

Policy

Title: **Fencing Policy**

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This document relates to:

The **calico** Group

The Calico Group

calico homes



Calico Homes

calico enterprise

Calico Enterprise

 **SafeNet**
Empowering you to live free from domestic abuse

SafeNet

ACORN
RECOVERY PROJECTS

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providing
quality services that
make a difference
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1.0 Introduction

When this policy was first introduced in May 2011 we received regular feedback from our customers stating that fencing and /or the provision of defensible space was one of their main priorities. There was an expectation that Calico should provide and maintain fencing.

The STAR survey which was undertaken in 2012 indicates that the provision of fencing is no longer a main priority for customers. Customer consultation completed in 2014 shows that internal and external property repairs are the main priority.

This policy outlines Calico's approach to providing fencing to the front of our customers' homes, the provision of defensible space to rear of their homes and general day to day repairs.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to provide guidance to all staff and customers about our approach to boundary and dividing fencing, both to the front and rear of our customers' homes.

It covers the planned fencing programme, how we deal with day to day repairs and requests in relation to all other boundaries which include walls, hedges and rear fencing.

3.0 Policy Description

Planned works – Front Fencing

Calico is in the process of replacing the existing wooden fencing, to the front of properties across its housing stock, with new metal fencing where required.

The programme has ensured that our customers' homes are provided with secure and safe boundary fences to the front of their property.

All works have been carried out in consultation with customers. Customers do have the option to refuse works.

The scope of works has been determined by individual property inspections and includes fencing and gates to the front of properties where there is currently wooden fencing which is in poor condition.

We have not replaced any hedges, walls or existing metal fencing that is already in situ. Areas that have always been open plan will remain without fencing.

Double access gates/Parking provision

Double access gates will only be provided as part of planned works where there is an authorised dropped kerb, a pavement crossing is present and the existing driveway is:

- A minimum width of 2.5 metres
- A minimum depth of 6.5 metres from the front of the property to the front boundary

Where a “true” driveway is present then a double access gate will be provided instead of a single pedestrian gate.

In line with Highways law the gates will open inwards onto the drive.

Dividing Fences and Adjoining owners

Dividing fencing is the responsibility of the customer. We do not carry out repairs to dividing fences to the front or rear of the property.

However, if a dividing fence is shared with an owner occupier, repairs may be completed if the owner occupier can provide certified, documentary evidence that the fencing is Calico’s responsibility.

Where there is a Health and Safety concern, the fence may be removed with the owners consent. If the owner occupier refuses to give consent then the existing fence has to remain in situ.

Day to day repairs

- **Rear Boundary Fencing**

Calico has no statutory responsibility to provide rear or dividing fencing.

We will only consider replacing/repairing fencing where it is needed to provide:

- Protection and/or privacy from people or vehicles entering a garden where it borders a busy thoroughfare or public space.
- Separation of a garden from hazards such as streams or severe changes in ground level at the edge of a property.

We will use the protection and privacy test noted above to decide whether existing fencing will be repaired or replaced.

The decision to repair or replace fencing is at the discretion of Calico.

Any other repairs where there are no privacy or protection issues remain the responsibility of the customer; Calico will remove the fencing on your behalf if required, but will not replace it.

Any fencing requested received due to anti social behavior concerns regarding children and/or animals will also only be considered based on the above criteria.

Where a customer is identified as having a vulnerability issue, any request for fencing will be assessed in line with their specific needs to ensure that they are not unfairly disadvantaged by the protection and privacy tests.

Where a decision is made to repair or replace fencing, the style of fencing will be based on which offers best value for money.

- **Front, Rear and Side Gates**

Repairs to gates including hinges and latches are the responsibility of the customer.

Other Boundaries

- Hedges

Properties where hedges provide the defensible space to properties are the responsibility of the customer to maintain and keep in order.

Calico does not remove established hedging to replace this with metal or wooden fencing.

Calico can offer customers advice and guidance on obtaining assistance to maintain their hedges where required.

- Walls

Walls that provide the defensible space to properties remain the responsibility of Calico to maintain. Metal or wooden fencing will not be installed where walls are present.

Open Spaces

Areas that are currently open plan i.e. where there is no obvious individual garden areas, or where fencing has never been in place will remain open plan.

This information will be communicated to customers taking up tenancies on properties in these areas prior to sign up so that they are aware of the company's policy.

4.0 Scope

This policy outlines our approach to the planned programme of fencing replacement and how we will deal with requests for day to day repairs and other boundary issues including walls, front and rear fencing and hedges.

5.0 Responsibility

The overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Property Services Manager but various aspects of the operational delivery of it lies with various departments across the organisation who will work together to identify the most appropriate solution.

- The Property Services Manager is responsible for the delivery of the planned programme for fencing across our stock.
- The Repairs Operations Manager is responsible for the allocation of rear fencing based on the protection and privacy tests outlined.

6.0 Service Standards

Planned works

- Customers will be consulted with regards to planned works prior to works commencing.
- Customer satisfaction will be monitored on completion of works, increase in STAR survey results relating to “Overall Quality of Home”.
- Regular meetings will be completed with contractors to assess progress.

Day to day repairs

- The decision to carry out repairs to rear fencing will be based on the protection and privacy tests outlined.
- Customers will be informed at the initial point of contact as to whether a request for fencing will be considered.
- Customers will be advised of the final outcome in writing within 14 days of their request.

- Fencing repairs will be completed within 6 months of works being approved. Any repairs relating to a significant and immediate health and safety risk will be prioritised.

7.0 Regulatory and Legal Compliance

There is currently no regulatory or legal compliance relating to the provision of fencing by registered providers.

8.0 Monitoring

- Successful completion of planned fencing programme on time, within agreed budgets and in consultation with customers.
- Reduced number of complaints received regarding fencing.
- Improvement in STAR survey results relating to “Overall Quality of Home” (86% as at end of 2012)
- Completion of day to day repairs within the agreed 6 month timescale.
- Year on year reduction in day to day fencing repairs budget.

9.0 Consultation

This policy came about following consultation with customers on their main priorities for each estate as part of neighbourhood road shows during the summer of 2010. Fencing and external improvements were identified as a top 3 priority in 6 out of our 15 neighbourhoods.

Since this time the STAR survey has been completed and fencing was not identified as a neighbourhood priority for customers.

A fencing survey was completed with customers in April 2014. Although important, fencing was not given as high a priority as internal and external repairs/improvements to properties.

The investment and repairs team steering groups and tenant board members have been consulted and provided feedback on the review of the policy.

A survey of customers has been undertaken to identify their priorities and this feedback has been used in the review of the policy.

Customer contact information has also been used in the review.

10.0 Benchmarking

This policy has been bench marked with a number of other registered providers:

- Mole Valley Housing Association
- Golden Gates Housing Trust
- Nottingham City Homes
- Bracknell Forest Homes
- Bolsover Council
- South Liverpool Housing
- Salix Homes
- One Vision Housing
- Phoenix

11.0 Related Strategies, Policies and Procedures

- Asset Management Strategy
- Repairs Policy
- Value for Money Strategy
- Customer Contacts
- Investment Programme Procedure
- Successful Neighbourhoods Strategy
- Rechargeable Repairs
- Anti-social Behavior Policy (ASB)