

## **SHARED SPACES POLICY**

**Policy Owner:**

**Executive Director of Property Services**

**Accountable Lead:**

**Director of Estate Services**



Policy Control	
<b>Policy Level</b>	Operational
<b>Policy Reference</b>	CS/HM (NS)/005/2013
<b>Link to Strategy</b>	Great properties and places
<b>Version Control</b>  V.1 Consolidated Curo estate management policy  V2. Revision of policy in Nov.  V3. Review and becomes shared spaces policy  V4. Review and update Feb 21	Effective from:  May 2024  Effective until:  Apr 2027
<b>Approved by</b>	Executive Director Property Services 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Consultation</b>	Curo Estates Partnership Board May 2024
<b>Equality analysis</b>	May 2024
<b>Next review date</b>	April 2027

### Policy Statement

Curo is committed to the delivery of excellent services to residents. As part of that commitment we will strive to provide residents with a safe, secure and pleasant communities in which to live.

## **1. Scope**

- 1.1 This policy refers to all our shared spaces and open areas: our commitment is to all who live on, or near them, regardless of tenure.
- 1.2 The policy covers a range of services that are related to the maintenance and upkeep of community shared spaces, including:
  - Estates Services e.g. Grounds Maintenance, Waste Management, Communal Energy
  - Looking after the internal shared spaces, e.g. cleaning, decor
  - Shared facilities and equipment
  - How the use of shared spaces is managed
  - Estates Services – Inspections
  - Snow, ice and gritting arrangements
  - Open and green spaces / Tree Management
  - Play Areas
  - Abandoned Vehicles
  - Signage provided by Curo
- 1.3 The focus of the policy is the way that we manage the shared spaces we own. Other policies and services help us achieve our objectives, notably:
  - Curo's Strategic Plan 2024-2035
  - Estate Standard
  - Tree Management Procedure [Estates Services]
  - Responsive repairs
  - Fire Safety Management Policy and Procedures [Statutory Compliance]
  - Tenancy Management Procedures [Tenancy Management]
  - Anti-Social Behaviour Policy [Compliance]
  - Empty Homes Management Policy [Response]
  - Service Charge Setting Policies [Rents & Service Charge Team]
  - Communities where we do not provide services; managing agents and owners' own policies are reviewed by our commercial team.

## **2 Responsibilities**

- 2.1 The Board and Executive, through the Policy Owner, ensure that the policy delivers Curo's strategic objectives and reflects corporate values.

2.2 The Accountable Lead is accountable to the Executive for the effective implementation of the policy in Curo, so that:

- the principles are achieved through appropriate team plans and objectives, and
- procedures – with appropriate RACIs – translate the policy objectives into practice.

Estates Advisors are responsible for delivering appropriate procedures across our shared spaces.

Estates Operatives are responsible for making sure that our blocks and grounds are safe, cleaned and well maintained.

Fire Safety Compliance Officers are responsible for making sure that our alarms and lighting across our blocks are working and shared spaces are free from combustible items.

2.3 All Curo colleagues (particularly those working in property services) are responsible for providing appropriate support to deliver required outcomes (for example estate works or establishing customer led services).

### **3. Definitions**

3.1 In this policy, a “community” means any building or single development with three or more homes and where part of the development is communal.

3.2 In this policy “community contracted services” means services provided by Curo to maintain communal gardens, open spaces, play areas and cleaning of communal internal spaces.

### **4. Principles**

4.1 The principles of our shared spaces policy are that our communities will be:

- Safe and secure places to live and play. In particular, we will
  - inspect all playgrounds at intervals no greater than 31 days (and annually by our insurers)
  - carry out full estate inspections at least once every 6 months, and more frequently where risks are greater
  - include in those estate inspections an assessment of the safety of shared footpaths, and take necessary remedial action
  - permit no storage of any item in a shared area unless the area is a type (eg extra care) designed to allow a managed approach.
- Great places to live in and enjoy

- Maintained to our published Estate Standard criteria, always with an aspiration to exceed the standard.
- Accessible to all, wherever possible, recognising
  - limitations imposed by the physical landscape.
  - restrictions relevant to the appropriate use of some shared areas
  - the reasonableness of any necessary adjustments.
- Clean and tidy
- Kept in good repair, with clear arrangements and timetables for carrying out cleaning & repairs.
- Open to local arrangements which encourage and enable residents to play a greater role in determining standards and providing services in their community if they wish.
- Provided with necessary equipment which meets residents' needs and is properly maintained and serviced.
- Places where anti-social behavior is effectively managed; free from graffiti, abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping and other rubbish.
- Subject to appropriate, but not onerous, regulations which manage the use that residents and visitors make of common areas, particularly in relation to vehicles and pets.
- Inspected regularly by Curo Colleagues. We will do so together with residents when this is possible. We will be open and accountable in the way we respond to residents and in feeding back what we can and will do, and when.

#### 4.2 We will manage our communities in a way that:

- Represents value for money for our residents, and recognises issues of affordability where services are paid for directly.
- Maintains both our assets and our reputation.
- Ensures that modernisation and improvement works are carried out in a planned way that meets the needs of our communities and takes into account the aspirations of residents.
- Plans for the replacement of essential components and equipment.
- Listens and responds positively to feedback, including complaints, from residents.
- Knows whether and understands why residents are dissatisfied with the service.
- Involves residents in monitoring performance.
- Recognises the relationship our communities have with the wider neighbourhoods in which they sit and support our residents in addressing wider neighbourhood issues.

## 5. Application

### 5.1 To achieve our objectives we will:

- Have a defined Estate Standard against which communities are audited and plans are put in place to ensure all communities meet the standard and are great places to live.
- Have clear and transparent contracts in place for community contracted ('resident led') services which have key performance indicators which are managed.
- Develop processes in conjunction with managing agents who provide services to us as leaseholder which benefit our customers. These will ensure that customers are engaged and we can monitor performance.
- Have arrangements in place to manage invasive plants located in communal gardens, open spaces or play areas which could cause damage.
- Carry out regular inspections in a way that is accessible and accountable.
- Have arrangements for car parking in our communities that are clear and simple to understand, together with appropriate signage. Be clear the extent to which we can support and signpost those needing disabled parking.
- Remove fly tipping, graffiti and abandoned vehicles as quickly as we are able.
- Have effective arrangements in place for gritting and the clearance of snow and ice in pre-defined locations.
- Provide clear simple to read signage where we have named blocks of flats or a need to provide directional signage to help visitors navigate their way or where there is a legal requirement to do so.
- Operate a repairs procedure that responds quickly to disrepair, faults and faulty equipment in shared spaces.
- Include in our asset management plans, provision for the replacement of estate components such as green infrastructure, footpaths, fencing, floor coverings, play area equipment.
- Have health and safety servicing procedures that ensure the regular inspection and servicing of plant and equipment.
- Carry out inspections to minimise the risk and consequences of fire, working with residents to ensure all shared spaces are continually free from risk.
- Promote and consider requests from residents to deliver grounds maintenance and cleaning services in shared spaces themselves through Customer Led Services.
- Have a flexible approach to the provision of shared facilities so that we are able to provide additional items, such as door/gate access systems where these are wanted by residents and the cost can be recovered through service charges.
- Review and enforce our tenancy and other occupancy conditions which relate to the use of any shared spaces.
- Robust contract management processes to ensure contractors comply with their commitments and ensure value for money.

- Work with other agencies, such as the police, local authorities, managing agents and other RPs in relation to issues affecting the wider neighbourhood around our communities.
- Use customer insight, complaints, compliments, our Customer Engagement Groups and Scrutiny, to obtain feedback from residents about the quality of our services and our shared areas and how we can further improve them.

## **6 Procedures**

6.1 The following procedures and associated documents contribute to the implementation of this policy:

- Community Inspections
- Customer Led Services
- Snow, Ice and Gritting
- Signposting for disabled parking spaces
- Estate Standard
- Tree Management Procedure
- Play area inspection and maintenance specification
- Safety servicing procedures
- Repairs procedure
- Asset management cyclical decorations and component replacement programmes for all communal spaces

## **7. Consultation and monitoring**

- 7.1 We monitor performance of services delivered by external contractors through agreed KPIs, monthly contractor meetings and customer feedback through monthly insight surveys
- 7.2 We monitor issues identified through Community Services inspections and monitor their resolution.
- 7.3 We monitor customer feedback through our monthly insight surveys. This survey asks questions about the quality of communal cleaning and grounds maintenance services as well as satisfaction with the overall appearance of our communities.
- 7.4 The policy is reviewed at least once every three years

## **8 Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out (May 2024) as part of the review of this policy.