



Estate Management Policy

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This document can be produced in different formats, for example, in larger print or audio-format, and in other languages, as appropriate.

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Note: The Association is mainly referred to as “we” in this policy. Our estate management policy is also referred to simply as “our policy.”

Section1: Context

It is the aim of New Gorbals Housing Association to provide a comprehensive estate management service, which is effective in ensuring that the areas in which we operate are attractive, well maintained and safe places to live. Our policy on estate management outlines what our position is and how we deal with certain estate-related issues.

We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment for all people in our service provision and work in the community. Our policy will not discriminate against any person on the grounds of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Section 2: Law and guidance

From a tenant and landlord perspective, the foundation to estate management lies mainly in the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement which our tenants have signed with us. The key legislation behind our tenancy agreement is the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Our policy and our general approach to dealing with estate management are based on the above legislation, good practice and comply with the principles outlined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets standards and outcomes that describe the results our tenants and others who use our services can expect from us. The relevant standards and outcomes for the activity of estate management are outcomes 1, 2, 3, 6 and 11 which are detailed below. We will use these to measure our performance and also to make sure we are accountable to our tenants, owners, residents and customers.

- Charter Outcome 1: Equalities
Social landlords perform in all aspects of their housing services so that:

“Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.”

- Charter Outcome 2: Communication
Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

“Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.”

- Charter Outcome 3: Participation
Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

“Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.”

- Charter Outcome 6: Estate Management, Anti-Social Behaviour, Neighbour Nuisance and Tenancy Disputes Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure that:

“Tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe. “

- Charter Outcome 11: Tenancy Sustainment
Social landlords make sure that:

“Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations. “

All of these outcomes cover a range of actions we can take on our own and in partnership with others to ensure we meet the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Our policy and the related procedures take on board our commitments to equalities, communication and participation across all of our estate management services. It also covers actions to enforce tenancy conditions on estate management and neighbour nuisance, to resolve neighbour disputes, and to arrange or provide tenancy support where this is needed. It also covers our role as a landlord in working with others to tackle anti-social behaviour.

The areas of operation which can be considered as “estate management” are numerous and varied and we do have different policies and procedures in place to deal with some of the more specific operational areas. The following areas are covered in this policy and regarded as estate management issues:

- Pets
- Gardens and services
- Common areas and backcourts
- Bins & bulk refuse
- Vehicles
- Vandalism and graffiti
- Estate visits & close inspections

We have a separate policy dealing specifically with Anti-Social Behaviour.

Section 3: Policy objectives

It is recognised that estate management is an important part of our service for our tenants, owners and residents, and as such the aims of our policy are to ensure that:

- Our housing stock and communal areas are managed and maintained to a high standard which increases the stability of the community;
- Our tenants, owners and residents are satisfied with the service we provide and with the estate in general;
- We provide tenancy information and advice in a consistent way;
- We co-operate and liaise with other partner agencies and contractors to ensure that services are provided to a high standard and to the satisfaction of both the residents and the Association.

Section 4: Information to our tenants

It is important that all of our tenants are clear about their responsibilities and obligations. The details of their tenancy agreement and their obligations will be discussed in detail at the time of the tenancy signing and reiterated again at settling in visits for our new tenants.

Our tenants will also be issued with a Tenants Handbook, which provides an explanation of the key terms of the tenancy agreement and our expectations as a landlord. Our newsletters will also be used to highlight issues, confirm our policy and to reinforce our tenants' responsibilities as outlined in their tenancy agreement. The general standards of service delivery that our tenants should expect will also be publicised through our newsletters and website.

When dealing with individual tenants, our staff will explain clearly our policy and our response to the relevant issue so that our tenants clearly understand the service, which is being provided.

Section 5: Pets

Our tenancy agreement requires our tenants to have written permission from us if they wish to keep an animal as a pet.

If the building exceeds five storeys in height then our tenants must not keep a dog or cat unless a dog is kept for use as a registered guide dog. Domestic pets can be kept in buildings five storeys or less in height only with our written consent and that consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Where tenants allow their pets to cause a nuisance or danger, we will endeavour to enforce the Conditions of Tenancy by requesting that the pet is brought under control.

Our tenancy agreement states the conditions on keeping pets as:

- The pet is not prohibited by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or any re-enactment of the same, or by any other law.
- Our tenants are responsible for the behaviour of any pets owned by them or anyone living with them.
- Our tenants must take all reasonable steps to supervise and keep pets under control.
- Our tenants must take all reasonable steps to prevent pets causing nuisance, annoyance or danger to neighbours. This includes fouling, noise or smell from your domestic pet.
- Our tenants must take reasonable care to make sure that pets do not foul or cause damage to the house, neighbour's property, anything belonging to us or anything we are responsible for, such as the common parts.

Our tenants will be notified of any breach to allow them to rectify the breach. Our tenants who persistently breach the above conditions will be required to remove their pet from the premises.

Should our tenant refuse to comply with our request to remove the pet, legal advice will be sought to pursue a court order to instruct our tenant to comply with our request. If the householder is not our tenant then legal action will also be sought regarding the use of an interdict in liaison with Glasgow City Council and Community Safety Glasgow.

Section 6: Gardens and services

Our tenants have a responsibility to keep clean and tidy any garden areas that they have individual or common use of. We will monitor the standard of gardens by carrying out regular inspections. If the standard of a private area is poor, damaged and, or causing nuisance to another property, action will be taken to ensure the area is properly maintained.

We will provide an environmental service of grass cutting and maintenance within our area of operation which will include communal areas, gardens and communal gardens, vacant properties, play areas, access roads and open spaces. However, it is still the overall responsibility of our tenants to act responsibly within these areas and assist with the reasonable maintenance of these areas.

Should an owner's garden be deemed unacceptable due to lack of maintenance we will liaise with the owner in an attempt to remedy the situation. However, our powers of enforcement are limited.

Gardens will be inspected during the wider estate walk rounds, during close inspections and also following any comment or complaint from residents.

Section 7: Common areas and backcourts

We will provide an environmental maintenance service to maintain our backcourt areas and common landscaping for our tenants. A close cleaning service will also be provided in the majority of our tenement and flatted developments as well as some of our high rise accommodation.

It is still the responsibility of our tenants to ensure that all communal areas are cleaned and maintained on a regular basis out with the maintenance and cleaning rota.

We will monitor the standard of our environmental and close cleaning services. We will also make sure that our tenants adhere to their tenancy conditions by:

- Carrying out regular inspections
- Responding to complaints regarding individual tenants

Use of back courts and common areas

We believe that it is reasonable to allow children who are under responsible supervision to play in the backcourt area as long as consideration towards other neighbours is shown. If goodwill between neighbours does break down, this use of the backcourt area will be reviewed by us and may be prohibited.

We believe that it is unreasonable to use the backcourts and common areas for dog fouling.

Section 8: Use of bins and bulk refuse

The volume of refuse and incidents of dumping and fly-tipping has increased significantly in recent years and it has as a result become increasingly important for residents to ensure that they comply with the requirements as laid down by Glasgow City Council via their Land and Environmental Services department.

We will be vigilant in terms of identifying patterns of dumping either in back courts, or in streets and open spaces. When the dumping is in a back court area or identifiable in terms of where it originated, then we shall pursue the residents in terms of ensuring that the correct procedures have been followed.

Bulk refuse and items of furniture

All residents are responsible for the disposal of items of bulk refuse and furniture by arranging uplift from Glasgow City Council, Land and Environmental Services. The local agreement with Glasgow City Council for the uplift of bulk items will be publicised in our newsletters. We will arrange for the removal of items as soon as reasonably possible where they pose a risk to residents. The cost of removal will be recharged to the resident responsible where they can be identified.

Section 9: Vehicles

Our tenancy agreement is clear that residents must not use our land for inappropriate parking, working on vehicles and most importantly, must not cause a nuisance or annoyance to other residents.

Section 10: Vandalism and graffiti

We will treat all cases of vandalism or graffiti as serious and take all necessary measures to prevent it becoming a problem.

If graffiti is deemed offensive in that it is explicit in terms of language and, or could be regarded as inappropriate we will aim for this to be

removed as an emergency on the same working day that it is noted or reported. All other graffiti will be carried out as urgent repairs, although from time-to-time the Association may programme minimal graffiti works and tackle them on a one-off basis. If the offensive graffiti is in public view, either Glasgow City Council will clear the graffiti as an emergency, or we will.

Where acts of vandalism, such as graffiti have taken place, we will endeavour to identify who committed the crime, and if appropriate the persons or their parents/guardians will be spoken to. Should the culprit be identified, they should be encouraged to remove the graffiti or indeed the costs for removal may be recharged to the culprit or their parent/guardian. We will liaise regularly with the Police to minimise vandalism and graffiti and report appropriate incidents with significant incidents of vandalism always being reported to the Police.

Section 11: Estate visits and close inspections

Our staff play a key role in estate management, from listening to customers comments, through to simply witnessing conditions or activities in the area. Our Housing Management and Maintenance staff have an integral responsibility in their day to day functions to make sure the estate is maintained and attention is given to make sure that any apparent issues are dealt with appropriately and timeously.

Our Housing Officers have responsibility for estate management and are expected to pay attention to all issues in our properties and areas when carrying out routine visits. A visual inspection of the area should be routinely done at all visits.

A formal inspection of all closes, common areas and estates is carried out every month and a record of this is kept for audit purposes. Closes will be visited more often if it is deemed that this is required or if we receive regular complaints from the same close and, or area.

Section 12: Setting in visits and annual tenant visits

We will carry out settling-in visits for all of our new tenants. We aim to do this within six weeks of the tenancy start date, although we will aim to visit sooner, usually within two weeks. The purpose of the settling in visit is to allow our tenant raise any concerns and issues about their tenancy or home.

It also allows us to intervene at an early stage should we have any concerns about the tenancy. Early intervention should help to prevent any difficulties from escalating and help our tenant access additional support if required.

Tenants rehoused through a section 5 referral and all new tenants who have not had a tenancy before will also receive follow up visit after 6 months. The purpose of the visit is to provide another opportunity for our tenants to raise any concerns and issues about their tenancy or home.

All of our tenants will receive an annual home visit to allow our tenant and us to raise any concerns and issue about their tenancy or home.

Section 13: Responsibility for estate and tenancy management

Housing Officers and Housing Assistants have responsibility for estate and tenancy management. Any advice, queries and all referrals for legal action will be following approval by the Area Housing Manager or Head of Housing Services.

Housing Officers have responsibility for implementation of the Estate Management Policy:

- Carrying out estate management inspections
- Dealing with problems
- Handling complaints in their areas of responsibility
- Monitoring the day to day effectiveness of cleaning and landscape

- Maintenance services in conjunction with the Property Services Office and Maintenance Team
- Serious tenancy management issues
- Dealing with cases of harassment
- Dealing with abandonment of tenancies

The Area Housing Managers have responsibility for:

- Monitoring the performance of all Housing Management staff
- Assisting the staff to deal with serious or persistent breaches of tenancy
- Dealing with all serious cases of harassment
- Monitoring the operation of the policy, reporting to Property Sub Committee on Housing Management and assisting the Head of Housing Services with the review of the policy
- Liaison with other service providers, including the local authority, to maximise their service

Section 14: Resident participation and partnership working

Effective estate management is a result of having good links with the community and other agencies and service providers. Through a variety of channels, such as staff liaison, focus groups, estate action groups, newsletters and information posters we will encourage community involvement to improve the estate and to help us improve the overall area.

We aim to make our services responsive to the needs of our community. This means that we will:

- Take account of our tenants' and resident's views when making decisions regarding the nature and type of services which are delivered
- Consult with our tenants when monitoring the quality of services.
- Respond positively to deal with individual complaints
- Encourage any attempt to raise issues collectively by organising close meetings or other local meetings as deemed appropriate

In addition, our staff will take every opportunity to encourage tenants to contribute to local estate management by:

- Promoting and consulting with local tenants and owners groups
- Encouraging feedback from our tenants and owners and responding constructively i.e. involving residents in estate inspections, planning of remedial works
- Involving residents in development of new initiatives for the improvement of their local environment and amenities
- Keeping residents informed about activities affecting their areas

The importance of other service providers is paramount in improving the safety and attractiveness of our estates, and we aim to develop good networking arrangements with other agencies including the Police, Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Community Health and Care Partnership and Community Safety Glasgow.

Section 15: Different tenures

Our estate management may involve tenants and owners. However, the legal action and redress which is relevant to owners is more limited and for many issues we have no formal enforcement powers.

The relevant Deed of Conditions for owners provides details of homeowner responsibilities in relation to communal area management. This documentation will normally include clauses on what homeowners can and cannot do in relation to common parts and where requests for permission are required.

Section 16: Performance targets and policy reporting

The performance in respect of general inspection rates and details of the nature of estate management issues will be reported to Property Management Sub Committee (Housing Management) at least, on an annual basis. In line with the provisions of the Scottish Social Housing Charter we will set targets for responding to and resolving complaints of anti-social behaviour which can include some estate management issues. These targets and our actual performance compared to the targets will be published on our website and on a regular basis within our tenants' newsletters and other relevant publications.

Section 17: Complaints

Complaints against our operation of this policy and the procedures for estate management will be processed through our Complaints Handling Procedure. Copies of our Complaints Handling Procedure, including advice on how to make a complaint, are available from our offices or via our website.

Section 18: Policy review date

Our estate management policy will be reviewed every five years or earlier if required. For example, we may review sooner to reflect changes in law or, if guidance changes occur. We may also decide to make changes requested by our tenants.