Neighbourhood and Estate Management Policy

Lead officer	JOHN BARGH
Author	JOHN BARGH
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1. What this policy is about and why we need it.

1.1 This policy applies to all Acis Group Limited (AGL) properties, neighbourhoods and other land owned by AGL. It does not apply to the Company's student accommodation or learning portfolios (Riverside and CLIP). This policy sets out the framework through which AGL manages neighbourhoods and communal areas associated with the homes it owns. It applies to all tenures, including social and affordable rented homes, shared ownership properties, leaseholders and freehold homeowners.
For the purposes of this policy, a neighbourhood is defined as a group of homes within a geographical area.

1.2 This policy ensures that we deliver safe, well-managed and attractive neighbourhoods that people are proud to live in. It supports our strategic objective of providing the best possible service to our customers and communities and enables us to meet relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, including those set out within the Neighbourhood and Community Standard.
The management of anti-social behaviour and individual tenancies is addressed through separate, complementary policies.

1.3 We are committed to working collaboratively with customers, local communities and partner organisations to achieve positive and sustainable outcomes within our neighbourhoods.
Strong relationships with local authorities, the police, fire and rescue services, social services, schools, health organisations and other local agencies are essential in supporting thriving communities. We also encourage customers to engage directly with relevant agencies where appropriate.

1.4 We will use customer insight and feedback from surveys, neighbourhood inspections, customer groups, complaints and compliments to inform and continuously improve our services. We will demonstrate how customer feedback has influenced neighbourhood services and communicate improvements made as a result of customer insight.

1.5 Landlord and customer responsibilities are set out within tenancy agreements, leases and the Tenancy Management Policy.
Customer improvements and alterations are covered by the Repairs and Maintenance Policy, while charges relating to communal services are detailed within the Service Charge Policy.

1.6 The key aim of this policy is to ensure that our neighbourhoods are safe, well-maintained and sustainable places to live.
We will achieve this by:

- Complying with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements

- Taking a proactive approach to neighbourhood management
- Seeking, listening to and responding to customer feedback
- Working with customers and partner organisations to achieve positive neighbourhood outcomes
- Ensuring customers understand their rights and responsibilities
- Supporting the long-term sustainability of our communities
- Using resources efficiently and effectively to deliver value for money

2. Who does this policy apply to?

2.1 This policy applies to all employees, Board Members, contractors, agency workers and any person acting on behalf of AGL.

3. Our policy is…

3.1 This policy sets out our approach to the management of:

- Neighbourhood audits and inspections
- Neighbourhood planning
- Management of communal areas
- Grounds maintenance
- Vehicles within neighbourhoods, including caravans and trailers
- Tree management
- Neighbourhood improvements
- Pest control
- Disposal of Needles and syringes
- Management of Untidy gardens
- Garage management
- Fly tipping, litter and household waste
- Graffiti
- Management companies
- Planned health and safety inspections
- Environmental impact and sustainability

3.2 **Neighbourhood Audits and Inspections**

Neighbourhood Audits are a comprehensive review of defined areas, examining all aspects that impact the customer experience. They provide an opportunity to assess and inspect issues that may not routinely receive detailed scrutiny and support a longer-term view of the strategic vision and future development of the neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Audits will be undertaken at least annually or every six months where required and identified through a risk-based assessment. Risk assessments will consider factors including customer satisfaction levels, tenancy turnover, incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB), fly-tipping, and

vandalism. Where these indicators suggest increased risk or concern, audits will be carried out more frequently. The Neighbourhood Audit Procedure provides further detail on the assessment process and audit frequency.

The strategic aims of Neighbourhood Audits are to:

- Support sustained tenancies
- Increase customer satisfaction
- Create better places to live and work
- Reduce costs through proactive and early identification of solutions
- Enhance the organisation's reputation

In addition to Neighbourhood Audits, we will carry out Neighbourhood Inspections at regular intervals to:

- Identify, manage and resolve health and safety risks in communal areas. All required health and safety inspections and checks will be undertaken on a planned basis, including fire risk assessments, electrical safety inspections, asbestos inspections, legionella testing, lift servicing and gas safety checks.
- Identify any issues that may impact people with disabilities and take appropriate action in response.
- Identify communal repairs and maintenance requirements.
- Identify opportunities to improve the neighbourhood environment and support effective ongoing management.
- Monitor the quality of contracted services, such as grounds maintenance and cleaning, and ensure agreed standards are being achieved.
- Check compliance with tenancy conditions relating to gardens, vehicles, property damage, pets and unauthorised alterations.
- Respond to customer feedback on local issues and monitor progress in resolving them.

We will proactively engage with customers while undertaking Neighbourhood Audits and Inspections to understand the issues they are experiencing and the improvements they would like us to prioritise. This may include calling on residents and speaking directly to them to seek the views of those most affected by local issues.

Where specific issues have been identified, or where customers have requested involvement, we will invite customers and other relevant local stakeholders to participate in, or accompany us during, an audit or inspection where appropriate.

The outcomes of Neighbourhood Audits will be communicated to customers through appropriate channels, including the Your Voice pages of our website, so that actions taken and resulting improvements are clear and accessible. We aim to provide this information in a timely manner and keep customers informed of progress.

Where we identify any repairs, hazards or other issues while working within our neighbourhoods, we will report them to the relevant team or external agency for action. We should always encourage customers to report concerns to us so that they can be addressed promptly.

3.3 **Neighbourhood Planning**

We will adopt a coordinated approach to the management, improvement and delivery of services within our neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood planning activities will be informed by a risk-based assessment using a range of performance indicators, including, but not limited to, tenancy turnover, rent arrears, recharges, crime and the fear of crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB), customer satisfaction levels and customer feedback.

Our neighbourhood planning approach will be holistic and collaborative, involving customers and key partner agencies, including local authorities, emergency services, schools and community organisations where appropriate. The aim is to support sustainable, thriving neighbourhoods and improve outcomes for current and future customers.

We recognise that neighbourhoods face different challenges and opportunities. Therefore, neighbourhood planning will be tailored to local circumstances and needs rather than applying a single approach across all areas. Actions and interventions will be determined based on the specific issues identified within each neighbourhood.

The actions considered through this approach may include:

- Local Lettings Policies.
- Targeted and intensive tenancy management and support.
- Crime reduction initiatives, such as CCTV, cycle barriers, defensible space measures and SmartWater.
- Enhanced service provision, including graffiti removal, environmental improvements, grounds maintenance and customer support services.
- Targeted “blitz” campaigns addressing specific issues, such as rent collection, tenancy sustainment and anti-social behaviour.
- Digital inclusion initiatives and the effective use of digital communication channels and social media.
- Communication and engagement strategies for customers and partner organisations.
- Increased customer involvement and partnership working.
- Neighbourhood and environmental improvement projects.

3.4 **Management of Communal Areas**

Communal areas include, but are not limited to:

- Shared entrance doors and windows.
- Hallways, stairwells and landings.
- Lifts.
- Communal facilities and green spaces in our ownership.
- Bin stores and drying areas.
- Unadopted roads, pathways and parking areas.
- Unadopted lighting columns and bollards.

We will ensure that communal areas are regularly inspected, maintained and kept clean, safe and secure. We will work to ensure that communal areas are promptly repaired, adequately lit, free from graffiti, litter and abandoned items, and that all associated services are delivered to the required standard.

Working in partnership with other landowners and stakeholders within our neighbourhoods, we will seek to maintain high standards across the wider environment. Where appropriate, we will work collaboratively with partner agencies to improve service delivery, increase efficiency and achieve better outcomes for customers and communities.

Through robust monitoring and contract management arrangements, we will ensure that services delivered to communal and external areas provide value for money and meet the required quality standards. Repairs and maintenance relating to communal areas will be carried out in accordance with the timescales and service standards set out in the Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

The scope, frequency and quality standards of communal services will be defined within relevant contracts and service specifications. Where services are funded through customer service charges, customers will be advised if requested services fall outside agreed contractual arrangements and may result in additional costs. Further information can be found in the Service Charge Policy.

We will engage with and support customers to ensure communal areas and facilities are used appropriately and responsibly. Where misuse, damage or neglect of our property or land is identified, we will take appropriate action. Where necessary, this action may be undertaken in partnership with other agencies.

Where redundant cables, alarm systems, satellite dishes or other obsolete fixtures are identified on the exterior of our buildings, we will seek to arrange their removal in the most appropriate and cost-effective manner, either directly or in consultation with customers and other relevant stakeholders.

3.5 Storage of Items in Communal Areas

The storage of personal belongings, goods or other items within communal areas is prohibited.

Items left in communal areas may present a fire risk by acting as a source of ignition or combustible material. They may also create slip, trip and obstruction hazards, impede access, or block emergency escape routes.

Any items found in communal areas will be subject to a risk assessment. Where an item is considered to present a significant risk to health, safety or fire safety, it may be removed immediately without prior notice. Where items do not present an immediate risk, a notice will be issued in accordance with the Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977 and reasonable steps will be taken to identify and contact the owner before removal. If the item is not removed within the specified timescale, we may remove, store or dispose of it and may seek to recover any associated costs from the owner.

We reserve the right to recharge customers for the costs associated with the removal, storage or disposal of items and may take appropriate tenancy enforcement action where necessary.

The storage and charging of mobility scooters is governed by the Mobility Scooter Policy.

3.6 Grounds maintenance

We will maintain communal external areas owned by AGL to ensure they are safe, attractive and well managed.

Grounds maintenance services will be delivered in accordance with agreed contracts, service specifications and performance standards. We will regularly inspect these areas to monitor service quality and compliance with contractual requirements, including undertaking joint inspections with our appointed contractor where appropriate.

We will actively seek customer feedback on grounds maintenance services and use this information to inform performance monitoring and service improvements. Feedback will be reviewed regularly with contractors through contract management arrangements.

We will work collaboratively with contractors, customers and other stakeholders to review landscaping and environmental management approaches. This may include identifying opportunities to enhance the appearance of neighbourhoods, improve biodiversity, increase sustainability and achieve value for money.

3.7 **Tree maintenance**

We will inspect, survey and maintain trees located on communal land we own and manage. Tree surveys and associated maintenance will be undertaken in accordance with agreed contractual arrangements, recognised industry standards and arboriculture best practice. Tree condition surveys will normally be carried out at least every three years, with additional inspections undertaken where circumstances require. Any necessary works will be prioritised based on the level of risk identified.

Customers are responsible for the maintenance of trees located within the boundaries of their individual gardens. However, we may inspect, undertake works to, or remove trees located within communal areas or customer gardens where they:

- Present a risk to the health and safety of individuals.
- Have the potential to cause significant damage to property or infrastructure.
- Are causing a statutory nuisance or significant neighbourhood management issue.
- Are inappropriate for their location or are having a detrimental impact on the surrounding environment.

Where tree-related issues are identified, we will seek to work with customers and will take account of individual circumstances before determining the most appropriate course of action.

Where works to trees within customer gardens are required as a result of a customer's deliberate action, negligence or failure to meet their maintenance responsibilities, we may recharge the customer for any associated costs.

Before carrying out any works, we will check whether a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) applies and obtain any permissions required by the relevant local authority. We will also ensure compliance with any applicable planning or environmental legislation.
The removal of a tree will only be considered where:

- The tree presents an unacceptable risk that cannot reasonably be mitigated through alternative measures.
- The tree is dead, dying, diseased or structurally unsound.
- Removal is supported by a suitably qualified arboriculturist's assessment or other appropriate professional advice.

3.8 **Vehicles in Neighbourhoods**

Through effective neighbourhood management, we aim to reduce irresponsible parking and minimise access difficulties for emergency vehicles and other essential services. We will work in partnership with customers, local groups and relevant statutory agencies to support this objective.

However, we are not responsible for enforcing parking restrictions on public highways or communal land, except where vehicle-related issues constitute a breach of a tenancy agreement, lease, or other occupancy conditions.

We will take appropriate action to address nuisance, environmental concerns, and health and safety risks arising from abandoned, untaxed or unroadworthy vehicles within our neighbourhoods. Where necessary, we will work with the appropriate authorities, including the Police, local authorities and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), to facilitate the investigation, removal and disposal of such vehicles.

Where permitted and practicable, we will seek to recover any costs associated with vehicle removal, storage or disposal from the vehicle owner.

We will provide customers with information on how to report concerns relating to the illegal or antisocial use of motorcycles, quad bikes, electric bikes, e-scooters and similar vehicles within our neighbourhoods.

Where a customer, member of their household, or visitor is found to be using, or permitting the use of, illegal or unlicensed vehicles in a manner that causes nuisance, annoyance, danger or breaches tenancy conditions, we may take appropriate tenancy enforcement action.

3.9 **Caravans and trailers**

Caravans, motorhomes, campervans and trailers are not permitted on communal land, including grass verges and shared parking areas. Permission to keep such vehicles within the boundary of a property will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and at our discretion.

When considering a request, we will take into account the size and location of the vehicle, together with any actual or potential nuisance, obstruction, safety concerns, or adverse impact on the local environment or neighbourhood. Where restrictive covenants prohibit the parking or storage of such vehicles, permission will not be granted under any circumstances.

3.10 **Neighbourhood Improvements**

We will consider neighbourhood and environmental improvement projects that support our objective of creating safe, attractive and well-maintained communities where people want to live.

Customers will be consulted, where appropriate, on the identification, scope and prioritisation of improvement projects. Priority will generally be given to initiatives that support outcomes such as:

- Reducing tenancy turnover.
- Increasing demand for homes and neighbourhoods.
- Improving customer satisfaction.
- Enhancing safety and security.

- Reducing complaints and neighbourhood management issues.
- Improving the appearance and environmental quality of neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood improvement projects will be delivered within available budgets and resources. Where appropriate, we will work with partner organisations to secure additional funding and maximise investment in our neighbourhoods.

3.11 **Pest control**

We are responsible for pest control within communal areas. Pest infestations within individual occupied homes are generally the responsibility of the customer.

Where a customer reports a pest infestation, and there is evidence or a reasonable belief that the infestation may be linked to a defect, deficiency, disrepair, lack of maintenance, or other hazard within any property or building we own, we will investigate the matter in accordance with its statutory and regulatory obligations.

Where an investigation identifies a structural defect, disrepair issue, or other landlord responsibility that has caused or contributed to the infestation, we will arrange any necessary inspections, remedial works, and repairs within the timescales required by law and in accordance with recommendations from appropriately qualified specialists.

Where a pest infestation presents, or may contribute to a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of occupants, we will investigate, assess the level of risk and take appropriate action in line with its obligations under Awaab's Law and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

Customers are expected to take reasonable steps to maintain their home in a clean and hygienic condition and to address any pest infestation for which they are responsible. Where a customer's actions, behaviour, or neglect are identified as causing or materially contributing to an infestation, we may require the customer to take appropriate remedial action. If the customer fails to do so and we incur costs in managing the infestation, those costs may be recharged where permitted by the tenancy agreement, lease, or other relevant legal arrangement.

Nothing in this policy prevents us from investigating reports of pest infestations where there is a potential impact on health and safety or where a landlord responsibility may be involved.

3.12 **Needles and syringes**

We recognise the health and safety risks posed by discarded needles and

syringes.

Where needles or syringes are reported or identified on land or property we own, we will arrange for their safe removal as a priority and, wherever possible, within one working day.

3.13 **Untidy gardens**

We will inspect and assess the condition of gardens at our properties as part of our neighbourhood management activities.

Where a garden is not being maintained in accordance with the requirements of a tenancy agreement or lease, we will ask the customer to take appropriate action to bring it to an acceptable standard.

Where a customer fails to address the issue following our reasonable requests to do so, we may take appropriate action to enforce the terms of the tenancy agreement or lease.

Where appropriate, we will work with customers and signpost them to support services or partner agencies that may be able to assist with gardening and grounds maintenance, taking account of individual circumstances and vulnerabilities.

3.14 **Garages**

This policy applies to our garage sites and garage plots and does not apply to garages attached to individual homes.

Garages may be licensed to our tenants, leaseholders and members of the wider community, subject to availability and eligibility criteria. Garage rents are payable in advance in accordance with the terms of the licence agreement. An annual charge will apply to garage plots.

We will routinely inspect garage sites and associated communal areas to ensure they are safe, secure and well maintained.

Any items identified as posing a significant health, safety or fire risk may be removed immediately without prior notice. We reserve the right to recover the costs of removal, storage or disposal where appropriate and may take tenancy or licence enforcement action where necessary.

Garages must be used for their intended purpose and maintained in a secure condition. Where a garage is misused, left insecure, abandoned, or deliberately damaged, we may take action to terminate the licence agreement and recover

possession. Recharges may be applied where costs are incurred as a result of customer actions or neglect.

At the end of a garage plot licence, the licence holder must remove any structures, equipment or materials they have installed and return the plot in a satisfactory condition unless we otherwise agree.

3.15 **Fly tipping, litter and household refuse**

Litter, fly-tipping and the inappropriate disposal of household refuse have a detrimental impact on neighbourhoods, customer satisfaction, environmental quality and community safety.

We aim to keep communal areas clean and free from litter. Litter-picking services are included within our grounds maintenance arrangements and will be monitored through our contract management processes.

Where fly-tipped waste is identified on land owned or managed by us, we will normally arrange for its removal within seven calendar days. Where the waste presents a significant health, safety or environmental risk, removal will be prioritised and normally arranged within 24 hours.

Waste will be disposed of in accordance with relevant environmental legislation and in the most environmentally responsible manner reasonably practicable.

We will work proactively with customers and partner organisations to encourage responsible waste disposal and promote alternative disposal options, including local authority bulky waste collection services and recycling schemes.

Where fly-tipping is identified, we will seek to establish the source of the waste and work with partner agencies where appropriate. Where sufficient evidence exists, we may take enforcement action against those responsible. Where the perpetrator is our customer, member of their household or visitor, this may include action for breach of tenancy.

We may remove waste left in communal areas. Where the person responsible can be identified, we reserve the right to recover the costs incurred in its removal and disposal.

We will implement measures to reduce fly-tipping and littering, including customer education, signage, CCTV, environmental improvements and community engagement initiatives where appropriate.

The removal of fly-tipped waste forms part of our neighbourhood management service and, where applicable, the associated costs may be recovered through service charges in accordance with the Service Charge Policy and relevant tenancy or lease agreements.

We will work with local authorities and other partners to promote the provision of suitable refuse and recycling facilities. The provision of individual household

waste containers remains the responsibility of the relevant local authority unless otherwise agreed.

3.16 **Graffiti**

We recognise that graffiti can have a negative impact on the appearance of neighbourhoods and can contribute to perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour. Graffiti within or on our communal areas will be removed in accordance with the Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

Offensive, racist, discriminatory, threatening or hate-related graffiti will be treated as a priority and will normally be removed or made safe within one working day of being reported or identified. All other graffiti will normally be removed within 28 calendar days, subject to access, weather conditions and any necessary investigations.

Graffiti constitutes criminal damage and, where appropriate, we will work with partner agencies, including the Police and local authorities, to identify those responsible and take appropriate action. Where the perpetrator is our customer, member of their household or visitor, we may take tenancy enforcement action in addition to pursuing any available remedies for damage caused to our property.

3.17 **Anti-Social Behaviour and Good Neighbour Management**

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and the conduct of neighbours can have a significant impact on the cohesion of communities and neighbourhoods. Details of how we respond to incidents of ASB are set out in the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

There may be occasions where behaviour that is considered acceptable by one customer exceeds the expectations, tolerance levels, or perceptions of neighbouring customers. In such cases, we encourage customers to discuss concerns with each other in the first instance, where it is safe and appropriate to do so, in an effort to resolve issues informally.

Where customers are unable to resolve issues themselves, we may offer support and assistance, including appropriate informal interventions, mediation, or other reasonable measures aimed at resolving concerns and preventing escalation. These matters are managed in accordance with our Good Neighbour Management Procedure.

3.18 **Management companies**

In some neighbourhoods, management companies are responsible for the maintenance, safety, and management of communal areas. We will work collaboratively with management companies to ensure services are delivered in accordance with agreed standards, legal requirements, and contractual obligations.

We will monitor the quality and value for money of services provided by management companies and will challenge poor performance where standards are not met. This may include raising service failures, requiring corrective action plans, seeking evidence that services have been delivered, challenging invoices or charges, and escalating concerns through formal contractual processes.

Where service standards are not achieved or contracted services are not provided, we will take reasonable steps to protect customers' interests. This may include challenging charges, payment under protest, seeking reimbursement for services not delivered, using rights available under the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024, and, where appropriate, pursuing action through a tribunal or other legal remedy.

Where poor performance is persistent or poses a significant risk to customers, we will consider all available options to secure improvements in service delivery and ensure management companies are held accountable for their responsibilities.

Where applicable, the costs of management company services will be recovered from customers through service charges in accordance with the terms of their tenancy agreement, lease, or other occupancy agreement.

3.19 **Environmental Impact and Sustainability**

In delivering neighbourhood services, we will have regard to environmental impact and sustainability by:

- Recognising the value of green spaces in supporting health, wellbeing, biodiversity, and attractive neighbourhoods.
- Ensuring that we and our contractors give due consideration to wildlife, biodiversity, and natural habitats when carrying out works.
- Only considering the removal of trees where they present a safety risk, are causing damage that cannot reasonably be mitigated, or are diseased, dead, or beyond reasonable recovery.
- Actively supporting and encouraging the provision and use of appropriate recycling facilities within our neighbourhoods.
- Ensuring that fly-tipped waste is removed, either directly or through appointed contractors, and disposed of in an environmentally responsible manner while working to reduce future incidents.
- Seeking, wherever reasonably practicable, to minimise our carbon footprint through the use of sustainable materials, recyclable products, and low-emission tools, equipment, and processes.
- Encouraging and supporting community initiatives that promote environmental sustainability, including community gardens, biodiversity projects, and local food-growing schemes.

4. How we will monitor this policy

4.1 We will monitor this policy through the following metrics and methods:-

- Customer Satisfaction results
- Tenancy turnover Figures (sustainability)
- Outcomes of Neighbourhood Inspections
- Void levels
- Recharge statistics
- Total number of Audits completed against expected and the total number of properties covered will be reported annually to the Tenant Experience Committee in the Annual Housing Management Report. This will also include commentary detailing any identified trends or issues that the Committee should be aware of.

Action plans arising from Neighbourhood Audits will be monitored through appropriate management arrangements, with progress reviewed regularly at 1 to 1's to ensure identified issues are addressed.

5. Procedures and other documents that link into this policy

5.1 Procedures that link into this policy are:

- Neighbourhood Audit Procedure
- Non occupation and Illegal occupation Procedure
- Lettings processes guide
- Tenancy Fraud Procedure
- CCTV and E surveillance procedure
- Good Neighbour Management Procedure

6. Links to other policies, legislation and/or regulations

6.1 Policies, legislation and/or regulation that links to this Policy are listed below:-

Policies

- Aids and Adaptations Policy
- Antisocial Behaviour Policy
- Customer Feedback Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Legionella Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Customer Experience Strategy
- Service Charge Policy

Legislation

- Law of Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977

- Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978
- Removal and Disposal of Vehicle Regulations 1986
- Removal and Disposal of Vehicles (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2002
- End of Life Vehicles (Producer Responsibility) Regulations 2005
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Housing Act 2004
- Town and County Planning Act 1990
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)

Regulation

Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England - Neighbourhood and Community Standard

7. When this policy will be reviewed

7.1 This policy will be reviewed no later than October 2029 or sooner where legislative, regulatory or operational changes require and earlier review.

8. Jargon buster

Reference	Definition
N/A	This is a jargon free policy

9. Appendices *(if any)*

None