

Estate Management Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Estate Management is a vital part of the role of the landlord and is therefore of particular importance to all residents – both tenants and owners. Effective estate management is not just about looking after the buildings and the physical environment it is also about effective tenancy management, for example managing anti-social behaviour, harassment, neighbour disputes, giving advice and support and working with other agencies to achieve decent living conditions.
- 1.2 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

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The aims and objectives of this policy are as follows.
 - 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 breached.
 - We will not tolerate violence, intimidation, harassment, or illegal activity within our estates and will respond swiftly and robustly by working with other agencies to address the problems.
 - We will not discriminate nor offend any of the principles enshrined in The Equality Act 2010: on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
 - We will take appropriate action, eg seeking anti-social behaviour orders, repossession orders in circumstances that warrant such action.
 - 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

- 3.1 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.

- 3.2 We will carry out regular Estate Walkabouts, to which residents are invited, to help identify any unreported repairs, signs of vandalism, graffiti, poorly managed gardens, neglected bin stores, untidy closes, parking problems, dog fouling, etc. We will also encourage residents to report acts of vandalism, graffiti, etc to the police and ourselves.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 All staff visiting estates, in the course of their duties, will look for and report to the Asset Manager and Maintenance Manager any signs of deterioration to the common areas and to our properties.

4. Common Areas

- 4.1 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 programmes.
 - 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 Repairs and Maintenance Policy.
 - Enforce tenancy obligations by arranging the cleaning of closes, bin areas and common parts where required.

5. Gardens

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 Where, at our discretion, there is emergency work required in a tenant's garden, eg trees

causing or likely to cause a danger to persons or property, we will undertake the required work to remove the danger/potential danger. For elderly residents or those that have disabilities we will advise the tenant of the option that they may seek to obtain support in maintaining their gardens.

6. Play Areas

6.1 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 or likely to become unsafe this will be reported for urgent repair. All play areas and equipment will comply with the relevant standards. The Association sometimes engages Dundee City Council to carry out organised inspections of play parks and instructs them to carry out repairs.

7. Parking, Garages and Abandoned Cars

7.1 The Tenancy Agreement does not allow tenants to park caravans, boats and commercial vehicles without the Association's permission. 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.

7.2 Dundee City Council has a statutory duty to remove vehicles abandoned on their land. In instances where the owner cannot be traced and the vehicle is not on the Association's land, the matter will be referred to Dundee City Council to arrange removal of the vehicle in accordance with the Council's statutory obligation.

7.3 In light of the above, tenants must ensure that vehicles in their ownership and no longer in use are disposed of through an approved contractor.

7.3 If the vehicle is on the Association's land, then Dundee City Council has no duty to take action and neither will Police Scotland. In order to seek ownership of the vehicle, the Association 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 the Association will seek legal advice before any further action is taken.

7.4 With regard to the management of garages, the Association will ensure all residents are aware of their respective responsibilities with regard to using their garage for the purposes of storing a vehicle.

8. General

8.1 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

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

10. Vermin and Pest Control

10.1 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 the infestation is attributable to a building

defect.

- 10.2 Insects, mice, beetles and similar 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 (eg physically housebound) tenant's circumstances would make it unreasonable or impossible for the tenant to take the responsibility.
- 10.3 Wasps' bikes (nests) and bees' nests – in garden ground or exterior common ground – will be the responsibility of tenants. The tenant is also responsible for the 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 the Association and may involve the Association having to employ the services of qualified operative to remove the nest.

11. Tenancy Issues

11.1 The Association's Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement comprehensively covers the responsibilities and obligations of the Association's tenants and it is our duty to ensure compliance. Housing Officers carry out two post allocation visits 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.

11.2 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.

11.3 Alternations and Improvements

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

11.4 Disabled Adaptions

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

11.5 Business Use of House

Tenants must not allow their home to be used as a base for any business, trade or profession without the Association's written consent.

12. Retirement Housing

12.1 Retirement Housing Coordinators 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 Coordinators will be arranged regularly. All Retirement Housing tenants, and the Retirement Housing Coordinator will be encouraged to attend Estate Walkabouts in their area.

12.2 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 Coordinators will notify the Senior Housing Officer when items of furniture, carpets, etc, require to be renewed or replaced.

13. Support Services for Tenants

- 13.1 Certain housing support can be provided by external agencies. The respective Housing Officer can refer tenants to support agencies where necessary to help the tenant sustain their tenancies.
- 13.2 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.
- 13.3 Supported Housing Schemes, by their very nature, provide tenancy support and will be subject to a specific and appropriate Management Agreement with the Support Provider or with Social Work Department, as appropriate in each case.

14. Tenants and Residents Involvement

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 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.
- 14.3 We will develop a timetable for Estate Walkabouts and promote these on our website, newsletter, main office and retirement communal lounges.
- 14.4 We will liaise with Dundee City Council, MSPs / MPs, local Councillors, community organisations the community police, other relevant organisations to promote the amenity of the estates.
- 14.5 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 stakeholder partners.

15. Neighbour Disputes and Anti-Social Behaviour

- 15.1 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 Return 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

- 16.1 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.
- 16.2 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.

- 16.3 We will carry out an Owner 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

- 17.1 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

- 18.1 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. Monitoring Performance

- 19.1 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.

20. Risk Management

The risks associated with estate management, including tenancy management, are incorporated within the Association's Risk Management Framework.

21. Equal Opportunities

The protected characteristics enshrined in the Equality Act 2010 are respected when ensuring compliance with the Association's obligations in relation to estate management.

22. Policy Monitoring and Review

- 22.1 The Housing Manager, in consultation with the Maintenance Manager, will monitor the implementation and operational effectiveness of the Estate Management Policy.
- 22.2 The Estate Management Policy will be reviewed every four years or as and when deemed necessary.