

Our neighbourhood standard

At settle we know that your home goes beyond your front door. We want the neighbourhoods that we are responsible for to be safe, clean and tidy so that you can be proud of where you live.

Our neighbourhood standard helps you to know what to expect when we look after and improve communal areas in your neighbourhood.

All our communal areas, both internal and external, are visited regularly. This will range between weekly and monthly visits depending on need or demand.

There are five parts to our neighbourhood standard:

- Internal communal areas
- External communal areas
- Bins and recycling facilities
- Signage and notices
- Neighbourhood management

If you are a settle homeowner, please also see our separate document on homeownership.

Internal communal areas

Flooring

- Floors will be cleaned regularly in line with our published schedules. When serviced, floors will be clean, the area will smell fresh and there will be no loose debris.

Corridors

- Your corridors will be cleaned in line with our published service schedules.
- They should be free of personal belongings. Stairwells and landings should be unobstructed. We ask residents to work with settle to ensure they do not leave anything in communal areas.
- To ensure compliance with fire safety, regular block inspections are conducted. If we identify anything that is a hazard, we apply a yellow sticker asking the owner to remove it as soon as possible. Due to the safety implications, we may have to take action to remove items, which may have a recharge cost to the resident responsible.

Walls & Ceilings

- Corridors should be in good condition. Marks and scuffs from general wear and tear are unavoidable, but any graffiti will be removed and any repairs will be undertaken in line with our repairs standard.
- Paintwork colours will be matching throughout the communal area.

Windows (communal only)

- Window frames, sills and silicone will be in good condition. Windows will be in good working order.
- Communal windows will meet the decent homes standard. They are cleaned four times per year in retirement living and twice per year in all other communal areas.

Lighting

- Lighting units will be in full working order and all switches in good condition.

External communal areas

Grass

- We don't collect grass cuttings across the majority of our areas as it degrades naturally into the ground and it helps reduce the cost of the service being charged to our customers.
- Grass will be cut regularly during the growing season, which is March to October, however this may vary slightly depending on the weather conditions.
- Grass will be cut every 3-4 weeks during the growing season and in the winter when required (if conditions allow).
- Grass will be in good condition and where required, we will reseed any patchy areas.

Shrubs

- Shrubs will typically be cut 2-3 times per year, depending on their type.
- We identify planting that looks tired and replace it when weather and growing conditions are suitable (typically outside of the growing season between December and March).
- Shrubs will be maintained to ensure clear pathways and access.

Hedges

- Hedges are cut three times per year and will be left uniform in shape when cut and cuttings will be cleared. After they are cut, they will be no more than 6 foot in height.
- Low-level windows will be kept clear of any growth to ensure clear visibility– this will be assessed and addressed, through routine maintenance.
- Hedges are cut during May, July and September. We check for nesting by visually inspecting the hedges prior to cutting and only taking fresh growth off at this stage. If we do identify a nest, all works are stopped and left until this nest has moved on later in the year.

Trees

- We will carry out essential maintenance to trees which are diseased, dangerous, unhealthy or are likely to cause structural damage to buildings.
- We will inspect trees within our ownership on a three-year cycle and essential works will be scheduled accordingly.
- For every tree we do remove, we will replace this with two more in line with our sustainability strategy.
- You are entitled to cut the overhang of a tree up to your boundary line, regardless of the type of tenancy or ownership.

Pathways

- Pathways will be free from hazards – clear and accessible for users and in good condition (free from trip hazards).
- Not all roadways and pathways are under our ownership. You can access further information on ownership using our website. However, if you are unsure, please contact us and we will help you.

Weeds & Litter

- Weeds are treated twice a year to remove or reduce growth.
- During our neighbourhood inspections, we will remove any litter that is present. We will respond to reports of litter by visiting within 10 working days (sooner if a visit is due).

Play Areas

- Play areas receive a weekly visual inspection, a monthly maintenance visit and an independent annual safety inspection based on the ROSPA standard.
- During inspections the equipment, flooring and surrounding area are inspected. If there are any safety concerns or maintenance required, equipment will be isolated and repaired or replaced.
- Play areas will be kept free of graffiti with secure boundary fencing and litter removed.

Rough growth areas (typically unused land or woodland areas)

- Rough growth areas are not subject to usual maintenance standards however we will maintain responsibility to keep these areas tidy, free from fly-tipping and safe.

Bins and recycling facilities

Litter bins and dog bins

- Litter bins and dog bins are the responsibility of your local authority.

Bin Stores

- Bin stores will be cleaned regularly in line with our published schedules. When serviced, floors will be clean, the area will smell fresh and there will be no loose debris.
- All rubbish will be placed in the bins.

Recycling facilities

- We ensure every block has recycling facilities and that these are clearly sign posted.
- Recycling facilities include clearly marked bays of recycling bins that have sufficient capacity to serve the number of residents living in the neighbourhood.
- The local authority is responsible for collections.

Signage and notices

- Internal and external signs will be clear and kept clean.
- Noticeboards will have clear and relevant information that is regularly checked and updated.
- Noticeboards will be maintained with clear covers.

Neighbourhood management

We know that brilliant neighbourhood management is key to keeping communal areas safe and well-maintained.

Our frontline neighbourhood team responds to reports of things like anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping and other communal housing management issues. In order to reach the best possible outcomes, we work closely with local partners, including the council, police, health services and fire brigades.

There are a number of relevant policies that provide more detail on the approach we take which supports the neighbourhood standard:

- Neighbourhood management policy
- Anti-social behaviour policy
- Tenancy policy

The team also complete regular walkabouts in neighbourhoods to ensure any communal issues are identified, raised and resolved. We have created neighbourhood plans for our largest neighbourhoods in partnership with residents and use data and resident insight to take a proactive and preventative approach to neighbourhood management.

All settle colleagues take part in neighbourhood action weeks where we focus on improving communal spaces and Big Door Knocks where we get out and about in our neighbourhoods to speak to residents, check in on how you're doing and get your views on our services.