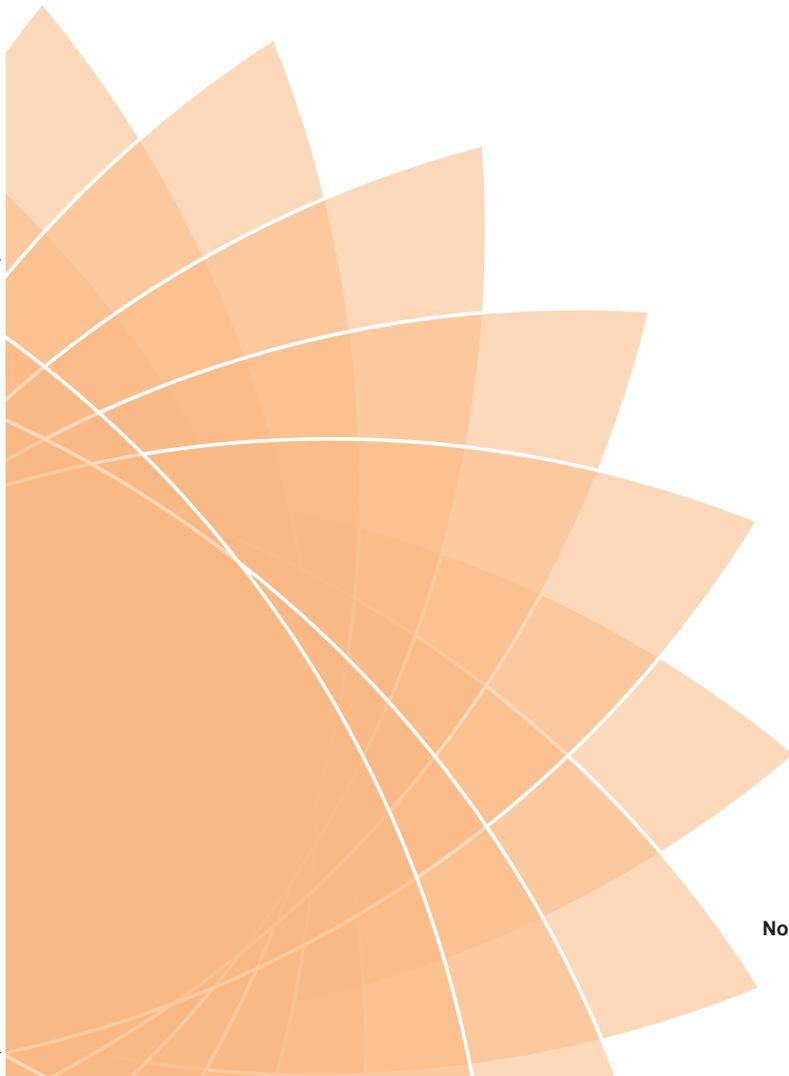




Neighbourhood and Community



districtnk
100 flourishing communities
North Kesteven District Council



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**If we fail to meet any of the standards stated in this leaflet,
please tell us.**

Neighbourhood and Community

The Council offers services to keep neighbourhoods well maintained, clean and safe and to help communities get along well together. We also offer services to prevent, investigate and stop anti-social behaviour.

This leaflet will give you information on the following:

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How we manage our estates

Open Spaces and Grassed Areas

We are lucky to have so many open spaces and grassed areas on our estates, and we hope you will treat your local area with respect. Tenant representatives have agreed standards that should be achieved on every estate, and we work with residents to improve our estates.

The Council's contractors cut the grass on our open spaces.

Gardens

You can help improve the appearance of your area by looking after your garden:

- keep it tidy, and free of rubbish
- maintain garden paths
- cultivate and weed areas as appropriate
- trim back hedges and shrubs regularly
- cut grassed areas regularly
- keep sheds and fences in good repair.

If you do not keep your garden tidy, we will ask you to tidy it up. If you don't tidy it properly or finish the work by the date we have set, we may do the work and charge you for it. If you continually fail to maintain your garden we may take legal action against you.

Occasionally tenants ask if they can extend their garden by taking over ground next to their garden. If you wish to do this contact us for advice. You will need our permission.

Tenants are responsible for the maintenance of their own gardens, but we understand sometimes old age or disability can make this difficult. This means the Council's contractors can also provide a garden service for vulnerable tenants. There is a charge for this service. We can also help by arranging a garden share - this is where one neighbour agrees to allow another to maintain part or their entire garden.

Our commitment to you - we will:

- Explain to all tenants their rights and responsibilities.
- Take action to tackle any tenancy breaches and provide support to tenants to ensure that they meet their tenancy obligations.
- Ensure all estates and communal areas are inspected by our tenant 'Estate Champions' at least once every 12 months.
- 100% of all communal areas reach a minimum Level 2 standard which is:

- > The estate is fairly tidy and has some litter but no fly-tipping.
- > There may be evidence of non-offensive graffiti.
- > Grounds maintenance needs minimal work e.g. cleaning of leaves, moss etc, grass needs cutting, planters may be in need of weeding.
- > A few external repairs and maintenance are required.
- Provide a grass cutting service to all housing communal areas and for our vulnerable tenants. Weather permitting, grass is cut at least 14 times per season.
- Monitor the grass contractor performance to ensure:
 - > The grass is cut evenly.
 - > The distribution of clippings is even and spread over the entire area.
 - > Grass that edges paths or other features is trimmed and swept or blown from paths at the time of the cut.
 - > The length of grass between cuts is no more than 75mm.
 - > Where grass becomes over 75mm in length, clippings will be collected in a catcher fitted to the mowing equipment and removed off site.
- > Provide a garden clearance service for vulnerable tenants.

How we manage garages and parking areas

Council Garages

The Council has a number of garages available for rent across the District. Application forms for garages are available from the Council Offices, Sleaford, or can be downloaded from our website.

If it is not possible to let a garage to you, you will be placed on the waiting list. When a garage becomes empty, we prioritise Council tenants who are not in breach of their tenancy

A full list of conditions can be found in the “Garage Tenancy Agreement”. You must make sure you pay the rent for your garage

on time. If your rent is more than four weeks overdue, the Council will give you one week's notice to end the tenancy.

If you wish to give up your garage, you need to give one week's notice. The keys should be returned to us by 12noon on the Monday the tenancy ends. You will be charged for the removal of anything you leave behind. You must not rent the garage to

Parking Areas

Tenant satisfaction surveys show that car parking problems cause more unhappiness than almost anything else. We are improving this through an annual parking programme. This includes building lay-bys, driveways and hard-standing areas. The areas with the worst problems will be improved first.

You can park a roadworthy car or motorbike in your driveway or parking area, if you have one. If you want to park a larger vehicle such as a caravan or boat or commercial vehicle in your driveway or parking area you need the Council's permission.

If you share a driveway make sure that you do not obstruct other users' access.

If car parking spaces are provided outside your home these should only be used for a roadworthy car or motorbike.

If you would like to construct a driveway, hard-standing, car-port or garage in your garden you must get permission first. You will need to comply with any building regulations or planning permission. You also need to get the County Council's permission to build a vehicle access over a footpath.

Our commitment to you - we will:

- Explain to all tenants their rights and responsibilities.
- Take action to tackle any tenancy breaches and provide support to tenants to ensure that they meet their tenancy obligations.
- Prioritise the areas with the worst parking problems

How we manage the shared and communal areas of flats

Residents who live in flats or who share common areas are responsible for ensuring that these areas are kept clean and tidy and free from obstructions.

You will be advised of your responsibilities when your tenancy begins.

To help you with your responsibilities we have introduced a fortnightly cleaning service. There is a small weekly charge for this service. Each block has a notice board, with details of what cleaning the contractor is expected to do, and when they will be calling. There is also a feedback sheet - we ask you to nominate someone from your block to complete the sheet with comments on the performance of the contractor.

People living in flats usually need to show extra consideration for their neighbours. If you live in a flat you can do this by:

- ensuring that any door entry system is used properly to keep the building secure
- not using or storing bottled gas
- not hanging washing out on balconies
- thinking about any noise you are making and the affect it could have on your neighbours.

Fire safety in Flats

We take fire safety very seriously and the communal areas must be kept clear at all times. It is not acceptable to store belongings (including pushchairs, mobility scooters and pushbikes) in these areas.

This does not apply to small “welcome” mats at front doors, small potted plants on window ledges etc. but it is not acceptable to store items in the communal landings, stairwells and hallways, or to obstruct these areas.

We will not hesitate to take action, including removal of the items and recharging the cost to the tenant responsible and serving a Notice of Seeking Possession due to the breach of tenancy.

Communal areas such as drying areas and footpaths should also be used with consideration for other people who share them.

Our commitment to you - we will:

- Explain to all tenants their rights and responsibilities.
- Take action to tackle any tenancy breaches and provide support to tenants to ensure that they meet their tenancy obligations
- Inspect all communal areas of flats at least 4 times every year
- Ensure all communal areas are inspected by our tenant 'Estate Champions' at least once every 12 months

Helping neighbours get along with one another

We hope our tenants will take pride in their homes and will treat their neighbours with consideration and respect.

We have a right to live peacefully in our home and we all have a responsibility to be a good neighbour.

We all want to get along with each other but it is not always easy. The pressures of modern life mean we all have our 'off' days and we need to make a special effort to get along.

Being anti-social, causing trouble or bothering our neighbours stops them from enjoying their home.

We can all help to keep a friendly relationship with our neighbours by talking with them often, listening to any problems they have and talking to them to help find solutions.

Good Neighbourhood Agreements

A Good Neighbourhood Agreement (GNA) is an agreement between a number of residents in an area about what behaviour they expect from one another.

Landlords like North Kesteven District Council help to set them up and use them to make a commitment about what they will do in an area to help residents make the GNA work.

The GNA can have in it whatever residents want! The aim is to improve the quality of life in the community.

If enough neighbours agree, the Council will bring together what neighbours are saying and draft an agreement for you to look at. Tenants are able to say what they like and dislike about the draft, and a final version will be produced, based on what the majority say.

We will then call on all residents with a copy for them to sign. New tenants get a copy, too.

Pets

If you are considering keeping a pet, make sure you are aware of all its needs and be satisfied that you will be able to look after it properly. You may keep a maximum of two dogs and two cats as pets, without asking us for permission but you must ensure they are well kept and do not cause a nuisance.

You will need written permission to keep any other pets. In most cases North Kesteven District Council will give permission, however, certain types of pet are not permitted, including:

- Farm animals - for example, cockerels, sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, and horses.
- Animals that should be licensed under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 - a list of animals requiring a license under the Act can be found at www.defra.gov.uk
- Breed of dogs specified in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 - up to date information can be found at www.defra.gov.uk



Permission may not be granted where there is an ongoing problem with pet ownership in the household or there has been a problem in the past.

The Council's policy on pets meets the RSPCA's Bronze Footprint Standard - please contact us for a full version of the policy.

Our commitment to you - we will:

- Explain to all tenants their rights and responsibilities.
- Take action to tackle any tenancy breaches and provide support to tenants to ensure that they meet their tenancy obligations.
- Promote Good Neighbour Agreements by offering the introduction of 6 new ones every year.
- Take enforcement action for breaches of the pet tenancy obligations.
- Work with Regulatory Services to seek enforcement of dog fouling bye-laws.
- Continue to promote responsible pet ownership and the Council's pet policy (RSPCA bronze standard).

Taking action against anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) such as noisy neighbours, graffiti, vandalism, harassment and violence can make life a misery for people. The Council is committed to dealing with neighbour disputes, anti-social behaviour and harassment to ensure that all tenants enjoy their right to peace, quiet and security in their homes.

What is anti-social behaviour?

A legal definition of anti-social behaviour is found in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Act describes anti-social behaviour as: "Acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household."

North Kesteven District Council is proud to have one of the lowest crime rates in the country - this is a safe District to live in. However, in tackling anti-social behaviour, the Council also has to deal with the perception and potential for crime, and works in many different ways to do this.

What the Council can do

When an issue is reported, either via the police, another agency or by residents themselves, the Council will:

- Investigate the matter.
- Try to determine the culprits.
- Gather usable evidence.
- Take appropriate action to address the problem.

The goal of any action is to:

- Protect victims, witnesses and the community.
- Enable the perpetrator to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- Make sure the perpetrator changes their behaviour.

Measures that can be used by Council, police, and other agencies include:

- Warning letters and interviews, contracts, and agreements.
- Fixed penalty notices and penalty notices for disorder.
- Parenting orders.
- Individual support orders.
- Noise abatement notices.
- Injunctions.
- Dispersal powers.
- Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs).

As a landlord, the Council can also take action against the tenancy. This can include:

- Tenancy Demotions.
- Possession proceedings (eviction)

Our commitment to you - we will:

- Respond to reports of harassment, neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour within 1 working day.
- Allocate a named officer to deal with your case
- Provide regular updates on the progress of a case as agreed with the tenant.
- Offer and arrange support to protect victims of anti-social behaviour, where needed.
- Work with partners to ensure timely action is taken and use the full range of options available.

These include:

- > ASB warnings.
- > ASB contracts.
- > ASB orders
- > Housing Injunctions.
- > Tenancy Demotions.
- > Referring actions of criminal behaviour to the Police.
- Make sure all tenants can give us feedback on how their report of ASB has been dealt with, both as complainant and perpetrator.
- If a tenant says they are dissatisfied with the service they have received a senior manager will review their case to ensure the Council has acted as it should do.