

Policy

Title: No Access Policy

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Approved by: Calico Homes Senior Leadership Team

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This document relates to:



Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The No Access Policy details the action that Calico Homes will take where we are not allowed access to homes to carry out works or to carry out our housing management function.
- 1.2 Calico is committed to creating and maintaining sustainable tenancies and neighbourhoods.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all customers who are signed up to a Calico Homes tenancy agreement.
- 1.4 We have a moral and legal duty to ensure that we:
 - Have an efficient and effective repairs and maintenance service
 - Have a clear and reasoned approach to planned maintenance and repairs to customers' homes and communal areas that also takes account of future sustainability
 - Establish and maintain good relationships with customers that are based on trust and that take into account individual needs and financial factors
 - Ensure that we achieve ongoing compliance with all applicable legislation
 - Have in place effective complaints processes which are compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. This will provide customers the opportunity to have their voice heard and receive appropriate redress.
 - Allow customers to be supported by a representative or advocate in interactions about landlord services.

2. Context

- 2.1 This policy has been developed to ensure that Calico Homes is fully compliant with all relevant legislation and regulations relating to tenancies, Decent Homes Standard, building safety and the standards set out by the Regulator for Social Housing.

3. Policy Aims and Objectives

The aims of the policy are:

- To ensure that Calico are able to attend to any reports of damp/mould/condensation (DMC), gas service, electrical checks, asbestos

surveys/removals/repairs and other urgent/non-urgent repairs and housing management visits.

- To demonstrate how we will adopt a 'reasonable approach' in non-emergency situations, to gain access to properties through multiple attempts of contact with the occupier to secure access by agreement.
- To set out how Calico will adjust its approach to access and may work in partnership with external support and advocacy agencies where the customers/occupiers are known to be vulnerable in any way or where there are barriers to communication.
- To set out how we will ensure compliance with ongoing legal and regulatory requirements.
- To set out how emergency access requirements will be followed where there is an immediate health and safety risk to the occupants or to the building.

The policy supports delivery of the Calico Homes vision and strategic objectives as set out below.

The Calico Homes Vision

"Going one step further with customers and local communities to provide affordable, safe and quality homes and personalised services; supporting customers to live their best lives in challenging times."

The Calico Homes objectives:

- To provide safe and well-maintained homes through investment in existing and new properties.
- To support customers to sustain tenancies.
- To provide good quality and personalised repairs, customer and neighbourhood services.
- To develop trusting relationships and to empower customers and communities to take the lead on the things that matter most.
- To strengthen the business so it is strong, well-governed, environmentally friendly and provides value for money customers.
- To create a place where people want to work now and in the future.

4. Customer Scrutiny, Oversight and Monitoring

- 4.1 Calico Homes values transparency and accountability in our repairs, investment and management processes.
- 4.2 We commit to publishing information about our performance so that customers can see how the services are performing.
- 4.3 We encourage customers to provide feedback on their experiences of our services. Whether positive or negative, customer input helps us continuously improve our services.

5. Planned access

5.1 There are various avenues for planned access including:

- Access to carry out an inspection, stock condition survey (MOT)
- Access to carry out a mould treatment
- Access to remove or inspect for the presence of known hazards e.g. asbestos through survey or removal
- Access to carry out works to remedy DMC
- Access to post inspect works carried out to ensure DMC has been eradicated
- Access for periodic inspections/check such as gas and electric
- Tenancy related visits
- Health and safety breaches

6. Policy Description

6.1 The No Access Procedure and Process sit beneath this policy and give more detail around timescales and the method of contact where there is no access to a property.

Listed below are the types of measure Calico will deploy to gain access on a planned basis:

- Writing to the customer/occupier in advance outlining why access is required and providing a proposed date (also details of how to contact Calico to make an alternative appointment if this is not convenient)
- Contact by telephone or email to secure an appointment date
- Home visit to book an appointment date.

Calico may repeat the above attempts to maximise the opportunities to secure appointments by arrangement.

6.2 Where customers fail to respond to the above attempts Calico may also, depending on individual circumstances, and the urgency of the access required, deploy the following measures to secure access:

- Make contact with next of kin or those listed as having caring responsibilities,
- Make contact with neighbours,
- Make contact with known external support and advocacy groups and internal teams who are already working with the customer.

6.3 In all attempts to gain access Calico will endeavour to use preferred communication methods where these are known e.g. where English is not spoken as a first language and will keep a record of all the attempts it makes.

6.4 In certain circumstances, Calico may be required to gain immediate access to properties where there is a reasonable assumption that there is a threat to the health and safety of individuals or failure to act may result in property damage.

6.5 Calico will only ever attempt immediate access in extreme circumstances, non-exhaustive examples including where there is a flood, gas escape or suspected medical emergency and when it is safe to do so.

In these circumstances permission to act will normally be required from a Manager from the Neighbourhood Management or Independent Living teams, or similar if this is possible in the timeframes concerned.

Where Calico is required to gain access in this way it will:

- Ensure follow up attempts are made to trace the property customers/occupants to inform them of the actions undertaken,
- Ensure the property is left safe and secure (this may on occasion involve carrying out a locks change. Where this is required, Calico will endeavour to leave messages or notification to the customers/leaseholders of how they can obtain replacement keys),
- Take photographic evidence of the property by means of an inventory and/or as evidence for legal action that may follow.

If Calico is required to gain access in emergency situations to remedy a fault that is found to be of the occupants making, we reserve the right to recharge the customer for all works undertaken, e.g. where taps have been left running causing flood damage.

6.6 In the vast majority of cases planned appointment measures usually result in access being secured, however, there are occasions where Calico may be required to take tenancy or lease enforcement actions to secure access. This may include:

- Applying for injunctions from the courts to enforce the landlords 'right of access',
- Serving 'Notices of Seeking Possession' for breach of tenancy and applying to the courts to bring the tenancy to an end,
- Calico will only pursue the above legal remedies for gaining access to properties when all other reasonable attempts at contact and access by agreement have been exhausted.
- Calico will address any property that is suspected of being abandoned in line with its Abandoned Property Procedure.

7. Reasonable Adjustments

7.1 It is our policy to ensure that discretion is used in cases of identified vulnerabilities such as disability, frailty, domestic abuse, concern for welfare or any other identified need. Calico will use information provided by customers and held in our systems to assist in identifying responsibilities. We will also ask customers if there are any issues that need to be considered to help us make appropriate decisions when offering a tenancy.

7.2 In cases where abuse is identified or suspected, a safeguarding notification will be made. See the Safeguarding Procedure.

8. Monitoring

8.1 Monitoring of the delivery of this policy will include the production of monthly reports to enable operational managers to effectively monitor the performance

and ensure that no access cases are being progressed in line with the No Access Procedure.

- 8.2 Board members are responsible for overseeing delivery of this policy. To do this they will receive regular updates about performance of the service and delivery of the policy on a quarterly basis with extra reporting by exception if required. We will report at what stage access was gained, categorised by the nature of the visit including DMC, gas, disrepair, electric and tenancy management.
- 8.3 Customer feedback received via transactional surveys and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures will be used to actively improve the service being offered.

9. Regulatory and Legal Compliance

- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Act 2004
- Health and Safety at Work act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)
- Equality Act 2010

11. Links with other Calico Strategies, Policies and Procedures

- The Humanitarian Offer – Calico Group Customer Strategy
- Tenancy Fraud Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy
- Starter Tenancy Procedure
- Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Health and Safety Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Tenancy/License/Lease agreements
- Employee Code of Conduct
- DMC Procedure
- DMC Process map
- Gas policy and procedure
- Repairs policy
- No Access process
- No Access Procedure