

Appendix 1

Communal Area Standard

This document details communal area standards applicable to

- internal communal areas at low, medium, and high-rise flats
- external approaches to low, medium, and high-rise flats
- communal facilities at low, medium, and high-rise property such as car parking and bin stores

The scope excludes sheltered accommodation and the standards described will apply, wherever possible, when communal areas are upgraded in their entirety.

Approach route

Approach routes will be step-free where practicable. If external steps are required, then they will have the following features.

- unobstructed flight width of at least 900mm
- maximum rise of 1800mm between landings to all flights
- top, bottom and, where necessary, intermediate landings at least 900mm long
- uniform steps with a rise of 75mm - 150mm and a minimum going of 280mm
- continuous handrail located on one side of all flights with three or more risers, fixed 850-1000mm above the pitch line, extending at least 300mm beyond the top and bottom nosing's and finishing in a horizontal section

The gradient to an approach route will always be as shallow as the site permits; subject to a nominal long fall of 1:50 and a manageable crossfall to external parts of the route to shed rainwater. All external gates, openings or doorways within an approach route will provide a minimum clear opening width of 850mm.

External lighting to a communal approach route will be passive infra-red activated unless solar powered, automatically timed or otherwise managed. External lights must be bulkhead style and vandal resistant.

Communal doors

External communal doors will contain a glazed vision panel, ironmongery, and a communal lock (mechanical or electrical) will be provided. Each tenant will be provided with a communal key or electronic fob upon commencement of their tenancy.

Intercoms and entry systems

Flat blocks with a minimum of four flats contained within a communal area, will be provided with a door entry system wherever possible. The system will provide two-way speech and allow the tenant/householder to open the door remotely using a phone.

Communal entrances

This section applies to the main communal entrance door to a building containing flats (or other dwelling types served by a communal entrance). It also applies to all other communal doors and gates located between the main entrance and the private entrance to the flat itself, and to doors which give access to communal gardens, terraces, balconies, play areas and other communal facilities intended for residents.

All entrance areas will provide a well-lit, external level landing area and a door with a clear opening width of at least 800mm where possible. This can usually be achieved with a standard 1010mm overall door set, but where the door has a weatherboard or full width projecting ironmongery (such as a panic bar) a wider opening may be required. Where double doors are provided, the main leaf will provide the required minimum clear opening width. All communal entrance doors and gates will provide an accessible threshold. Where a secondary entrance door is provided, for example to a lobby or porch, the doors will be at least 1500mm apart and provide at least 1500mm clear space between door swings. The second door will also provide a minimum clear opening width of 800mm where possible and where the existing structure permits. The communal entrance will provide a level external landing area at least 1200mm wide x 900mm deep and fully covered.

Communal stairs

A communal stair will provide the following features and, where it is an escape stair, must also comply with *Part B of the Building Regulations*.

- uniform rise not more than 170mm
- uniform going of at least 250mm
- continuous handrails on both sides of the flight extending 300mm beyond the top and bottom nosing's and finishing in a horizontal section
- closed or 'solid' risers

Stairs will be safe, well lit, having strong railings and be well constructed. All staircases must be provided with securely fixed handrails for their entire length. New Balustrades on the staircase or landings will be fitted in accordance with building regulations.

Windows and internal glazing

Windows, glazing, frames, cills, and ledges will be clean and free from dust, dirt, and cobwebs.

Walls and ceilings

All walls and ceilings must be structurally sound and free of material cracking and unkeyed plaster. The surfaces must be even, and all decorative surfaces must be in good order. Walls and ceilings will be free from dust, dirt, and cobwebs.

Decoration

Decorations must be clean, complete and of a high standard. Paint to walls and ceilings should be fire retardant and will conform to all current and future British standards. Any skirting's to be decorated in white satin. Decoration will be carried out on a rolling cyclical programme.

Flooring

All floors will be level, even and free from trip hazard or dampness. All flooring must be durable, impervious, and easily cleaned.

Ventilation

Accessible windows must be capable of being opened and provide at least one air change per hour. Communal areas with non-opening windows open must be provided with a powered extractor fan capable of providing at least one air change per hour. This unit must have an over-run of fifteen minutes. Where physically practical, permanent ventilation will be provided in the form of air bricks or trickle vents.

Doors

Any identified fire doors within communal areas will have 30-minute self-closing fire-resistant internal door for with an approved self-closer and housed within an acceptable door frame with adequate stops. Glazed panels above fire doors will be fitted with 6mm wired glass or other fire-retardant material.

Lighting

Internal communal areas will be adequately lit, lighting and covers will be fully functional, clean, and free from cobwebs and dead insects.

Directional signage

If required directional signs will be fitted in accordance with BS5499 part 10, Guidance for the selection and use of safety signs and notices.

Sheds and storage areas

Communal access to sheds and storage areas will be clean, free of litter and cobwebs and secured against unauthorised access.

Car Parks

Gradients to estate parking areas will be as shallow as the site permits and the ground surface reasonably smooth, even and slip resistant under normal weather conditions. Where there is external space within the site, a drop-off or setting down point with flush kerb will be provided close to the main communal entrance of each block.

Garaging and garage areas

Garage sites will be clean, well maintained, and free of graffiti, litter, refuse, fly tipped items and weeds.

Bin areas

Refuse/Recycling bins must be supplied per property or per block as applicable complying with local collection arrangements. The area will be clean, well maintained, and free of graffiti litter, hazardous materials such as broken glass, refuse, fly tipped items and weeds.

Refuse Chutes and hoppers

The Council will maintain chutes and hoppers in a serviceable condition.

Boundary fencing, walls, and gates

Fencing and walls will be well maintained and structurally sound. Access gates must be in good condition and securable.

Drying areas

Drying areas will be clean, well maintained, and free of graffiti, litter, refuse, fly tipped items and weeds.

Clothes posts and lines

Clothes lines and posts will be fully serviceable, well maintained, and clean.

Gardens

Gardens must be free of debris. All paved areas, pathways or other concrete areas must be reasonably level and in reasonable repair. They will be the same level as the surrounding area. Manhole covers must be easily removable for access.

Grassed areas and planting beds

These areas will be free of hazardous objects litter, fallen leaves, refuse, and weeds. Grass will be cut on a regular basis.

Tree and hedges

Trees and hedges will be maintained and pruned if required and litter or leaf debris will be removed on each visit.

Weed control and clearance

All appropriate areas will be sprayed as required and all dead weeds removed.

Fly tipping

The aim is that fly tipped items will not be present anywhere on site. Fly tipped items that are reported will be removed within 3 working days.

Ramps/Half Steps

Where these are provided to communal entrances they will be maintained to a good condition.