



Pest Control Policy

Revision History

Policy	Pest Control
Reviewer(s)	Louise McDonald/Sandra Doherty
Committee Name	Operations and Performance
Number and Date of Meeting	
New Policy or Description of Revision	New
Equality Impact Assessment Complete	30.04.25
Data Protection Impact Assessment Complete	30.04.25
Health and Safety Risk Assessment Complete	
Consultation Complete	
Next Review Date	April 2028

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1. Introduction

Williamsburgh Housing Association has a range of residential properties that may be subject to an infestation of pests such as rats, mice, wasps, bedbugs, beetles, ants, fleas and cockroaches.

These pests can:

- Spread diseases
- Damage tenants' homes and belongings
- Sting or bite
- Aggravate asthma, eczema and other allergies

The effective control of these pests within the Association's properties will ensure that, in the event of an outbreak, the responsibilities of the Association and the customer are clearly defined and that the appropriate action and advice can be undertaken.

This document outlines the individual responsibilities to ensure that adequate control measures are in place to control any pest control issues within the Association's properties.

2. 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 (2012): 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 our Pest Control Policy, all tenants, 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.

3. Scottish Social Housing Charter and Legal Framework

The Association, in preparing this policy and the related procedures has given consideration to and sought compliance with the following:

Scottish Social Housing Charter, as defined by The Scottish Housing Regulator – the regulatory body for housing associations. The relevant Charter Outcome numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 11 state:

2: Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

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

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”

4: Quality of housing

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

“tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) when they are allocated; are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair; and also meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH) by December 2020”

5: Repairs, maintenance and improvements

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

“tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done”

6: Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes

Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonably possible that:

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

11: Tenancy sustainment

Social landlords ensure 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”.

Legal Framework

This policy has been developed taking into account the legislation and regulations governing Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Legislation relevant to this Policy includes:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987/2001/2010/2014
- Data Protection Act 1998 and 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations 2016 (GDPR)
- Equality Act 2010
- The Scottish Social Housing Charter
- Public Health (Scotland) Act 2008
- Environmental Protection Act 1990

4. Aims Of The Policy

The Association has a duty of care to ensure that its residential properties are safe for use and, where pest control issues are identified, they are properly managed to ensure the eradication of the infestation.

The aim of this policy is to have an effective management system in place to ensure that, where a pest control issue has been identified, the issue is resolved as appropriate.

5. Responsibilities

WHA recognises it has an important role in ensuring its properties are well maintained and fit for habitation. The Association will work with other partners to promote best practice, general food and recycling waste management and will ensure robust and effective measures are in place for the prevention and effective control of pests.

The three key issues driving effective pest control are acknowledged as:

- property maintenance
- promotion of good practice
- behavioural change

with treatment considered a remedial measure where there has been a lapse in one or more of the key issues that have resulted in the pest control issue. In some cases, instances around wildlife pest control may be unforeseen and fall out with these categories.

5.1 The Association's Responsibility

Schedule 4 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 states that the landlord in a Scottish Secure tenancy must ensure that the house is, at the commencement of the tenancy, wind and watertight and in all other respects reasonably fit for human habitation.

If there is evidence of serious pest infestation such as rats or cockroaches during the void period which renders the property unfit for human habitation, it will be the responsibility of Williamsburgh Housing Association to liaise with Environmental Health or appoint a pest control contractor to eradicate the problem prior to the property being offered for let.

If pests are accessing a property through holes in the building fabric, then the Association will ensure that the pests are removed and the holes repaired.

The Association will appoint a pest control contractor to deal with an infestation of cockroaches and bedbugs. These pests can spread germs and move freely from building to building.

If a tenant suspects the external area / communal back court to have an infestation of mice or rats, they should contact the Association in order for us to investigate.

The Association are not responsible for works required to be carried out within individual owner-occupied properties.

Where work is instructed to communal areas, this may be recharged to owner occupied properties within the building.

The Association **is not** responsible for the eradication of other insects (except those highlighted above) in a tenants home. If a tenant has an infestation, they should contact the Association's office in the first instance for advice, you may also contact an approved Pest Control Contractor.

We will also:

- Ensure that the appropriate advice is given to customers and staff when advised of an infestation.
- Ensure that, where necessary, infestations are inspected to determine the source and identify who is responsible for undertaking the treatment.
- Ensure that, where appropriate, works are instructed to treat infestations, including the blocking up of holes to prevent further problems.
- Ensure that we investigate and follow up any recommendations from specialist contractors to prevent further infestations.

The Association is not responsible for damage caused by pests to tenant's belongings.

5.2 The Tenant's Responsibility

Advising the Association of any infestation so that we can assess the cause and advise responsibility.

The tenant is responsible for treating and paying for infestations by common household pests in their own property such as flying insects, ants, moths, household beetles or spiders. This list is not exhaustive.

Demonstrate appropriate behavioural change towards eradication of the issue as appropriately outlined by WHA staff or service providers.

Refrain from feeding wild birds within the grounds of the common parts and locality of their home.

Follow direction and best practice relating to domestic waste and recycling.

The Association will offer advice where we can on treatment and prevention.

If a tenant has tried and failed to deal with pests, contact should be made to the Association for further advice and assistance.

If a tenant does not deal with an infestation or request assistance to do so, and consequently, neighbouring properties or the building fabric become infested or damaged due to a tenant's neglect, the Association will intervene to address the problem. In this situation, all associated costs will be recharged to the tenant who failed to eradicate the pests from their property in the first instance.

5.3 Procedure For Bats

Bats are a protected species, and it is a criminal offence to capture, injure or kill a bat, or to intentionally damage a bat roost. The penalties for violation are severe.

If bats are discovered in any WHA property or in a common area factored by WHA, they must not under any circumstances be touched, disturbed, expelled, stopped from gaining access, or killed. When a colony is suspected, this information and direction **MUST** be made clear to the caller.

WHA has a responsibility to stop contractors undertaking work anywhere near bats or anything which may disturb them.

Scottish Natural Heritage should be contacted for further advice on any infestation.

6. Monitoring

A detailed record of reports received regarding a potential infestation will be kept in line with appropriate GDPR guidelines to enable monitoring of trends and identification of problem areas. Reports will include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Property address;
- Date of report;
- Type of infestation (i.e. rats, mice, cockroaches);
- Location of infestation (i.e. kitchen, bathroom, garden, stairs)
- Advice Given

7. Staff Training

We will ensure that all staff are aware of this policy.

8. Complaints

Although we are committed to providing high levels of service, we accept that there may be occasions where you may not be satisfied with the service you have received from us. We value all complaints and use this information to help us improve our services. Our Complaints Policy describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint.

9. Data Protection

The Association will store personal information provided securely on both our computer and filing systems. At all times we will act in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Committee on a 3 yearly basis, to ensure that it responds to any changing circumstances.