



Williamsburgh

HOUSING ASSOCIATION

• Limited •

Estate Management Policy

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This policy is available in different languages and other formats such as Braille or tape on request.

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1. Introduction

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

In order to achieve this, the Association requires to have an effective Estate Management Policy in place.

Estate Management involves the regular inspection of all our properties ensuring that they are well maintained and remain an attractive place to live.

The effectiveness of our estate management function impacts significantly on all aspects of our activity including resident satisfaction, empty property management, allocations, demand for housing and the incidence of repairs. It plays a major role in meeting our stated objectives of achieving sustainability and providing a quality service to all residents in our 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 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.

3. 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 legislative framework which affects the Estate Management includes:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 1988
- EU General Data Protection Regulation

4. Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To ensure that our properties, including individual and common garden areas, are maintained to the highest possible standard.
- To contribute to developing sustainable communities where people choose to live.
- To ensure that our service provision complies with law and good practice.
- To highlight our commitment to inter agency partnership working in order to achieve our stated objectives of sustainability and quality service provision.
- To ensure that our staff maintain a visible presence throughout our areas of operation.
- To ensure that we have an effective complaints procedures in operation.
- To ensure that we monitor our performance against targets and timescales set.
- To ensure that residents can enjoy their home and surroundings in peace, without undue disturbance from others.
- To ensure that the rights and obligations of the tenancy agreement are understood and adhered to.
- To ensure that the rights and obligations of the Deed of Conditions are understood and adhered to.
- To ensure effective tenant participation.

- To achieving continuous improvement in our performance and in the standards of services provided to tenants.

5. Prevention

The Association will seek to minimise estate management problems by taking preventative action through tenant consultation, inter-departmental working, overseeing the work of relevant contractors, and the promotion of our Policy. This will include:

- Explaining landlord and tenant responsibilities to prospective tenants, during accompanied viewings and any subsequent lettings interviews.
- Explaining landlord, tenant and owner occupier responsibilities in relation to estate management, during the tenancy sign up interview or the initial interview with owner occupiers.
- By provision of our Residents Handbook.
- Through discussions at Focus Group meetings.
- By holding close meetings, where appropriate.
- Reminding existing residents of their obligations and responsibilities through verbal, written and electronic communications, including our website, newsletters and other publications.
- The holding of regular joint meetings of the Housing Management and Maintenance sections.
- Undertaking regular inspections of the area by relevant staff and prompt action being taken when problems are identified.
- Overseeing the work of contractors in relation to Close Cleaning, Garden and Backcourt Maintenance, Bulk Uplifts, Bin Management Service, Stone Repairs and Hard Landscaping.

6. Estate Management Inspections

The Association's housing staff will be responsible for undertaking regular inspections of all of the Association's properties and common areas.

Housing staff will conduct inspections of each property a minimum of four times per year.

Where problems are identified within properties or common areas, housing staff will undertake additional inspections and appropriate action taken until the problems are resolved.

Details of all inspections will be recorded on the Association's database – QL.

Routine inspections will include the following:

- Cleanliness of close, stairs and backcourts.
- Garden maintenance.
- Vandalism to Association property.
- Graffiti.
- Pet fouling.
- Refuse disposal.
- Car parking.
- Satellite dishes.
- Stone repairs.
- Hard landscaping.
- Bulk uplifts.

- Signage.
- Play parks.
- Repairs required.

The Association's maintenance officers whilst carrying out their duties, will also be responsible for identifying any issues in relation to the following:

- Vandalism to the Association's property.
- Stone repairs.
- Hard landscaping.
- Bulk uplifts.
- Signage.
- Play parks.
- Repairs required.

6. Estate Management Inspections Contd.

Where inspections identify standards that are unacceptable, various methods of addressing these may be undertaken including the following:

- Personal contact with residents whilst on site.
- Depositing contact cards if residents are not at home.
- Written letters to residents, if personal contact fails.
- Liaising with Police, Neighbourhood Wardens, Environmental Services, Contractors and other external partners.

7. Cleaning of Close, Stairs and Backcourts

Residents are responsible for ensuring the close, stairs, windows and backcourts are kept clean and tidy as detailed in their Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement sections 2.8, 2.9 and 2.11. In addition, the Association may install the services of a contractor to provide regular sweeping and washing of close, stairs, windows and also backcourt grass cutting.

Where closes and backcourts are found to be of an unacceptable standard, housing staff will address this in several ways including the following:

- Personal contact with residents whilst on site.
- The introduction of close and stair cleaning rotas.
- The introduction of contractors (the cost of which will be met by residents).
- Arranging close meetings with residents.

In all circumstances, housing staff will be responsible for re-inspecting the close and backcourt to ensure improvement.

Close cleaning services will be introduced automatically as each new build close is completed and available for let. On an ongoing basis, housing staff will pursue the implementation of close cleaning services, where they are not already in place.

In addition, where it is felt necessary, housing staff will pursue the introduction of backcourt maintenance services.

An annual Good Close, Best Back and Best Front Garden competition will be held to promote and encourage high standards of maintenance by residents.

8. Garden Maintenance

Well maintained gardens enhance the physical environment of the area.

Where a tenancy is let with exclusive use of a garden, it will be the responsibility of the tenant to maintain it, unless alternative arrangements, agreed by the Association, are in place.

Where individual gardens are found to be of an unacceptable standard, housing staff will address this in the following ways:

- Personal contact with residents whilst on site.
- The introduction of a contractor (the cost of which will be met by residents).

In all circumstances, housing staff will be responsible for re-inspecting the gardens to ensure improvement.

An annual Best Back and Best Front Garden competition will be held to promote and encourage high standards of maintenance by residents.

9. Vandalism to Association Property

Under the terms of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, section 3.3, the tenant, those living with the tenant and the tenant's visitors must not vandalise or damage Association property or any part of the common parts of the neighbourhood.

Where damage or vandalism has occurred, residents are expected to report such matters to the Police and the Association, as soon as is reasonably possible.

Where damage or vandalism has occurred within individual tenant's homes, action will be taken regarding Breach of Tenancy. The action will include issuing warning notices and any other relevant legal options available.

In addition, the Association reserves the right to charge the tenant for any subsequent repairs required.

10. 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

11. Pets

Permission to keep pets will not be unreasonably withheld. Tenants wishing to keep pets must apply using the Association's Pet Let.

Section 2.5 of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement outlines tenants' responsibilities in relation to the keeping of pets, and the Association's entitlement to request removal of a pet if it is causing nuisance or damage.

Where a tenant is in breach of their Tenancy Agreement, with regards to the conduct and behaviour of their pet, the Association may involve other agencies, as appropriate, including the following:

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

12. Refuse Disposal

Tenants' responsibilities for household refuse collection is outlined in the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, Section 2.13.

All Association tenants will receive the required wheelie bins, free of charge, for disposing of their household refuse. The services of a contractor to place wheelie bins for collection and then return them to the bin store areas within tenement properties, is provided by the Association. In addition the contractor is responsible for cleaning the bin store areas. The contractor's performance is monitored by housing staff.

Tenants are also responsible for the removal of their large bulky items. Tenants can, if they wish, request the services of the Association's contractor by contacting the customer services team (the charge for any items to be removed will be met by the individual resident).

13. 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.

14. 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 who will instruct the necessary work to be undertaken.

15. 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.

16. Satellite Dishes

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

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

17. 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.

18. 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.

18. Complaints

Residents can make complaints in relation to aspects of estate management, in the following ways:

- By attending our office in person.
- By telephoning our office.
- In writing.
- By using the Association's website - www.williamsburghha.co.uk

All complaints received will be responded to, in accordance with the timescales detailed in the Association's Neighbour Disputes and Anti Social Behaviour Policy.

21. 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).

22. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Association's Housing Management Sub 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.