

L&Q Abandoned Goods Policy



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1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy explains the approach to dealing with personal belongings that have been abandoned in a property or communal area managed by L&Q.
- 1.2 As a resident, it explains your responsibilities, and how we (L&Q) will deal with abandoned goods in a fair and safe manner, in line with our duties as a responsible landlord.

2 Scope and Exclusions

- 2.1 This policy applies to:
- Rented homes, garages, and temporary accommodation managed by us.
 - Items left behind after a tenancy or licence ends, including after the death of a tenant.
 - Items left in all communal areas, including lockers, cupboards, where we have or have not been able to identify the owner. This includes items left in communal areas of buildings by visitors, shared owners, leaseholders or their tenants.
 - Items left in guest rooms in supported living accommodation.
 - Items left in community meetings rooms.
- 2.2 This policy focuses on items that appear to have been genuinely abandoned. (See section 5 for how we determine abandonment). For our approach to keeping communal areas clear and how we enforce this, please see our Clear Communal Spaces Policy.
- 2.3 For information relating to abandoned or nuisance vehicles, please see our Parking and Garages Policies.

3 Legislation and Regulation

- 3.1 We always aim to meet our relevant legislative and regulatory obligations. Those relevant to this policy include, but are not limited to:
- **Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977**
The Act requires landlords to give notice and act fairly before selling or throwing away abandoned items.
 - **Housing Act 1988**
The Act confirms goods can only be removed once a tenancy has lawfully ended.

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005**

The Order requires the ‘responsible person’, typically the landlord, building owner, or managing agent, to ensure that communal areas are kept clear and safe as part of a fire risk assessment, maintaining unobstructed escape routes and reducing fire hazards to protect occupants

- **Fire safety Act 2021**

The Act reinforces and clarifies responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, particularly for communal areas in multi-occupied residential buildings.

- **Consumer Standards**

The Regulator of Social Housing sets Consumer Standards, which we are expected to meet. Our policies and processes are reviewed in line with such standards. For this policy we draw particular attention to the Safety and Quality and Tenancy Standard.

- **Equality Act 2010**

The Act requires fair and non-discriminatory treatment in all decisions and actions under this policy.

4 Resident Responsibilities

- 4.1 In line with tenancy agreements and licences, you must remove all personal belongings, furniture, and waste when a tenancy or licence ends.
- 4.2 You must keep communal areas clear and follow any safety information or notices issued. This includes, for example, our enforcement of policies covering fire safety.
- 4.3 We will recharge reasonable costs associated with removal, storage (where applicable), and disposal of items. Costs may be charged to individuals, and where this isn't known charged against the building as a collective cost, for example in the case of fly-tipping (See 6.6). To avoid this becoming necessary, we encourage residents to report any instances of dumping or fly-tipping to us.
- 4.4 If you need to get rid of items, we encourage you to utilise local bulk collection services in your area. Some charities offer collection services, providing convenient and responsible disposal options.
- 4.5 We understand that it may prove difficult for some residents to remove certain items by themselves. For example, someone with limited mobility may need assistance disposing of large items. In such cases we may be able to help to locate some local support (See section 7 of this policy for further details).

5 Determining abandonment

- 5.1 The following are examples of where we consider goods to be abandoned:
- The tenancy has ended, and belongings remain in the home, garage, or outdoor areas within the property boundaries such as a garden or balcony.
 - Items are left in communal areas, and ownership cannot be established after reasonable enquiries.
 - There is reasonable evidence that the owner does not intend to collect the goods.
 - The resident has died and no next of kin or representative claims the goods. (Please see 6.12).
- 5.2 Where a former resident may be particularly vulnerable (for example, hospitalised or displaced), we will take reasonable steps to contact them or their representative before taking action. Where the individual is homeless or likely to become homeless and their possessions may be at risk, we will signpost to the relevant local authority or support services to help safeguard their belongings.

6 Notice, Storage and Disposal

- 6.1 We will immediately remove and responsibly dispose of goods that pose a high risk, without prior notice. High-risk items include, but are not limited to:
- Fuel
 - Solvents
 - Paints
 - Items blocking exits¹
- 6.2 If we urgently remove and dispose of an item, we will:
- Display a Torts Notice on the noticeboard, if the item was in a communal space or
 - Email residents to inform them of the action taken
- 6.3 For items do not pose an immediate risk, we will:
- Attach a Torts Notice to the item requesting removal within a specified period (typically 7 days)

¹ We may arrange to remove or store some removed items for a short period – see 6.4 and 6.11

- Photograph the item with the notice attached
 - Deliver a Torts letter if the item was outside a specific property
 - Display a notice on the noticeboard or email residents if the item was left in a shared space
 - Send a notice to all residents on the floor if the item is in a corridor
- 6.4 If items remain after the notice period, they will be treated as abandoned. We will:
- Record and photograph the items
 - Assess condition, type, and approximate value
 - Store items securely and handle them with care
 - Attempt to contact the owner (where known) and issue written notice giving at least 14 calendar days to collect goods from storage
- 6.5 Where ownership is unclear, such as items left in communal areas, we will make reasonable attempts to identify the owner before removing or disposing.
- 6.6 Where we cannot identify the owner, the costs of items removed from communal area will be recharged against the building through service charges.
- 6.7 Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR, we must treat all sensitive information as confidential. If personal documents such as IDs, photographs, or financial papers are found, we will try to preserve and return them to the resident or their representative.
- 6.8 If pets or animals are found abandoned, we will immediately seek assistance from the RSPCA or local animal control. See our Pets Policy for more details.
- 6.9 We will not store and will dispose of:
- Waste bags – immediate disposal
 - Perishable, hazardous, or unsafe items – immediate disposal
 - Items where storage or removal costs will exceed estimated value
- 6.10 If goods are not collected within the notice period, we may:
- Dispose of them safely
 - Sell items of value
 - Where appropriate, items may be donated to charities or recycled, provided this does not delay disposal or incur unreasonable cost.

- 6.11 Proceeds from any sale will be used to cover costs such as removal, storage, and administration costs such as notices. Any remaining balance will be held for the former resident for a reasonable period and returned if claimed.
- 6.12 When a resident has passed away, we will always handle their home and belongings with sensitivity and care. We will work closely with next of kin, executors, and/or the relevant local authorities to agree on appropriate arrangements.
- 6.13 Where there is no next of kin, once the Notice to Quit period has ended, we will issue a Torts Notice to confirm the process for managing any remaining belongings. High-value items will be safely stored for 14 days before we take further action. Other items that cannot be returned or collected will be respectfully disposed of.

7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 7.1 We will apply this policy fairly and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of this policy review.
- 7.2 We recognise that some residents may face additional challenges when removing belongings, and we will take these circumstances into account. For example:
- Residents with disabilities or debilitating health conditions may require extra time or practical assistance to arrange removal.
 - A mental health condition such as hoarding disorder can make it difficult to sort and dispose of possessions quickly.
 - Older residents who are downsizing may need extra support to manage removal and disposal of items they won't be taking with them.
- 7.3 We acknowledge that language or literacy levels might prevent some residents from understanding notices or deadlines. Where appropriate, we may be able to make reasonable adjustments such as extending timeframes, explaining verbally through an interpreter or representative, providing information in accessible formats, or signposting to relevant support services. For more information on such assistance, please contact us.

8 Communication

- 8.1 We will publish this policy on the L&Q website.
- 8.2 We will publish this policy internally for our colleagues to access, along with associated procedures, processes and guidance,
- 8.3 Complaints about the application of this policy will be managed through our Complaints Policy.

9 Policy controls sheet

Date of approval: 03/03/2026

Approved by: Customer Group – following January 2026 meeting and circulation

Effective date: 03/03/2026

Next Review date: 31/01/2029

Policy owned by: Director of Housing Management

Associated documents: Absence from Home Policy, Clear Communal Areas Policy, Pets Policy, Property Access Policy

Main change	Key points
Introduction of a new Abandoned Goods Policy	Outlining our existing approach to abandoned goods in a property in a standalone policy. This position was previously covered in our Abandonment Policy. This policy also now includes other scenarios, where items may be abandoned but a property isn't.
Reviewed by: Policy Team	
Approved by: Director of Housing Management, Customer Group	