

COMMON ROOM AND COMMUNITY SPACE POLICY 2023-2026

Report of the Head of Housing Management

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Common Room and Community Space Policy, (community spaces), is a key Derby Homes Policy, which has been reviewed in-line with the three-year schedule. The purpose of this policy is to outline the objectives and benefits of our common rooms and community spaces, and to provide the information customers need to be aware of prior to a booking taking place.
- 1.2 Since the last policy update in 2020, there has been a full review and consultation of the policy, to understand feedback from customers and refresh Health and Safety considerations; this has resulted in considerable changes to the policy. This report is to present the new policy, rather than the amended policy, as there are a large amount of changes. Please find the updated policy attached as Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 To approve the updated policy.

3. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The review of the policy is important, to ensure that the use of the community spaces meets the needs of the local community. The updated policy aims to ensure that we have listened to customer feedback and have a clear, consistent, and robust booking process in place.

4. MATTER(S) FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 Derby Homes manages 22 community spaces on behalf of Derby City Council, which are based at various locations across the city. The demand for use of these rooms has increased over the past year, after closure from the coronavirus pandemic. Overall, the community spaces are to give space to facilitate community development opportunities, working in partnership with our customers and stakeholders in their local areas.
- 4.2 The community spaces are a great asset to Derby Homes. We encourage maximum use of all our community spaces and fully support bookings that focus on social inclusion, health and wellbeing, training, volunteering, education, and access to employment. Derby Homes and other agencies can use the space to encourage customers to get involved with a variety of social events and activities, as well as deliver projects that have the potential to influence people's lives.

4.3 Tenants who live in the surrounding area to a community space and already pay a service charge towards the upkeep of the space take a priority in bookings. Based upon whether or not a group is inclusive to Derby Homes customers and is open to the wider community, we look to charge certain groups for using the space.

4.4 Before reviewing the policy, a consultation took place from February until April 2023. The consultation was sent to a total of 871 people, which included the tenants who pay a service charge towards the rooms and the existing community group users. Below is a summary of the feedback we received from a total of 51 people:

- 13 group leaders, 9 group attendees and 29 tenants responded to the consultation
- 68.7% found the booking policy easy to understand
- 62% knew how to contact Derby Homes about support with booking the spaces
- 57.2% agreed that the space caters to their groups needs
- 73.8% agreed that the space is accessible for all the members of their group
- 38% of the groups use the Wi-fi.
- 30% store items in the community spaces
- 50% think the charges for the rooms are fair

4.5 Some of the comments which we thought were most notable for the consultation were:

‘groups that hire it wouldn't allow us tenants to walk in’
‘I need help with my wheelchair going anywhere in the building because of the doors’
‘Never been told who to get in touch with’
‘the wifi is useful for Helpful videos for crafting tutorials’
‘wifi helps The Warm Space referrals for energy and household support funding’
‘I use it for Music and games for my son and his homework’

4.6 Based upon this feedback, the changes we have reflected in the policy includes:

- We have made it clear in the booking form that the space hire is not for exclusive access, and that there is potential for Derby Homes trades staff, or customers to access the rooms.
- We have implemented a team phone and email which is advertised outside each community space for contact, in addition to the website.
- We have reflected the wheelchair access in the Equality Impact Assessment, and are working on reviewing accessibility for each room, in addition, to the amount of furniture and room capacity to make sure it is safe.

4.7 Some other changes we have made includes:

- Changing the charging structure to be based on an hourly rate to allow flexibility for group bookings.
- Added that tenants who pay towards the charge of the room will be prioritised above all other groups and activities.
- Reviewed the storage allowance for each room due to fire safety regulations.
- Added music licence requirements to the policy.
- Enhanced the wording for our equality and diversity commitment for the spaces.

- 4.8 Generally, we have shortened the amount of information in the policy too, as we felt that the process was not needed in the document, as this will be explained to customers over the phone when they wish to book a room. With the latest changes reflected in this report, we anticipate that the policy will give clear guidance regarding the charging structure, booking requirements, and expectations of anyone wishing to hire the spaces.

5. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None

IMPLICATIONS

6. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The consultation was captured in paragraph 4.4 to 4.6.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An equality impact assessment has been carried out and is attached as Appendix 2.

8. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 A revised Common Room and Community Space Risk Assessment has been carried out with consultation from the Health and Safety Team; this highlighted areas of storage in the rooms as areas of risk. The policy aims to allow small items of storage, based upon a groups needs and other requests, will need to be reviewed with a Service Level Agreement and permission from Derby Homes.

9. POLICY REVIEW IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This is a key policy of Derby Homes and is included in the Key Policy Review Schedule. In accordance with Derby Homes Board Minute, 10/51, this policy will be reviewed no later than 3 years from the date of this meeting.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Financial and Business Plan
Legal and Confidentiality
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Policy Review

For more information please contact:

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Background
information:

This report has been approved by the following

Managing Director	Maria Murphy	26.05.23
Finance Director/Derby Homes	Michael Kirk	25.05.23
Accountant		
Company Solicitor	Taran Lalria	26/05/2023
Head of Service	Carl Tring Willis	26/05/2023
Governance (checked)	Jane Haywood	16.05.2023