



ONCHAN DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS



SHELTERED HOUSING COMMUNAL AREAS POLICY

POLICY

Date: May 2026
Review: May 2029



**ONCHAN DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS
SHELTERED HOUSING
COMMUNAL AREAS POLICY**



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Please be aware that a hard copy of this document may not be the latest available version, which is available in the Authority's document management system, and which supersedes all previous versions.

Those to whom this policy applies are responsible for familiarising themselves periodically with the latest version and for complying with policy requirements at all times.

Effective from:	Replaces:	Originator:	Page X of Y
May 2026	New Policy	Chief Executive/Clerk	1 of 8
Board Ratification:		01/06/26	

History or Most Recent Policy Changes – MUST BE COMPLETED		
Version:	Date:	Change:
1	20/05/2026	New Document

Onchan District Commissioners

Sheltered Housing – Communal Areas Policy

1. PURPOSE

Onchan District Commissioners (“the Authority”) recognise the importance of ensuring that all internal and external communal areas are managed safely and kept free from obstructions and hazards. This is to protect the health and safety of residents, staff, contractors and visitors.

The Authority is committed to maintaining communal areas that are safe, accessible and welcoming for all residents, in line with relevant fire safety, health and safety, and data protection regulations.

Residents are expected to comply with this policy. Failure to do so may result in enforcement action in accordance with the Authority’s tenancy conditions and procedures.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Internal communal areas within the buildings – passageways, entrance halls and staircases
- Shared facilities, e.g. bin stores, bin chutes or other storage facilities.
- Shared communal and social facilities, e.g. communal lounges, kitchens, laundry facilities and cage rooms.
- External areas, e.g. shared gardens and through routes.

3. AIMS

This policy aims to:

- Maintain safe and accessible communal areas.
- Ensure compliance with fire safety, access and health and safety standards.
- Ensure residents' enjoyment of communal spaces while maintaining the need for safety.

4. DEFINITIONS

Internal Communal Areas	Connecting corridors, landings, stairwells, lobbies, meeting rooms, communal lounges.
External Areas	Garden Areas and Courtyards
Communal Lounge	A shared space for all residents of the Complex and guests.

5. GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNAL AREAS

Communal areas, including those directly outside of a resident’s property, are not an extension of any individual home. Residents should not use these spaces for their personal belongings or treat any part of the communal area for their exclusive use, particularly where access is required by other residents or staff.

5.1 Internal Communal Areas

Internal communal areas, such as corridors, landings, stairwells, lobbies, meeting rooms, or communal lounges, must be kept entirely free from obstruction at all times.

Even temporary obstructions pose fire risks and may cause injury, restrict accessibility or prevent safe evacuation.

Common obstructions include, but are not limited to:

- Rubbish and items awaiting disposal
- Furniture such as mats and flower pots
- Wheelchairs, Bicycles, motorised cycles and scooters
- Mobility Scooters (See section 11)

- Personal items such as photos, ornaments or decorative items.

These items must not be stored in any communal areas.

5.2 Communal Facilities – Use and Responsibilities

The Authority provides communal facilities within the sheltered housing schemes to support residents' day to day living and social wellbeing. These facilities must be used responsibly and respectfully to ensure fair access for all residents.

5.2.1 Communal Lounge

The communal lounge can be used for:

- Family visits (visitors must be accompanied by the resident they are visiting)
- Coffee mornings
- Approved events such as celebrations open to all residents
- Group activities (for example, crafting or exercise classes)
- Training sessions
- Informal resident gatherings

Registered Assistance dogs are allowed in the communal lounge, provided they are kept on a lead.

Onchan District Commissioners may occasionally use communal lounges to conduct official business.

5.2.2 Laundry Facilities

- Communal washing machines and dryers are provided and maintained by the Authority.
- Residents are responsible for:
 - Supplying their own laundry detergents and related products.
 - Using the machines in accordance with instructions provided.
- Residents must:
 - Be considerate of other users at all times.
 - Remove laundry promptly once washing or drying cycles are complete.
 - Avoid leaving items unattended for extended periods which may prevent use by others.
- Laundry areas must be left, clean, tidy and free from personal belongings once use is complete.

5.2.3 Dishwasher Facilities

- Dishwashers located within communal kitchens are provided and maintained by the Authority.
- These facilities are **not for personal use**.
- The dishwasher is intended solely to support, communal activities, coffee mornings, organised social events and resident gatherings.
- Users must ensure:
 - The dishwasher is used appropriately and not overloaded.
 - Items are moved in a timely manner.
 - The area is left clean and ready for the next users.

5.2.4 **Salon Facilities**

- Salon facilities are provided to support residents who may require assistance with personal care, such as hair washing and grooming.
- These facilities may be used by Residents, family members assisting residents and visiting personal hairdressers or barbers.
- The facilities may be used by visiting personal hairdressers or barbers for the benefit of residents. Any such use must not interfere with access for other residents and remains the responsibility of the resident for arranging the service.
- After use, the salon must be:
 - Cleaned thoroughly.
 - Left tidy and ready for the next resident.

5.2.5 **Storage Facilities (Storage Cages and Cupboards)**

- Storage facilities are provided by the Authority and may be rented by tenants subject to availability and agreement.
- Tenants must ensure that:
 - All items are stored securely within their allocated storage area only.
 - No items are stored loose within the cage room or in any adjoining communal areas.
 - Access routes, walkways, and doorways are kept clear and unobstructed at all times.
- The following are not permitted:
 - Storage of items outside designated cages or storage areas.
 - Storage of hazardous, flammable, or perishable materials.
 - Any items that may create a fire risk, obstruction, or health and safety concern.
 - Any unauthorised items may be removed without notice where they pose an immediate risk.
- The Authority accepts no responsibility for loss, theft, or damage to items stored within these facilities.
- Tenants are responsible for:
 - Ensuring they have appropriate home contents insurance to cover any stored belongings.
 - Ensuring that items stored do not:
 - Compromise health and safety.
 - Breach fire regulations.
 - Impact the Authority's building insurance arrangements.
- The Authority reserves the right to:
 - Remove items stored in breach of this policy.
 - Recharge tenants for any costs incurred in removal, storage, or disposal.

5.2.6 **General Conditions of Use**

All communal facilities must be used in a way that:

- Respects other residents' access and enjoyment.
- Maintains hygiene and cleanliness standards.

- Prevents damage or misuse of Authority-owned equipment.
- Failure to comply may result in:
 - Restrictions on use.
 - Recharge for cleaning, maintenance or damage where appropriate.

5.3 External Areas

External areas provide greater flexibility for residents to enjoy an outdoor space.

The Authority aims to balance the health and safety requirements, the need for unobstructed access, residents' enjoyment and use of the gardens.

6. SOCIAL EVENTS

- 6.1** If a resident wishes to use the communal lounge for a social gathering such as a birthday or any other social event, the tenant will need to contact the Sheltered Housing Co-Ordinator to make a formal request. When making a request, we will need:-
- The date of the event.
 - Type of gathering.
 - How many people will be in attendance.
 - Start and End Time.

This will be booked in to the scheme diary.

- 6.2** If a resident wishes to hold a large event, it is recommended that a community hall is hired.

7. STAFF

- 7.1** Staff will not be required to be on site during an event being held at the communal lounge.
- 7.2** It is the hosting tenant's responsibility for their guests' behaviour and to comply with health and safety procedures of the complex.
- 7.3** It is the hosting tenant's responsibility to ensure any rubbish created by the event is cleared, and the communal lounge and kitchen are left in a clean and tidy condition.

8. PERMISSIONS

- 8.1** Residents must request permission before making any alterations to communal areas, including adding hanging baskets, planters, seats, furnishings or decorative features.

Requests should be made to the Housing Manager:

Email: housing@onchan.org.im

Tel: (01624) 675564 option 3

- 8.2** Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the Authority's discretion. Approval will only be granted if:
- The alteration is risk-assessed and does not create an obstruction or hazard.
 - The item is not considered offensive to any person.
- 8.3** The Authority will maintain the furniture and items it provides in communal areas. Any resident owned item that is deemed unsafe, obstructive, or a fire hazard may be removed by the Authority.
- 8.4** The following items and behaviours are not permitted at any time:
- Combustible and flammable materials.

- Items that limit the use of shared facilities by other residents.
- Obstructions to bin stores, chute rooms or collection areas.
- Items obstructing stairwells, fire escapes and through routes.
- Items or behaviour considered offensive to residents or staff.

8.5 Residents will receive written confirmation of the decision within 10 days of submitting their request.

9. ACCESSIBILITY OF COMMUNAL SPACES

9.1 Residents must be able to safely access their own home, all communal areas and shared facilities in their building.

9.2 Communal areas, access routes, and shared facilities must be kept clear of obstruction to ensure safe and unrestricted movement for residents, staff, visitors and emergency services.

9.3 Where accessibility issues are identified, the Authority will consider and implement reasonable adjustments wherever possible, taking into account health and safety, building constraints, and the needs of all residents.

9.4 Residents must not undertake any action that restricts access to communal spaces or compromises accessibility for others, including the placement of personal items, furniture or equipment in shared areas.

9.5 Where obstructions are identified, the Authority may take action to remove items in accordance with this policy.

10. PETS IN COMMUNITY SPACES

10.1 Where permission has been granted for pet ownership:

- Residents are responsible for any damage caused by their pet in both the communal and private areas.
- Dogs must not be left unattended and must be kept on a lead in communal gardens, shared spaces and or internal corridors.
- Residents must clean up immediately after their pets, including additional deep cleaning where an area has been soiled, ensuring it is returned to a clean and hygienic condition.

10.2 Pets must not cause nuisance, disturbance or risk to other residents, staff, or visitors. This includes excessive noise, aggressive behaviour, or fouling of communal areas.

10.3 Pets are not permitted in certain communal areas such as kitchens, or food preparations areas, except for registered assistance dogs.

10.4 The Authority reserves the right to withdraw permission for pet ownership where there is a breach of these conditions or where the pet is considered to pose a risk to others.

11. MOBILITY SCOOTERS

11.1 Mobility scooters must not be stored or charged in the corridors or communal areas, or access routes due to significant fire, safety and obstruction risks. Access routes must be kept clear at all times.

11.2 Mobility scooters may only be stored within a residents' home where this can be done safely, and only where they do not block fire escape routes or restrict access.

11.3 Charging of mobility scooters must only take place within the resident's property and must be carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to minimise fire risk.

- 11.4** The Authority accepts no responsibility for loss, damage, or charging-related incidents involving mobility scooters stored within resident properties.
- 11.5** Where a mobility scooter is deemed to pose a safety risk or is stored in breach of this policy, the Authority reserves the right to require its removal and take appropriate enforcement action.
- 11.6** Permission may be sought to store a mobility scooter within the designated cage room. Requests must be made in writing to the Authority, and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 11.7** Any approval will be subject to conditions, including but not limited to:
- The storage location not causing obstruction to access routes or other users.
 - Compliance with all fire safety requirements.
 - No charging of mobility scooters within the cage room or communal storage areas.
- 11.8** The Authority reserves the right to refuse or withdraw permission where storage is considered to pose a risk to health and safety, fire safety or access.

12. POTENTIAL ENFORCEMENT ACTION

The Authority may take steps including issuing warnings, removing hazardous items, restricting use of facilities, or recharging associated costs where there is a breach of this policy.

- 12.1** The Authority will work with residents to resolve issues, considering individual circumstances. This may include referrals to occupational therapists, social services, or other relevant agencies.
- 12.2** The Authority may recharge residents for costs incurred from damage caused by mobility scooters or prohibited items, legal or storage costs.

13. DATA PROTECTION and PRIVACY

Personal data is treated with care and in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data will not be shared with third parties without the individual's consent unless there is a lawful basis for doing so.

The Authority understands the sensitivity of special category data and the information individuals may share with them. Any personal data collected will be stored in line with our privacy policy¹.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT

Employees have a right to work in an environment that is free from aggressive, threatening, or abusive behaviour. The Authority is committed to maintaining a safe and respectful workplace where all individuals can carry out their duties without fear of harm, intimidation or harassment.

¹ Privacy Policy 2022 – <https://www.onchan.org.im/your-commissioners/policies-procedures/board->
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