



# Communal Area Procedure

## 1. Aim of procedure

1.1 The aim of this procedure is to ensure that our communal areas are safe, well maintained and meet the expectations of our customers. Utilising an inspection regime, this procedure will also help identify communal areas where improvement or further investment is needed, as well as highlighting those areas which are maintained to a high standard.

## 2. Scope of procedure

2.1 This procedure covers the management of internal and external communal areas relating to blocks of flats which are managed by VIVID. It also covers the standards and rating system which is used to assess the quality of the communal areas. This procedure doesn't cover general estate management or estate inspections, which is covered in the Estate Inspection procedure.

2.2 This procedure is relevant for all staff who are involved in maintaining communal areas, including neighbourhood officers, caretakers, repairs operatives, staff within the assets team, and other staff who may be visiting or working in our communal areas.

2.3 It is also relevant to customers, particularly those customers who are involved in the inspection and rating of the communal areas.

## 3. Communal Area Standard

3.1 The Communal Area Standard (CAS) (appendix) sets out how the internal and external areas should be maintained and covers repairs, maintenance, fire safety, cleaning, grounds maintenance. It also covers how areas are used by residents, such as residents' items left in communal areas.

3.2 The CAS is broken down into 4 categories to help identify and prioritise areas needing improvement or investment, as well as recognising areas where we are achieving a high standard of maintenance.

Rating	Description
1	Very good, well maintained area
2	Okay, a reasonable standard
3	Poor, needs improvements
Red risk	Health and safety hazard which requires urgent action

## 4. Inspection and Assessment

4.1 Inspections will be completed annually in all blocks with internal and/or external communal areas which are managed by VIVID. These are the blocks that are currently subject to Estate

Inspections. There will be a quarterly schedule of blocks to be completed. These can be completed in place of an estate inspection.

4.2 Inspections will be carried out by a Neighbourhood Volunteer and Neighbourhood Officer, where a Neighbourhood Volunteer is available. The Neighbourhood Officer will liaise with the Neighbourhood Volunteer to arrange the inspection. Where there is no Neighbourhood Volunteer, the Neighbourhood Officer will complete the inspection and assessment.

4.3 The communal areas will be assessed using the Communal Area Standard (CAS) and the results recorded on the CAS form. There is also a Communal Area Standard Pictorial Guide (PDF) to assist with the Assessors with the assessments.

4.4 For each section of the CAS, the Assessor will select the rating which most fits their assessment. It is acknowledged that sometimes areas could span two ratings, and the Assessor should use their judgement to decide which one is most appropriate.

4.5 Where there are health and safety hazards identified, as set out in the CAS, the Assessor should always select the 'red risk' category.

4.6 At the end of the inspection, the Assessor should review the assessment and decide on the overall rating. This should be based on the rating which has been selected the most. Here is an example, where the overall rating would be a '2'.

Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Red risk
2	4	1	n/a

4.7 Upon completion, the Assessor will mark the inspection as complete. The data will then automatically be stored within this document (link to spreadsheet here). A notification email will be sent to the Neighbourhood Officer informing them that the inspection has been completed.

## 5. Follow on actions

### 5.1 Action needed

During the inspection, the Assessor may identify actions that are needed. They will complete the 'action needed' form, selecting the type of action from the drop down list which includes cleaning, repairs, fly tipping, fire signage, items in communal area, etc. They will then enter the location and a description of the action needed, giving as much detail as possible and including photos, if appropriate. On completion, this form will automatically be sent to the relevant team, as well as being stored on this spreadsheet for monitoring (add link to spreadsheet here). The Neighbourhood Officer will monitor the actions and check during visits or their next Estate Inspection that they have been completed. They will update the spreadsheet when completed.

### 5.2 Red risks

These are hazards which require urgent attention, as shown in the CAS. The Assessor will complete the 'action needed' form, ticking the 'red risk' box. Upon completion, the form automatically be forwarded to the Neighbourhood team who will lead on action, contacting other teams as necessary.

### 5.3 Low Rating Areas

Areas with a 3 rating will be reviewed and a simple action plan agreed to bring the area up to a 1 or 2 rating. The 'Responsibility Matrix' document can be used to help identify the appropriate business teams. Actions may include;

- Improvements needed – consider including area on assets/neighbourhood improvement list
- Damaged walls or paintwork – consider bringing forward cyclical redecs
- Failing doors or windows – consider replacement
- Cleaning issues – additional resources, a deep clean or extra supervision of staff maybe needed
- Repairs – multiple or complex repair issues might require a site visit from a supervisor
- Vandalism – the Neighbourhood Officer could consider ways to help tackle this

#### 5.4 Publicity

A notice should be placed in the communal noticeboard informing customers of the rating of their block. Where the rating is 3, the action plan should also be shared with customers on the noticeboard. We'll also share the amount of areas in the different categories on our website.

#### 5.5 Monitoring of inspections

The Neighbourhood Team Leader will monitor and ensure that the inspections are completed within the set timescales.

### 6. Related policies

Estate Inspection procedure

### 7. Monitor and review process

This procedure will be reviewed at least every three years. There will be customer consultation at least every three years, and with every significant amendment.

### 8. References/appendices

Communal Area Standard - a pictorial guide  
 Communal Area Standard summary  
 Responsibility matrix  
 Schedule of inspections

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