

# Melville Housing Association



## Policy : Estate Management

<b>Subject:</b>	Estate Management
<b>Section:</b>	Housing Services
<b>Objective:</b>	To define the role of Estate Management within the Association
<b>Scottish Social Housing Charter</b>	Good neighbourhoods
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 The Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003
<b>Issue Date:</b>	May, 2018
<b>Review Date:</b>	May, 2021
<b>Policy Ref No:</b>	HSG 009

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 We recognise that effective Estate Management is a vital part of our landlord role, the satisfactory delivery of which will assist greatly in promoting safe, secure, sustainable and desirable communities.
- 1.2 We recognise that effective Estate Management goes beyond looking after buildings and the physical environment. It is also about providing or arranging necessary information and advice to support tenants and residents. It involves liaising and working with tenants, neighbouring residents and other agencies to ensure that the environment is safe for others who may visit, use or enter our land or property.
- 1.3 Estate Management covers a diverse range of areas including:
  - a. providing information, advice and assistance on the rights and responsibilities of the Association and of tenants and residents
  - b. enforcing tenancy conditions and deed of condition requirements in a firm, fair, prompt and sensitive manner
  - c. providing advice and assistance to tenants and residents on services which enhance the local community, such as initiatives which improve the environment and reduce crime
  - d. consulting tenants on Estate Management issues and ensuring that Estate Management services are appropriate to local needs
  - e. agreeing and meeting standards for the management of communal areas and facilities in our ownership
  - f. working with other agencies including the statutory authorities to ensure that Estate Management standards are achieved
- 1.4 The Estate Management Policy does not sit in isolation and works alongside the Tenancy Agreement and key policies, including Planned Maintenance, Health and Safety, Empty Homes Management, and Neighbour Disputes and Anti Social Behaviour. We will seek to ensure that the design of our new properties will aim to prevent major issues arising.
- 1.5 This Policy is supported by a suite of procedures to assist staff in delivering a consistent and effective service, including Estate Management Procedures.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

2.1 This Policy aims to ensure:

- a. that tenants and residents of our properties can live in their homes in clean, safe and secure environments.
- b. the development of mutually beneficial landlord/tenant relationships.
- c. the upkeep of the housing stock and surrounding environment is managed and maintained to a standard which enhances tenant/resident satisfaction and which contributes to minimising the duration and level of void properties.
- d. that Estate Management services are planned, adequately resourced, effectively budgeted, controlled and monitored.

## **3.0 Resources**

3.1 The delivery of an effective Estate Management Policy depends on:

- Good quality design and lay out of developments
- A Planned Maintenance strategy which includes appropriate programming and provision for Cyclical and Major Repairs.
- Provision within our Reactive Maintenance budget to carry out alterations that will address management and estate issues.
- A staff presence in developments which supports proactive management through early identification of issues and appropriate preventative or remedial action. To this end regular estate walkabouts will be carried out by our staff to monitor:
  - Provision of ground maintenance services.
  - Provision of stair cleaning service (where appropriate).
  - Condition of common areas, including drying and refuse areas, car parking, footpaths, garages, play areas and equipment in our ownership.
  - Tenants' adherence to their tenancy conditions.

Tenants will be encouraged to join these walkabouts to work with us to improve the estates and also to ensure that resources are targeted to address the issues most important to tenants. Tenants will be advised of the outcome of their suggestions.

3.2 Tenants also have a key role to play in helping us to monitor the provision of services such as stair cleaning and ground

maintenance. Where we provide these services, copies of service specifications will be made available to tenants on request.

- 3.3 We will consider proposals put forward by residents which will result in an improvement to the building or external environment. These improvements must improve the living environment for current residents and in the longer term improve the letting potential of the development.
- 3.4 A budget will also be agreed each year to cover the costs of clearing rubbish, dumped furniture etc This will be used where we have not been able to encourage tenants to clear, there is a health and safety issue, and we are not able to recharge the cost to tenants.

#### **4.0 Estate Management Standards**

- 4.1 Local authorities are responsible for refuse disposal. We will, as far as possible in conjunction with them ensure that appropriate and well sited facilities are provided for the disposal of rubbish. We will maintain communal bin stores where these have been provided and will also take responsibility for the disposal of rubbish on land in our ownership.

Tenants are given information at the start of their tenancy of who to contact to confirm their days for the uplift of rubbish. Tenants are responsible for ensuring that their rubbish is disposed of safely, tidily and securely wrapped and for making arrangements for the uplift of large items.

We will liaise with the relevant local authority to take action on the illegal and unsightly dumping of rubbish and litter on our land or premises.

Where possible we will charge tenants the cost of clearing rubbish from communal areas or private gardens.

- 4.2 We will ensure that all private and communal gardens in our ownership are maintained to an agreed standard. The Tenancy Agreement clearly sets out those standards and action will be taken to enforce the Tenancy Agreement in the event of it being broken. A tenant who has exclusive use of a garden is solely responsible for its maintenance. Where a tenant has no access to garden tools, we can provide the hire of a strimmer and/or mower. Where a tenant is unable to maintain the garden, we will direct them to organisations which may be able to assist.

Communal garden ground will normally be maintained by us through contracts with firms who will be required to deliver services as specified in the grounds maintenance contracts. In newer developments, the cost of this will normally be recovered through a service charge.

We will be responsible for the basic upkeep of gardens of void properties.

- 4.3 We are responsible for the maintenance of communal parking areas and the external maintenance of garages in our ownership and for liaising with the local authority over adopted areas. Parking areas should not be used for extensive car maintenance.

Tenants who have been allocated a garage are responsible under the terms of the lease for keeping it clean and in a proper condition and for the cost of repairing all wilful or careless damage to the garage during their occupancy.

The Tenancy Agreement requires that no vehicle, caravan, trailer, or boat belonging to the tenant or anyone living with them or visiting may be parked/stored on our land or property permanently or temporarily unless:

- that land or property is set aside for parking or storage and
- written permission has been given by the Association and
- in every case it does not cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours.

- 4.4 Abandoned or untaxed vehicles, including caravans, on our property will be reported to the police, DVLA and the local authority and removed where appropriate. Local authorities have a statutory duty to remove vehicles abandoned on land in the open air or on any other land which forms part of the highway.

- 4.5 Where possible we will seek to ensure new developments comply with Secured by Design standards. Tenant Newsletters will be used to remind tenants of home security measures which they can follow - e.g. seeking production of identification from unknown callers, etc.

- 4.6 We aim to minimise the incidence of vandalism and to respond promptly when incidents are reported. We will make good any damage caused by vandalism which is not the responsibility of the tenant or which has been caused to empty properties owned by us. Vandalism must have been reported Police Scotland and an incident number obtained from them. Failure to do this will result in us being unable to make good any damage caused. The tenant is

responsible for making good or paying for damage caused by deliberate acts of vandalism by themselves, any member of their household or visitors. We encourage residents who witness vandalism to report it to the police.

4.7 We will aim to remove, from our properties, graffiti of an offensive, sexual or racial nature within one working day of it having been seen or reported. We encourage tenants to report this to ensure action can be taken.

4.8 The tenant has a responsibility to take reasonable care to prevent damage to the house, fixtures and fittings and common parts.

When a tenant reports the presence of vermin, pests or insects within their house, they will be advised to contact their local authority or a pest control company. Where infestation can be directly attributed to a tenant's living conditions, or habits, e.g. bird feeding, we will normally instruct the tenant on how best to address the problem to ensure it does not recur.

Where required we will work with the local authority to assist with any statutory nuisance arising from infestation.

4.9 Tenants are responsible for supervising their domestic pets and ensuring that they do not cause a nuisance to neighbours or deterioration in the condition of the property or common areas. We aim to minimise any nuisance or health risk associated with keeping pets or livestock. This is reflected in the Tenancy Agreement. Tenants will be asked to remove their pets if there are nuisance or health risks. We will liaise with protective services on issues including stray dogs and dog fouling and as appropriate, will utilise aspects of the Dog Fouling Act.

4.10 In many older properties the building construction prevents cost-effective installations of communal systems. We will, however, consider future advances in technology which might change this.

We will consider the installation of communal systems in new build properties where this is appropriate and cost effective.

4.11 In new build developments and in the Mayfield walk up flats, communal stairs comprising above ground and first floor, have a stair cleaning service provided by ourselves.

4.12 We will take action against drug, alcohol or solvent related nuisance under our Neighbour Disputes and Anti-social Behaviour Policy. We will involve the police where common areas such as stairwells or

gardens are being used for illegal drug use. We will give urgent priority to cleaning up items of drug use such as needles or foils.

## **5.0 Equal Opportunities**

5.1 We are committed to Equality and Diversity and will not discriminate in the operation of this policy on the basis of age, gender, gender reassignment, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, family circumstances, political belief or affiliation, trade union membership, sexual orientation, medical condition or disability. We aim to promote equal opportunities and comply with all current legal requirements relating to equal opportunities.

## **6.0 Training**

6.1 Training on the Estate Management Policy and associated procedures will form part of the induction training for all new staff members. Additional and ongoing training will be provided for staff who deal directly with Estate Management issues.

We will provide appropriate training for tenants who wish to be involved in Estate Walkabouts or who wish to act as stair representatives

## **7.0 Appeals**

7.1 If a tenant is unhappy with our actions under this policy they can make an appeal to the Chief Operating Officer.

7.2 If after investigation, the tenant's appeal is not upheld, the tenant has the right to make a formal complaint. If the tenant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

## **8.0 Tenancy sustainment**

8.1 We are committed to assisting tenants, where possible, to remain in their homes. We recognise the individual needs of tenants and take these into account in all aspects of our service. Where we are unable to offer direct assistance we will signpost tenants to other agencies and services. We have a partnership agreement with CHAI (Community Help and Advice Initiative) to provide Tenancy Support and Money Advice services.

## **9.0 Monitoring and Review**

- 9.1 The Chief Operating Officer will ensure this policy is reviewed every three years or earlier if there are any changes to legislation. The Senior Management Team has delegated authority to approve minor changes to the policy. Significant changes will be submitted to the Board for approval.