

Block Inspection Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to maintaining all our neighbourhoods to a high standard. We aim to provide safe, clean, well-managed and well-maintained blocks. This policy sets out our approach inspecting communal areas within the blocks we manage.
- 1.2 Block inspection is a visual check of the communal areas in residential blocks to assess their condition, identify safety and other issues or where standards can be improved and enable us to fulfil our role as an effective landlord.
- 1.3 This policy has links to some of our other policies, and we've thought about these links when reviewing the policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with:
 - Communal Area Fire Safety Policy
 - Estate Management Policy

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers internal communal areas in residential blocks with two or more residential dwellings that we manage. It is focussed on keeping communal areas (both internal and external) well maintained, clean and safe from hazards while recognising that communal areas are part of residents' homes and should be welcoming.
- 2.2 This policy applies to Peabody Trust and all subsidiaries (the Group).
- 2.3 This policy applies to all residents (tenants, shared owners and leaseholders) of residential buildings with communal areas, their visitors and anyone else using the communal areas covered.
- 2.4 Block inspections also take place in Care and Support schemes (for Town and Country Housing, Independent Living and Extra Care Schemes). However, due to the nature of the residents and accommodation colleagues also carry out other safety checks. For example, water temperature tests.
- 2.5 This policy does not cover:
 - Estate walkabouts with residents and other stakeholders
 - Safety inspections undertaken by specialist colleagues or contractors, such as fire, legionella and asbestos risk assessments, lift inspections, inspection of fire safety measures etc

3. Key terms and definitions

- 3.1 **Block**, in this policy, is a building containing two or more residential units and communal areas where Peabody has safety responsibilities.
- 3.2 **Communal areas** in this policy, refers to shared areas within purpose built and converted blocks and the surrounding external areas. Examples include entrance areas, hallways, stairs, corridors, loft areas, shared utility and riser cupboards, external garden areas.

4. Our approach

Block Inspection Policy

- 4.1 We take our responsibilities to provide communal areas that are clean, well maintained, safe and welcoming for all residents and visitors seriously. To do this, we use block inspection to monitor, review and improve how we manage communal areas.
- 4.2 In inspecting communal areas we make sure that we:
- Provide services that meet contractual, legal, regulatory and health and safety requirements and the aims of our policies, including this one.
 - Take a risk based approach to deciding the frequency and scope of inspections for each block.
 - Engage with residents to make sure that:
 - They are able to inform us of any issues and that we have appropriate approaches to mutual communication in each block
 - Their views are taken account of in deciding the frequency and scope of inspections
 - Any locally agreed standards meet residents' needs and concerns
 - We meet the requirements of resident engagement strategies agreed with residents in high rise blocks.
 - Demonstrably deliver value for money for Peabody, our residents and other stakeholders.
- 4.3 We make sure that we understand legal, regulatory and contractual requirements for each block and, as a minimum, meet these requirements.
- 4.4 In addition to meeting minimum requirements, we also follow best practice through a value for money approach set out in relevant policies. To do this we work with residents, other stakeholders and the wider housing sector to balance sector leading service provision with the requirements related to each block.
- 4.5 We follow a risk-based approach to the scope and frequency of block inspections. Broadly this means that:
- Blocks higher than eighteen meters and/or seven stories (high rise blocks) are inspected monthly by a member of the regional Operational team and quarterly by the Building Safety Manager,
 - Blocks between eleven meters and/or five stories and 18 meters and/or seven stories are inspected monthly by a member of the regional Operational team (for Town and Country Housing, independent living blocks are also inspected monthly).
 - Blocks below 11 meters and/or five stories are inspected quarterly. If compliance issues or risk factors are identified during inspections, due to engagement with residents or through colleagues' observations, and with the agreements of the relevant manager, the inspections may be made monthly for an agreed period.
 - Blocks consisting of street properties with communal stairwells and entrances, where there are no caretaking services, annually.
- 4.6 We actively encourage residents to tell us about their concerns through our wider engagement and management activities. We always listen to concerns, take appropriate action and inform residents what we are doing.
- 4.7 All colleagues and contractors working on our behalf act as Peabody's eyes and ears when visiting blocks reporting any issues and relaying any concerns to the relevant people. Block inspections then take account of any issues or concerns raised and check that Peabody is taking action to control and/or mitigate any resulting risks.
- 4.8 Block inspections cover (but are not limited to):
- Identifying and reporting repairs to communal areas and/or issues that would indicate the need for planned maintenance to remedy them

Block Inspection Policy

- Checking the quality of cleaning and gardening
- Communal Fire doors. These are undertaken quarterly in blocks above eleven meters in height
- Internal electrics, including lighting and safety lighting
- Checking fire safety signage is in place and clearly displayed
- Reading gas and/or electricity meters where Peabody is supplying power
- Checking the contents of Premises Information Boxes (PIBs)
- Water butts where relevant

4.9 We keep records of all inspections to enable us to monitor issues and that they have been put right. This includes where we are unable to access communal areas.

4.10 We continually try to improve our services. In high rise blocks the residents' engagement strategy, agreed with residents, sets out how we engage with residents to identify and improve safety in their building. We use the resident engagement strategies to identify new ways of working to improve services across all our buildings.

5. Legislation and Regulation

5.1 The key legislation and regulation influencing this policy is:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 ("Fire Safety Order")
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Tort (Interference with Goods) Act 1977
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- HSE L8 Legionnaires' Disease - The control of legionella bacteria in water systems 2013
- Building Safety Act 2022 and 'in occupation' regulations linked to it
- Regulator of Social Housing Regulatory Standards

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Neighbourhood Managers (NMs), Scheme Managers in Care and Support blocks (for Town and Country Housing, Housing Officers in extra care blocks and independent living blocks), should develop good local knowledge, understand the buildings they manage, act as our focus when working with residents and:

- Regularly visit blocks and inspect communal areas
- Engage with residents as relevant
- Review communal areas in the light of existing risk assessments
- Coordinate activity between teams.

6.2 Estate Services Teams will:

- Regularly visit blocks in line with their cleaning schedules
- Engage with residents as relevant
- Undertake dynamic risk assessments for their roles which in turn will result in the reporting of H&S issues and repairs required.

6.3 The Building Safety team:

- Visit high rise buildings (HRBs) quarterly

Block Inspection Policy

- Undertake inspections linked to building safety, including communal area fire doors and PIBs.
- 6.4 All Peabody colleagues and contractors are responsible for compliance with this policy. Colleagues and contractors visiting properties are responsible for reporting issues in communal areas via P360 or any other route as prescribed in relation to relationships with contractors etc.
- 6.5 The Health and Safety Team and/or Building Safety Team will provide training and advice to support operational teams undertaking health and safety linked activities. Other specialist teams may also need to provide training and advice as appropriate.
- 6.6 Managing directors, directors and assistant directors are responsible for the operational delivery of, and monitoring compliance with, this policy and associated policies and procedures. Including providing training as appropriate.
- 6.7 For Town and Country Housing, the Operations Director, Assistant Director of Housing, and Head of Neighbourhoods and Community Safety, are responsible for the operational delivery of, and monitoring compliance with, this policy and associated policies and procedures. Including providing training as appropriate.

Approval

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Policy owner	Kirsty Pepper, Managing Director North Counties