

H5



## **Estate Management Policy**

*If you require this policy in a different format please ask a member of staff*

***Date of Approval***

***29<sup>th</sup> January 2019***

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***March 2022***

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## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This policy will cover Estate Management including maintaining common areas such as backcourts, bin areas, stairs and close entrances.

1.2 It will also cover the issues of neighbour disputes which effect the local environment such as fly tipping and dog fouling.

1.3 Indicator 17 of the Scottish Social Housing Charter asks the question, "Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord's management of the neighbourhood you live in?". This is wide ranging as the definition of, "neighbourhood management" is a combination of services carried out by the landlord and other partners in the estate/neighbourhood, including; management of anti-social behaviour; dealing with nuisance neighbours; the maintenance of the estate; and, overall, making sure the neighbourhood is perceived to be a safe place to be. The neighbourhood, is defined as, "the street in which the tenant lives and the immediate surrounding area".

1.4 Other issues of Estate Management such as repairs services, void properties and tenant participation are also detailed in separate policy papers.

## **2. Policy Objectives**

The Association aims:

- 2.1 To ensure the efficient and effective maintenance and upkeep of all common areas
- 2.2 To clearly define the respective duties and responsibilities of both residents, tenants and the Association
- 2.3 To provide both value for money and a responsive service to residents by adhering to our procurement procedures and legislation
- 2.4 To take appropriate and prompt action when problems occur
- 2.5 To offer residents and tenants the opportunity to participate in decisions which affect how residents feel about their neighbourhood
- 2.6 To ensure that residents are consulted and informed on Estate Management issues, policies, procedures, responsibilities and the Association's complaints procedure
- 2.7 To liaise with other appropriate organisations and agencies in providing an effective Estate Management service (such as Land Services, Pest Control, Roads and Lighting, the Police, etc)
- 2.8 To work with tenants, residents and external agencies to promote a safe and pleasant living environment
- 2.9 To keep communal areas in good repair
- 2.10 To carry out regular estate management visits to all common areas
- 2.11 To regularly monitor and evaluate all aspects of the estate management service and review and revise the policy as require

### **3. Estate Management Service**

#### **3.1 Residents Feedback and Scrutiny of the Service**

a) The Association recognises that service standards and the level of resources dedicated to estate management need to respond to issues on the ground to ensure that tenants and residents live in well maintained neighbourhoods.

b) To help keep abreast of such changes and to ensure that residents are able to provide feedback on the service as well as scrutinise particular aspects of the service, the following techniques will be employed:

- Committee Membership
- Information (newsletters, etc)
- Surveys on contractors performance
- Environmental audits and information provided by relevant agencies, such as the Police
- Close and area meetings
- Tenant focus groups
- Public meetings
- Individual meetings
- Analyse feedback on individual service complaints
- Analysis of anti-social complaints by type of complaint

The options above reflect that residents participate in the estate management service in a variety of ways.

#### **3.2 Service Standards: Visits**

a) Regular inspections of common areas will be carried out by Association staff and records kept of each visit made.

b) Problem closes or areas will be visited as required to help rectify a particular problem.

c) All other common areas and tenement closes will be visited on a regular basis; at least every three months.

d) The Estate Management Officer will investigate problems reported by other staff, contractors and the general public as they occur.

### **3.2 Service Standards: Meetings**

a) The Association will consult and meet with residents as required.

b) Meetings will be held in problems areas and closes, as required, where there is an obvious demand for discussion, consultation and action.

c) When problems are identified by residents or staff the Association may call a meeting. Additionally, residents will be given the opportunity to call close, street, or estate meetings in a format to be agreed with the residents.

d) Meetings may cover:

- Specific action to deal with an identified problem
- Provide details on the law on dog fouling and anti-social behaviour
- Services provided by Elderpark Housing Association including close cleaning and the bulk uplift service
- Common Areas
- Street/Close representation
- Information/Publicity
- Tenancy Issues
- Advice/information on Factoring Issues
- Advice on Procedures and Responsibility
- General Problems
- Future Events/Activities
- Environmental services provided by Glasgow City Council

e) If residents suggest environmental improvements for a particular area these will be assessed with a view to getting costs and if appropriate included in the following years budget.

f) Complaints of a personal nature will not be discussed at these meetings. Notwithstanding, specific complaints will be dealt with along with general problems on areas such as procedures, response times, quality of work, length of time dealing with problem, etc.

g) Residents will be encouraged and supported in setting up their own groups and forums for discussion separately from these meetings.

### **3.4 Council Services and Opportunities Available via Community Jobs Scotland.**

The Association recognises that local authority budgets have been cut and this is likely to have an effect on the services required to maintain the streetscape. Also in accordance with the Scottish Housing Regulator's expectations, the Association will work in partnership to maintain the streets and immediate surroundings so as to ensure that the neighbourhood is perceived to be a safe place. The Association will gather tenants views on this including areas of dissatisfaction and work on proposals, with our partners, to help address their areas of concern. In a response to a reduced council environmental service the Association will seek to employ Estate Management Operatives, through Community Job Scotland, to assist in maintaining the streetscape and the Association's common areas.

## **4. Common Areas**

### **4.1 Close Cleaning Contracts in Operation**

Elderpark Housing Association has introduced a close cleaning contract to the majority of its tenement properties. The purpose is to ensure that the Association maintains closes to a basic standard and the specification aims to find a balance between price and quality. Similar to all services charges it is subject to review and takes into account recommendations from tenants and an assessment of value for money.

This close cleaning specification does not absolve the tenant from their responsibility in their missive to keep common parts "clean and tidy". If a stair or close is continually in a poor state of cleanliness the Association may provide additional cleaning at the cost to the tenants. Owners will be billed separately as part of their quarterly invoice.

### **4.2 Monitoring**

The contractor is responsible for fulfilling the terms of the specification. This will be monitored by regular inspections by the Estate Management Officer, through triennial surveys, ad-hoc feedback from residents, feedback through the continuous monitoring satisfaction surveys and complaints by made residents. Complaints from residents will be treated as a service complaint and record as such on the IT system.

### **4.3 Bin Areas and Backcourts**

The Association will instruct and to take all unwanted bulk in tenement properties to the Cleansing Department's depot. On an ad-hoc basis a contractor or our Estate Management operatives may be instructed to clean up unkempt bin stores.

Owners will be charged for the service as part of their quarterly bill. The charge for tenants is reflected in the annual rental charge.

Complaints regarding the quality of the service provided by the contractor will be logged and monitored on the IT system and managed in accordance with the Model Complaints Handling Service.

### **4.4 Common and Landscaped Areas**

- The Association provides a grass cutting service for all common landscaped areas; this includes the maintenance of shrubs and soft landscaped areas
- The cost of this work is recharged to private owners
- The service standard is set by the Association but will take account of recommendations from service reviews and a judgement on value for money
- The quality of the service in terms of contractors' performance and feedback from residents will be collated and analysed using tenant surveys and through service complaints
- The Association will seek to improve the environmental outlook for tenants and residents by allocating an environmental budget which is separate from the normal service charges. Recommendations for environmental improvement may come from staff, tenants, residents and other agencies.

### **4.5 Private Gardens**

Where a tenant has exclusive use of a garden they should cultivate and maintain it to a standard acceptable to the Association, as per the tenancy agreement.

Private Owners who do not maintain their garden areas may be reported to the Council's Environmental Health Department and the Association will advise them that they are in breach of their deed of conditions/title deeds.

## 5. Pets

a) Under the terms of the tenancy agreement, tenants are allowed one domestic pet in the property provided they have written approval of the Association. Permission will not be unreasonably withheld but will be given subject to the following conditions:

- Regard will be given to the Guidance on the Control of Dogs (Scotland Act 2010)
- The keeping of the pet is not prohibited under any other law
- The pet is properly supervised and kept under control at all times
- The animal is not allowed to cause nuisance, annoyance or be a danger to other residents in the area
- The pet is not allowed to cause damage to the house, to neighbouring property or to any property belonging to the Association
- The animal does not create excess noise or smell
- Pets, especially dogs, are not allowed to foul gardens, public footpaths, share back courtyards, play areas or any other common area and that the owner of the pet is responsible for cleaning up any faeces immediately
- In all instances pet owners should comply with current local and national legislation in relation to dogs and dog fouling.

b) In the event of a problem with pets warning letters will be sent initially to all residents or specific dog owners.

c) Where tenants allow their pets to cause a nuisance (e.g. by fouling the backcourt or other common areas) the Association will enforce conditions of tenancy by requesting that the pet be brought under control or removed (which may lead to court action such as applying for an Interdict).

d) Private owners who allow their pets to cause a nuisance to neighbours will be reported to the Council's Environmental Health Department.

e) The Association will, when necessary, make use of external agencies such as Environmental Health, Dog Wardens and the RSPCA.



## **6. Vandalism/Graffiti**

### **6.1 General**

In any effective Estate Management policy vandalism and graffiti have to be tackled as quickly as possible. Staff will seek to photograph the graffiti with a view to identify the tag and if possible the person responsible.

### **6.2 Remedial Work**

Vandalism and graffiti will be dealt with as a priority, as speedy removal often prevents reoccurrence.

### **6.3 Police**

Certain instances of vandalism may be reported to the police and other agencies.

### **6.4 Identification**

- a) If the person(s) causing the vandalism/graffiti is/are identified the Association may take further action such as a Breach of Tenancy warning letter and/or referral to the Police or any other appropriate agency.
- b) Tenants or members of their household, who persist in causing vandalism and/or graffiti, will be subject to legal action which may lead to eviction.
- c) Private owners, or members of their household, who persist in causing vandalism and/or graffiti will be reported to the Police who may take legal action and/or levy fines. The Association and/or other residents may resort to a civil action (such as an interdict or Anti-Social Behaviour Orders) against a private owner in this situation.

## **7. Fire Risk - Managed Use of Common Areas**

We propose to reduce and control the presence of combustible materials in common areas, so as to routinely ensure that escape routes are free from obstructions which may hinder the evacuation of people from the building.

After routine common inspections a list of items in the common areas will be recorded and passed to the Estate Management inspector to carry out a risk assessment. The risk assessment will take into account any items that are believed to be abandoned, the extent of the obstruction caused, the combustible nature of the item and the number of people who use the common areas. For example, if the items are either causing an obstruction and/or are made of combustible material we will write to residents to get them to remove hazards before a certain date. Failure to do so would result in the items being put in the back court. However if the material is of a combustible nature, it appears to be abandoned and is blocking the escape route, for example a mattress left at the close door, it would be removed as soon as possible to the backcourt. All staff should attempt to contact residents if refuge bags are left outside their flat door and ask them to remove them.

There is a risk to the Association in removing items to the back court, as this may be construed as theft. Staffs' decision making will balance the high impact risk of a fire in the common areas against the lower impact risk of being sued for theft.

In order to further reduce the fire risk associated with prams and bicycles left in common areas, the associated will make available, where appropriate, common close cupboards. Depending of the availability and design, residents will be able to store their prams and bicycles in the common cupboards.

## **8.0 Pest Control**

The details of how the Association manages pest control are detailed in a separate policy. (Should we incorporate the pest control policy into the estate management policy or make them separate)

## **9. Monitoring and Reporting**

### **9.1 Visits**

Records will be kept of estate, common area and close visits. The record will detail the date of the visit and note the general condition of the area.

Nuisance, anti-social behaviour and service complaints will be monitored by logging them onto Capita Estate Management Module.

### **9.2 The outcome of the Policy will be reported to Committee through the following reports:**

#### *Quarterly KPI Report*

- Percentage of tenants satisfied with the neighbourhood in which they live
- The number and type of problems noted as Nuisance Complaints for example dog fouling, which accord with the pending review of Scottish Social Housing Charter
- Number of complaints from residents about poor service levels from staff and contractors

#### *Tenant Participation Strategy Report*

- Outcomes from the different methods of seeking feedback, including the triennial survey of close cleaning, bulk uplift and landscape gardening.

## **10. Decision Taking and Appeals**

Residents may raise a formal grievance under the Association's published Complaints Procedure (copies are available at the office).

## **11. Review**

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or as dictated by the Risk Management Strategy and Strategic Asset Management Plan.