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1. INTRODUCTION

Estate Management is a vital part of the role of the landlord and is therefore of particular importance to all residents – both owners and tenants. Estate Management is not just about looking after the buildings and physical environment but also about tenancy matters e.g. anti-social behaviour, harassment, neighbour disputes, giving advice and support and working with other agencies to achieve decent living conditions.

In addition to this policy there are other specific policies which relate to Estate Management and which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

We are committed to providing good quality housing that assists people to live in healthy, safe, secure and peaceful communities that they can be proud to live in and which promotes social inclusion.

- We wish to provide tenants and residents with, or help them to obtain access to the support and assistance they require to maintain their tenancies.
- We will provide all tenants with clear information about their rights and obligations and we will take the appropriate action to ensure tenants meet their tenancy obligations.
- We aim to resolve incidents of nuisance, initially, by negotiation and mediation.
- We aim to take a pro-active responsive approach to tackle problems quickly.
- We will take legal action for repossession of the tenancy where tenancy conditions are seriously or persistently broken.
- We will not tolerate violence, intimidation, harassment, or illegal activity (e.g. dealing in drugs) within our estates and will respond robustly by working with other agencies to address the problems.
- We will not discriminate on the basis of age, race, colour, culture, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability in the manner in which we carry out our services.
- We will take action (e.g. seeking anti-social behaviour orders, repossession orders) against residents where appropriate.

- We aim to achieve a good quality physical environment and facilities in our estates and in the local neighbourhood as appropriate.
- We will liaise with other agencies as appropriate.
- We wish to ensure that tenants and residents are satisfied with the services we provide within their homes and in the local community.
- We will continually seek to improve the overall standard of estate management and will consult with tenants and owners and seek feedback on ways in which the service can be improved.
- We aim to provide an effective, efficient, economic and fair service to all residents.
- We will carry out tenant and owner satisfaction surveys at least every 3 years.

3. THE ENVIRONMENT

We are committed to providing a good quality environment for all tenants and residents and aim to provide a high standard of landscaping in all our estates.

We will carry out regular Estate Walkabouts, to which residents are invited, on a regular basis to help identify any unreported repairs, signs of vandalism, graffiti, poorly maintained gardens, neglected bin stores, closes, parking problems, dog fouling etc. We will also encourage residents to report acts of vandalism, graffiti etc to the police and ourselves.

All landscaped areas (both soft and hard), play areas, common areas pathways, garage forecourt areas, parking areas etc that are not adopted by the local authority will be inspected and a programme of works instigated in accordance with our Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Policy.

We will also carry out planned maintenance and Stock Condition Surveys, which will help shape future maintenance programmes. Any proposed works will be discussed fully with appropriate local tenants / residents groups.

All staff visiting estates, in the course of their duties will look for and report to the Asset Strategy Manager and / or Maintenance Manager any signs of deterioration to the common areas and to our properties.

4. COMMON AREAS

We aim to ensure a good quality of standard in the common areas – such as stairs, closes, bin stores, drying areas, laundries, common rooms etc.

We will

- Promote contact with tenants, owners and residents groups to identify problem areas and work out solutions
- Carry out a programme of regular formal estate walkabouts with residents, Maintenance and Housing Officers, to check on the fabric, tidiness and cleanliness. The findings from these inspections will influence both Day to Day and Planned and Cyclical Maintenance programmed works
- Inform residents of the action we propose to take and when. We will do this by publishing our findings and outcomes on our website
- Monitor areas regularly to ensure standards are maintained.
- Remove racist graffiti within 24 hours of it being identified by a member of staff or if it is reported to us.
- Arrange for repairs to be carried out promptly in accordance with our Day to Day Repairs Policy.
- Enforce tenancy obligations by arranging the cleaning of closes, bin areas and common parts where required.

5. GARDENS

Housing Officers will carry out routine inspections of private gardens to ensure they are kept in a tidy condition. The inspections will also form part of the Estate Walkabouts

Where a tenant fails to maintain their garden the Housing Officer will remind them of their conditions of tenancy and will give reasonable time in the individual circumstances to achieve the necessary improvements. In severe cases it may be appropriate to take legal action, such as an action for specific implement or even a repossession order.

Where an owner fails to maintain their garden we will write to the owner stating that they are in breach of their Title Deeds. We will do this in our capacity as an adjoining owner.

Where, at our discretion, there is emergency work required in a tenants garden (e.g. trees causing or likely to cause a danger to persons or property), then Abertay will undertake the required work to remove the danger / potential danger. For elderly tenants or those that have disabilities we will advise the tenant of the options that they may seek to obtain support in maintaining their gardens.

6. PLAY AREAS

The Association will ensure that regular checks are made to monitor the safety of play areas and equipment provided by the Association. Where equipment is found to be damaged and unsafe / likely to become unsafe this will be reported for urgent repair. All play areas and equipment will comply with the relevant standards. Abertay sometimes engages Dundee City Council to carry out organised inspections of play parks and instructs them to carry out repairs.

7. PARKING, GARAGES & ABANDONED CARS

Our Tenancy Agreement does not allow tenants to park caravans, boats and commercial vehicles without the permission of Abertay. In some areas there is a lack of car parking areas. We will encourage off street parking wherever it is possible to do so and ensure that all residents are aware of their respective responsibilities for vehicle parking and appropriate use of garages.

Removal of abandoned cars - Dundee City Council has a statutory duty under the Removal & Disposal of Vehicles Regulations 1986 made under the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 to remove vehicles abandoned in the open air. For example, tenants must ensure that vehicles in their ownership and no longer in use are disposed of through an approved contractor.

If the vehicle is on Abertay land then DCC has no duty to take action and neither will Police Scotland. In order to seek ownership of the vehicle, Abertay will contact DVLA to find the registered keeper. If there is a trace then the owner will be written to requesting removal of the vehicle within 14 days. If the vehicle is not removed then Abertay will seek legal advice before any further action is taken.

In instances where the owner cannot be traced and the property is not on Abertay land, the matter will be referred to the Environment Dept, Dundee City Council to arrange removal in accordance with the above legislation

Management of Garages – Abertay will ensure all residents are aware of their respective responsibilities with regard to using the garage for the purposes of storing a vehicle

8. GENERAL

We will regularly monitor the estates to ensure that a desirable level of amenity is maintained and will liaise with the landscape consultants, Landscaping Contractors and other appropriate agencies.

9. PETS

Where pets are the subjects of complaint or nuisance we will enforce the tenancy conditions liaising with other agencies as appropriate.

10. VERMIN AND PEST CONTROL

We will investigate reports from tenants regarding vermin or pest infestation (rats, wasp / bees nest etc) but only take action if there is evidence of a building defect attributing to the infestation.

Insects, mice, beetles and similar (not wasp bikes or bees nests) will be the responsibility of the tenant. The exception will be where the infestation is heavy and the house or room is uninhabitable, or where a vulnerable (e.g. physically housebound) tenant's circumstances would make it unreasonable or impossible for the tenant to take the responsibility.

Wasps bikes and bees nests – in garden ground or exterior common ground - will be the responsibility of tenants. The tenant is also responsible for infestations inside tenants' houses, loft spaces and internal common areas, unless a building defect has resulted in the infestation. In such circumstances this will be the responsibility of Abertay and may involve Abertay having to employ the services of qualified operatives.

11. TENANCY ISSUES

Abertay's Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement comprehensively covers the responsibilities and obligations of Abertay tenants and it is our duty to ensure compliance. We aim to carry out post allocation visits within 8 weeks of the start of a new tenancy to ensure tenants are aware of their obligations, that they are fulfilling them, and to deal with any queries and problems they may have. Follow-up visits will be actioned as required. At the same time a post allocation questionnaire will be sent to the tenant to obtain tenants views on the quality of information and the service provided during the allocation process.

Advice and assistance on all tenancy issues will be available to all tenants during office opening hours and through home visits outwith opening hours as necessary. Many tenants have difficulties in making best economic use of heating, particularly in some of our new build houses which have high-tech installations. We will refer them to our own Energy Efficiency Adviser, or Dundee City Council's Energy Advice Service for advice and assistance.

Alterations and Improvements

Our tenancy agreement conveys the right to tenants to carry out alterations and improvements to their homes subject to certain conditions. In all cases the written consent of Abertay is required in advance. Alterations and improvements include, for example, satellite dishes, sheds, garages, new kitchens, showers etc.

Disabled Adaptations

In addition to the above paragraph, tenants should notify Customer Services should they require any form of disabled adaptation in their home. Abertay receives grant funding for such adaptations and is often able to assist tenants with such requests.

Business Use of the house

Tenants must not allow their home to be used as a base for any business, trade or profession without the consent in writing of Abertay.

12. RETIREMENT HOUSING

Retirement Housing Co-Ordinators are employed at all of our Retirement Housing Estates. The Senior Housing Officer responsible for the Retirement Housing service and other Officers will liaise with them on all matters affecting the Retirement Housing tenants. Meetings with the tenants and the Retirement Housing Co-Ordinators will be arranged regularly. All Retirement Housing tenants, and the Retirement Housing Co-Ordinator will be encouraged to attend Estate Walkabouts in their area.

All alarm systems will be checked and tested regularly and repaired / renewed as required in accordance with the Retirement Housing Service Charges Policy. Complexes will also be subject to planned maintenance inspections when that estate is due for survey and any works that are required will be actioned as part of the contract works. Retirement Housing Co-Ordinators will notify the Senior Housing Officer when items of furniture, carpets etc require to be renewed or replaced.

13. SUPPORT SERVICES FOR TENANTS

Some Housing Support can be provided by external agencies such as Positive Steps or the Hope Project (for older tenants). The Housing Officer can refer tenants to either of these agencies where necessary to help the tenant sustain their tenancy.

We will liaise with the appropriate care / support agencies in respect of tenants who require additional support and we will endeavour to identify such tenants during the course of our routine duties.

Some houses – such as the specially adapted houses in the Finavon Street Development, the Liff resettlement in Fintry North, Action for Children, Arthurstone Terrace, Turning Point, Dunholm Road etc. are all specifically allocated to tenants requiring support. Such tenancies will also be the subject of an appropriate management protocol with the support provider or with Social Work Department as appropriate in each case.

14. TENANTS AND RESIDENTS INVOLVEMENT

We will encourage tenants and residents groups to take an active interest in their communities. We will meet with them regularly, consult with them and promote active participation. We will promote the forming of such groups and encourage residents to participate.

We will send out regular newsletters to all of our tenants and individual news sheets / information sheets when required. We will carry out home visits – outwith office opening hours when necessary. We will call meetings of residents e.g. in particular closes to discuss issues relating to them.

We will develop a timetable for Estate Walkabouts and promote these on our website, newsletter, main office and sheltered communal lounges.

We will liaise with Community Councils, the community police, local councillors, Communities (DCC) and other relevant organisations to promote the amenity of the estates

We will promote wider role activities and will seek funding from the Scottish Government and other grant agencies to promote wider role in our communities – working in conjunction with our partners (e.g. RSLs, the Scottish Government, Dundee City Council) where applicable.

15. NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We will seek to enforce the tenancy conditions wherever we identify or become aware of breaches of the conditions. We will always seek to resolve problems amicably by negotiation or mediation before considering forms of legal action. We will report the number of incidents as part of our Annual Charter Returns to the Scottish Housing Regulator. We will

also report our performance to residents by various methods and seek their views through resident satisfaction surveys.

16. OWNERS

Owners and their families make up a large number of residents in our estates. In some estates they outnumber our tenants. We will involve and support the owners in our efforts to promote our aims and objectives.

We will offer to take on a factoring role for all owners of tenement and multi storey flats in our estates and ensure they comply with their Deed of Conditions relating to estate management. We will charge them for their share of the costs of maintenance of the common ground. We will consult them on proposed planned maintenance and improvement works. We will hold meetings with them when appropriate.

We will carry out a Resident Satisfaction Survey every 3 years to ensure we are maintaining high levels of resident satisfaction with our factoring service. Owners will be encouraged to join in on our Estate Walkabouts or contact us with any issues in their neighbourhood if they cannot attend.

17. TRAINING

We will ensure that all staff have the appropriate skills, experience and training to perform their duties, thereby ensuring we provide an effective, efficient, economic and fair service to all residents.

18. SERVICE DELIVERY

We will deliver comprehensive services from our main office premises. We will make appropriate use of our Retirement Housing Complexes / lounges and offices. This may include using these premises for meetings (staff, residents) and holding surgeries and drop-in sessions with tenants and owners.

19. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We will promote equal opportunities by publishing this document in different community languages and other formats such as large print, tape and Braille as required. We will aim to ensure that no individual is discriminated against on grounds of gender or marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other attributes such as political or religious beliefs or opinions.

20. MONITORING PERFORMANCE

We will monitor our estate management services, including common areas, closes, and gardens by inspection and seeking residents' views on them. This will be carried out by, for example, tenants satisfaction surveys, questionnaires, monitoring trends, complaints etc. We will inform residents of the results of such surveys and the actions we propose to take as a result.

21. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk may arise as a result of dissatisfaction with the service provided which can damage the reputation of the Association. This may be as a result of higher turnover and difficult to let properties and of poor environmental standards. Where appropriate these risks will be included on our risk register.

STANDARDS

Common Landscaped Areas

Regular inspections of the common landscaped areas – monthly

Carrying out litter collection in the common areas – fortnightly

Carrying out grass cutting – every 2 weeks - approximately 16 cuts per year during the growing season, removing cuttings, trimming edges, borders, around trees, shrubs etc.

Cutting Rough Grass areas – approx. 6 times annually

Forking over and hand weeding shrub beds, firm any loose plants, and remove dead plants. Removing dead wood and damaged branches - 6 times annually

Hard pruning shrubs once annually

Tree maintenance – Inspecting and firming loose or staked trees as required. Removing dead branches, lopping branches. Tree removal and re planting – as required as part of Winter Maintenance Works between the months of December and March

Hedge maintenance – 3 times annually

Removing weed growth and moss from all hard and paved areas as required.

Treating all hard and paved areas with weedkiller and maintaining them in weed free condition

Closes

Regular Inspections of closes, stairs and bin areas

Close Cleaning to designated closes - sweeping, and washing closes and bin recess and stairs and removing litter from back drying area, paths and stairs leading to and from close - weekly

Clean, sweep and wash down handrails, all close doors, windows and lower stair and close walls – monthly

Estate Visits

Formal Estate Walkabout visits will be carried out annually . However some estates will require more frequent visits

Gardens

Ensure tenants' gardens are maintained to a reasonable standard:

i.e. grass is no longer than approximately 100 mm, flower and shrub beds are not overgrown with weeds, hedges are not overgrowing footpaths and are not causing a nuisance to neighbours, the garden is not being used as a tip etc.

Safety

Identifying issues of safety – At any time during routine visits by Abertay staff

Graffiti

Removal of graffiti – Normally instructed under a routine repairs order unless offensive when it would be carried out within 24 hours.

Anti-Social Complaints

We aim to respond to anti-social complaints in the following timescales:

- Racial harassment, domestic Abuse, extreme cases – within 3 days. However our aim is to respond the same day where possible.
- Serious cases – within 3 working days
- Other incidents – within 5 working days

New Tenants

New tenant visits – Visit by Housing Officer within 8 weeks of tenancy starting

Satisfaction Surveys

Comprehensive satisfaction surveys – every 3 years

New Tenants surveys – for all new tenants

Close Cleaning in designated closes – annually

Anti-Social Incidents – for all cases

Formal Complaints – for all cases

Day to Day repairs – % of all repairs