



Estate Management Policy

Revision History

Policy	Estate Management Policy
Reviewer(s)	Louise McDonald
Committee Name	Operations and Performance
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Introduction

The Association is committed to ensuring that all our areas of operation – Paisley East, Paisley North, Paisley West, Renfrew, and Johnstone – remain safe, attractive, and pleasant places for residents to live.

To achieve this, we have put in place an effective Estate Management Policy, which ensures that our properties and surrounding areas are regularly inspected, well maintained, and continue to provide a high quality of life for residents.

Effective estate management has a direct impact on key areas of our work, including:

- Resident satisfaction.
- Empty property management and allocations.
- Demand for housing.
- Incidence of repairs.

It also plays a central role in meeting our wider objectives of sustainability and quality service delivery.

Estate Management refers to services designed to ensure that residents can enjoy their homes in a safe, secure, and peaceful environment. These services cover both the people living in our communities and the physical environment of the areas, and include:

- Enforcing tenancy and factoring conditions.
- Managing communal areas.
- Maintaining the physical environment.
- Providing services to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

Equal Opportunities

The Association is committed to the principles of equal opportunities and good practice. In this regard, we acknowledge the Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes and Standards (Updated April 2017) : Outcome No. 1, Equalities, which states:

“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.”

Accordingly, we shall ensure that, specifically in regard to estate management, all residents – tenants and owner occupiers, current and former are treated equally, irrespective of their sex or marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other social attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

Good Practice and Legal Framework

The Association, in preparing this policy and the related procedures has given consideration to and sought compliance with The Scottish Social Housing Charter, Outcome No. 6 Estate Management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes, which states:

“tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe”.

Legal Framework

The Association’s Estate Management Policy operates within the context of relevant legislation and regulatory requirements, including (but not limited to):

- **Housing (Scotland) Act 2001** – sets out the rights and responsibilities of social landlords and tenants.
- **Housing (Scotland) Act 2014** – introduces further provisions on tenancy management, allocations, and anti-social behaviour.
- **Equality Act 2010** – requires the Association to promote equality and eliminate discrimination in service delivery.
- **Data Protection Act 2018** and the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** – provide the framework for handling, storing, and processing personal information securely and lawfully.
- **Access to Personal Files Act 1987** – establishes rights of individuals to access personal information held about them.
- **Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement** – Requires occupiers keep communal areas clear. This gives the housing association contractual power to enforce removal of items as breach of tenancy or lease terms.
- **Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 – Section 93** - Requires occupiers to keep “common property” free from combustible substances and anything which might obstruct egress (escape routes) or access, in the event of fire.
- **Fire Safety (Scotland) Act 2005**

Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are to:

1. Property and Environmental Standards

- Ensure that our properties, including individual and communal garden areas, are maintained to the highest possible standard.
- Provide a service that maintains the environment in and around our properties to a high standard, while also representing value for money.
- Carry out regular inspections and maintain a visible staff presence throughout our areas of operation.
- Minimise turnover of stock by addressing estate management issues proactively.

2. Sustainable and Safe Communities

- Contribute to the development of sustainable communities where people choose to live.
- Ensure that residents can enjoy their home and surroundings in peace, without undue disturbance.

3. Compliance and Good Practice

- Ensure that our service provision complies with legislation, regulation, and good practice.
- Ensure that the rights and obligations set out in tenancy agreements and Deeds of Conditions are understood and adhered to.
- Demonstrate our commitment to inter-agency partnership working in achieving quality service provision.

4. Resident Engagement and Participation

- Provide opportunities for tenant and resident involvement in estate management, including focus groups and estate walkabouts.
- Ensure effective tenant participation in decisions relating to the management of local areas.

5. Performance and Continuous Improvement

- Operate an effective complaints procedure.
- Monitor performance against agreed targets and timescales.
- Evaluate all aspects of the estate management service, including customer satisfaction and the condition of the physical environment.
- Strive for continuous improvement in both performance and service standards.

Preventative Action

The Association will seek to minimise estate management problems by taking proactive and preventative measures. This will be achieved through effective tenant consultation, inter-departmental working, close monitoring of contractors, and active promotion of this Policy. Preventative action will include:

- Clearly explaining landlord and tenant responsibilities to prospective tenants during accompanied viewings and subsequent lettings interviews.
- Explaining landlord, tenant, and owner occupier responsibilities in relation to estate management at tenancy sign-up interviews or initial contact with owner occupiers.
- Providing all residents with a comprehensive Residents' Handbook.
- Holding close meetings with residents where appropriate to address local issues.
- Making it easy for residents to report estate management concerns via the Association's website.
- Reminding existing residents of their obligations and responsibilities through verbal, written, and electronic communications, including the Association's website, newsletters, and other publications.
- Holding regular joint meetings between the Housing Management, Estates and Maintenance teams to ensure coordinated action.
- Undertaking regular estate inspections by relevant staff, with prompt follow-up action where problems are identified.
- Monitoring and overseeing the work of contractors delivering key estate services, including:
 - Close Cleaning.
 - Garden and Backcourt Maintenance.
 - Bulk Uplifts.
 - Bin Management Services.
 - Stone Repairs.
 - Hard Landscaping.

Estate Management Inspections

The Association recognises that effective estate inspections are essential to maintaining safe, secure, and attractive environments for residents.

What are “communal areas” / “common parts”

Communal areas (also called shared/common parts) are parts of a building or housing estate that are used by more than one household. These often include:

- Stairwells, landings, corridors, closes.
- Shared hallways, entrance lobbies.
- Bin stores, dry-goods or communal storage rooms.
- Shared gardens or paths.

- Spaces outside individual flats but still within the building perimeter.

The Association prohibits items being stored in communal areas for safety and legal reasons, including:

- **Fire safety:** clutter can block escape routes, create fuel for fire, hinder firefighters.
- **Trip & fall risks:** items in walkways can cause accidents.
- **Access for emergency services:** items may block or delay access.
- **Obstruction of maintenance** or caretaking (e.g. cleaning, fire door inspections).
- **Legal compliance** under fire safety legislation or housing legislation.

Removal of Items

- Written notice/warning will be given to residents about the items in communal areas e.g. bicycles, motorcycles, prams etc.
- If items are a hazard (fire risk, blocking escape etc.), items may be removed immediately.
- A period of 7 days will be given to remove items voluntarily.
- When items are not removed, the Association will remove them.
- Cost for removal may be charged to the resident who owns the items (if identified).
- Items will be stored for a period of 1 month to allow collection.
- If not collected, disposal will follow after the storage period.

Responsibilities and Frequency

- Housing staff will undertake inspections of all common areas at least 4 times per year.
- Additional inspections will be carried out where problems are identified, with follow-up action taken until the issues are resolved.
- All inspection details will be recorded on the Association's database (QL system).
- Maintenance Officers and the Estates Team will also identify and report estate management issues during the course of their duties.

Inspection Scope

Routine inspections will cover (but are not limited to):

- Cleanliness of closes, stairs, and backcourts.
- Garden maintenance.
- Refuse disposal and bulk uplifts.
- Vandalism to Association property.
- Graffiti (with offensive graffiti prioritised in partnership with relevant agencies).
- Pet fouling.
- Car parking and obstructions to access/exit routes.
- Tripping hazards.
- Stone repairs and hard landscaping.
- Signage.
- Play parks.
- Satellite dishes.
- General repairs required.

Equality and Community Safety

We recognise that offensive graffiti and harassment may be directed at individuals or groups on the basis of race, ethnicity, colour, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion/belief, or disability. Such incidents can contribute to heightened community tensions. The Association will therefore prioritise the removal of offensive graffiti and will work closely with relevant agencies to address harassment and hate-related incidents.

Follow-Up and Action

Where inspections identify unacceptable standards, the Association will take appropriate steps to resolve the issue. This may include:

- Personal contact with residents while on site.
- Leaving contact cards if residents are not at home.
- Written communication where personal contact is unsuccessful.
- Liaison with external partners, including Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Neighbourhood Wardens, Environmental Services, contractors, and other relevant agencies.

Cleaning of Close, Stairs and Backcourt

Resident Responsibilities

Under the terms of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, residents are responsible for ensuring that closes, stairs, windows, and backcourts are kept clean and tidy.

Association Support and Services

- The Association may arrange for contractors to carry out regular sweeping and washing of closes, stairs, and windows, as well as grass cutting in backcourts.
- The cost of such services will be met by residents through service charges.
- Close cleaning services will be introduced automatically in all new-build closes as they are completed and let.
- Where appropriate, the Association will also pursue the introduction of maintenance services (e.g. close cleaning and grass cutting) in existing properties.

Addressing Unacceptable Standards

Where closes and backcourts are found to be in an unacceptable condition, housing staff will take action to resolve the matter, which may include:

- Personal contact with residents while on site.
- Introducing close and stair cleaning rotas.
- Arranging close meetings with residents.
- Engaging contractors to provide cleaning/maintenance services (cost met by residents).

Monitoring and Follow-Up

- Housing staff will carry out re-inspections of closes and backcourts to ensure that improvements have been made.
- Ongoing monitoring will form part of regular estate inspections to ensure standards are maintained.

Garden Maintenance

Well-maintained gardens contribute significantly to the overall quality and appearance of our communities.

Resident Responsibilities

- Where a tenancy is let with exclusive use of a garden, it is the tenant's responsibility to ensure that the garden is kept in a clean, tidy, and well-maintained condition.
- Alternative arrangements may be agreed with the Association in specific circumstances.

Addressing Unacceptable Standards

Where gardens are found to be in an unacceptable condition, housing staff will take appropriate action, which may include:

- Personal contact with residents while on site.
- Arranging for a contractor to carry out necessary works, with the cost recharged to the resident.
- Issue warnings and possible action against the tenancy.

Monitoring and Follow-Up

- Housing staff will re-inspect gardens following intervention to ensure that improvements have been made and standards are maintained.

Vandalism to Association Property

Tenant Responsibilities

Under the terms of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, tenants, members of their household, and their visitors must not vandalise or cause damage to Association property or to any part of the common areas within the neighbourhood.

Reporting Requirements

- Where damage or vandalism occurs, residents are expected to report the matter to both the Police and the Association as soon as reasonably possible.

Action by the Association

- Where damage or vandalism occurs within an individual tenant's home, the Association will take action under Breach of Tenancy procedures. This may include:
 - Issuing warning notices.
 - Pursuing other legal remedies as appropriate.
- The Association reserves the right to recharge tenants for the cost of repairs resulting from vandalism or wilful/negligent damage.

Graffiti

The Association is committed to ensuring that all of our properties remain free of graffiti.

We aim to remove graffiti as follows:

Offensive Graffiti	within 2 days
Routine Graffiti	within 10 days

Pets

Permission

- Permission to keep pets will not be unreasonably withheld.
- Tenants wishing to keep pets must submit a request using the Association's Pet Let procedure.

Tenant Responsibilities

- The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement sets out tenants' responsibilities regarding the keeping of pets.
- Tenants must ensure that pets do not cause nuisance, disturbance, or damage to property.
- The Association reserves the right to require removal of a pet if it breaches these conditions.

Enforcement and Partnership Working

Where a tenant is in breach of their Tenancy Agreement with regard to the conduct or behaviour of their pet, the Association may take enforcement action and involve relevant agencies, including (but not limited to):

- Renfrewshire Council Environmental Services – Noise Enforcement Officer.
- Renfrewshire Council Environmental Services – Animal Warden.
- Police Scotland.
- Scottish SPCA.

Refuse Disposal

Tenant Responsibilities

- Under the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, tenants are responsible for the proper disposal of household refuse.
- Each tenant will be provided with the appropriate wheelie bins free of charge at the start of their tenancy. There will be a recharge cost to replace bins that have been stolen or damaged.
- Tenants are responsible for the removal of large bulky items.
- Fly Tipping: Where the persons responsible cannot be identified the Association will distribute the incurred costs to all residents within the building.

Association Support

- For tenement properties, the Association provides a service to:
 - Place wheelie bins out for collection and return them to the designated bin store areas.
 - Clean and maintain the bin store areas.
- This will be monitored regularly by housing staff to ensure standards are maintained.

Car Parking

Housing staff will regularly inspect all car parks owned by the Association, ensuring that they are free of litter, easily accessed, no unauthorised parking and have no abandoned vehicles.

Where problems arise and the identity of the resident concerned is known, housing staff will liaise with them directly, in order to resolve any issues. Where it is not possible to identify specific residents, housing staff will seek assistance from external agencies including the Police, Renfrewshire Council Environmental Services and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

All Association car parks will have the appropriate signage displayed.

Play Parks

Housing staff will regularly inspect play parks owned by the Association. Where any repairs are required, they will notify the Association's Maintenance Section/Estates Team who will instruct the necessary work to be undertaken.

Hazards

Where we are aware of hazards including hypodermic syringes, faeces, blood or other bodily fluids within our developments, we will take appropriate action to remove these safely and timeously. This action may include the use of an external contractor.

Where we are made aware of such issues, in areas outwith our jurisdiction, we will report them to the local authority promptly.

Satellite Dishes

The Association does not allow the installation of individual satellite dishes in flatted accommodation (i.e. tenements flats).

The Association will ensure provision of a communal system that can be utilised for the provision of satellite channels in these instances.

Deed of Conditions

The Deed of Conditions is the document which outlines the rights and responsibilities of owners in respect of the common areas of their property.

We will seek the co-operation of owners in the adoption of the Association's standard deed of conditions. In addition, we will provide owners with a Written Statement of Services which sets out our responsibilities as property factor, and also their responsibilities as one of the owners of the Common Property.

We will ensure that all owners are aware of their duties and responsibilities with regard to the upkeep of the common areas of their property.

Empty Houses

We will deal with all empty properties under the terms of our Voids and Lettings Policy.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff and residents to alert the Tenancy Team should they suspect that any property has been abandoned.

Complaints

Should any tenant be dissatisfied with the implementation of this policy they should submit a complaint to the Association in order to get the matter resolved.

If, after exhausting the Association's complaints procedure (full details of which are available on our website, from staff or located in our reception) a tenant is still unhappy, they should contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO):

SPSO

Bridgeside House

99 McDonald Road

Edinburgh

EH7 4NS

(if you would like to visit in person, you must make an appointment first)

Their freepost address is:

FREEPOST SPSO

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Online contact www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Data Protection

The Association will handle personal information carefully and keep it secure, whether it is held on paper, on our computer systems, or through approved cloud services. Access to personal information will be limited to staff and authorised partners who need it to carry out their role. We will keep information only for as long as it is needed for the purpose it was collected, or where we are required to keep it by law, and will securely delete, archive, or dispose of it when it is no longer required. At all times, we will act in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Association's Committee every three years to ensure that it responds to any changing circumstances.

This review will take place following the appropriate consultation with tenants as outlined in our Tenant Participation Strategy.