

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Use of Independent Retirement Living Communal Lounges Policy

Review due: November 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy applies to Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) tenants, leaseholders, and anyone that visits tenants or leaseholders.

1.2 This policy outlines the use of communal lounges within our Independent Retirement Living Schemes (IRL).

2. Aim

2.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure;

- Safe use of communal lounges
- Communal lounges are used in the best way to benefit all tenants, leaseholders, staff and visitors.
- Communal lounges can be safely evacuated in the event of an emergency

2.2 This policy provides a framework for how communal areas will be managed and what is expected of residents.

3. Scope, definitions and legislation

3.1 The legislation that applies to this policy: ;

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Housing Act 2004
- Building Regulations 2000, 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Anti Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988

4. Communal Lounge

4.1 The Council has five IRL Schemes. Each scheme has a communal lounge which is a space that can be used by all residents.

4.2 Tenants' own items should not be stored in these areas.

4.3 Communal lounges are managed by the scheme manager. Permission for items to be placed in the communal lounges must be granted by the scheme manager.

4.4 The following are classed as permissible items that can be in communal lounges but not limited to;

- Festive lights subject to installation and testing agreed and completed by RBC
- Festive decorations subject to installation by RBC
- Soft furnishings installed by RBC. No furniture to be gifted or donated for storing/placing in communal lounges
- Walkers or Wheelchairs which are in use, subject to a risk assessment.

4.5 Communal lounges can be used with scheme manager's approval for (not an exhaustive list);

- Family visits
- Coffee mornings
- Celebrations
- Approved events
- Selling of appropriate items
- Physical fitness sessions.

4.6 The communal lounge cannot be booked out by residents and will always remain open to all tenants.

5. External Organisations

5.1 In some instances external organisations may request to use the communal lounges within the IRL schemes. Such requests need to go to the scheme manager for approval and must include:

- 1) Evidence of relevant insurance cover.
- 2) Details of the proposed event, such as timings and activities that will take place.
- 3) Details of all those individuals that will be in the scheme during the event, names and addresses.
- 4) Details of a responsible person, with contact information.
- 5) Evidence of appropriate safeguarding checks.
- 6) Risk assessment.

6. Unauthorised Items in Communal Lounge

6.1 Residents are not permitted to leave any items in the communal lounge. If any items are found in communal lounges which breaches this policy, the Council will take action to remedy.

6.2 The Council will consider the following before taking any action;

- Whether the item poses an immediate risk to residents and visitors
- Whether ownership can be reasonably determined and whether further investigations are necessary.

6.3 If possible, the IRL scheme manager will provide written notice to the owner(s) of the item(s) to allow them to be removed. If items are not removed within the required timescale the Council will remove them and tenants may be recharged for the removal.

6.4 The Tenancy Agreement includes a condition that residents must not keep items which would constitute a health or fire safety risk in communal areas.

7. Consultation, communication and training

7.1 All current IRL tenants have been consulted on the proposals in this policy.

8. Monitoring and performance management

8.1 We aim to review this policy in three years to ensure it reflects current legislation and latest examples of best practices.

8.2 A breach of this policy will be a breach of the IRL resident's tenancy agreement. IRL scheme managers will work with residents to maximise the use of the communal areas within these guidelines, a persistent and deliberate breach of the policy, impacting negatively on other residents could result in enforcement action.

9. Equalities Implications

9.1 In producing this document an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out.

9.2 An EIA is a way of assessing the impact, or likely impact, that a particular policy, procedure or decision will have on particular groups. This is used to assess whether in making the decision whether the Council has complied with its public sector equality duty under S149 of the Equality Act 2010 (as amended) to; eliminate discrimination and any other conduct that is prohibited under this act and to advance equality between those who share a protected characteristic.

9.3 The screening found that a full impact assessment is not required as this new policy is being put in place to ensure consistency in the use of communal lounges in a fair and transparent way.

10. Related strategies/Documents

RBC Tenancy Agreement

11. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	August 2022	First Draft completed and updated	November 2022	Luisa Cantore-Norris	Housing Committee