any bollard in line with your agreement
- using bin stores properly and keeping shared areas clear
- removing rubbish, litter or graffiti you are responsible for
- asking for written permission before storing a mobility scooter
- reporting repairs, safety risks, vandalism or estate concerns as soon as you can

Charges and tenancy action
We may charge you if you cause a problem or if the work is your responsibility. We may also take tenancy action. We will look at the circumstances of each case and follow the relevant agreement and process.

How to report a problem

Use Contact us | Sanctuary to report a repair or ask us a housing question. If the issue is on land we do not own, the local authority, police, Environmental Health or another owner may be responsible. If so, we will explain who you need to contact.