



Craigdale
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Estate Management Policy

Date of Review: 18.05.20

Date of Approval: 26.05.20

Date of Next Review: July 2023

Craigdale Housing Association can provide this document on request, in different languages and formats, including Braille and audio formats.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Craigdale Housing Association (CHA) recognises the importance of managing its estates to ensure that all tenants and residents can live in a decent, safe and secure environment.
- 1.2 CHA will also recognise that to achieve this, Estate Management is not simply about the physical environment of the estate, but also concerns issues such as:
- Identifying individuals tenant's support needs;
 - Ensuring compliance with tenancy conditions; and
 - Creating sustainable tenancies and communities.
- 1.3 There are clear links between this Policy and a number of other Policies, crucial to overall effective management of our estates. The key Policies are identified below but not limited to:
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
 - Allocation Policy
 - Void Management Policy
 - Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement
- 1.4 The Policy sets down the standards that apply where the Association directly manages housing stock.

2. Scottish Social Housing Charter

- 2.1 The Scottish Social Housing Charter stated at Outcome number 6 that:

“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.”

This outcome covers a range of actions that social landlords can take on their own and in partnership with others. It covers action 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 the role of landlords in working with others to tackle anti-social behaviour.

- 2.2 The Scottish Housing Regulator assesses the Association's performance in respect of the Charter outcome through the following indicators:

- Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's contributions to the management of the neighborhood they live in.
- Percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year.
- Percentage of antisocial behavior cases reported that were resolved within locally agreed targets.

3. Principals, Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The Association has a clear commitment to continuous improvement and to the exploration of new ideas in all areas of its work. The objectives of this policy are:
- To enable all tenants, residents and their households to live in well managed and maintained housing.
 - To ensure that tenants and residents are able to live in a decent, secure, clean and tidy environment.
 - To ensure that tenants and residents are made aware of, and accept, their responsibilities in relation to the upkeep of their property and the surrounding area.
 - To ensure that tenants and residents are made aware of the Association's responsibilities in relation to estate management.
 - To work with other agencies and statutory bodies with the aim of ensuring that communities are well looked after.

4. Policy Definition and Responsibility

- 4.1 For the purpose of clarity, estate management within this policy is deemed to be concerned with maintaining the physical condition, cleanliness and safety of the overall housing environment both to preserve its fabric and to ensure that the community is a place where people wish to live.
- 4.2 This policy cross-relates to the Association's Anti-Social Behaviour policy. The policy places a strong emphasis on a proactive and supportive approach to estate management that focuses on creating sustainable and supported tenancies to enable the stability of the area, social inclusion and the prevention of homelessness.
- 4.3 For tenants it means compliance with their responsibilities for maintaining good order in their surrounding environment, as well as their own individual property, and in doing so to respect the rights of their neighbours and the surrounding community, all as laid down in their Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. The detailed terms of the Tenancy Agreement should be read in conjunction with this policy.

General Requirements

4.4 Craigdale Housing Association will seek to;

- Ensure that estate management services are planned, effectively budgeted for and managed to a high standard
- Ensure that sufficient staff resources are provided for estate management services
- Ensure that the common areas for which the Association has responsibility are regularly checked and maintained to the highest possible standard
- React promptly and act upon in relation to estate management problems including complaints from tenants and/or residents, for example about service quality or neglect by other tenants and/or residents
- Maintain appropriate estate management records covering common areas and any other building or area of land in the Association ownership
- Co-operate wherever possible with other relevant organisations in order to maintain and enhance the quality of the local environment

The Estate Management Framework

4.5 The prevention of estate management problems is one of the most effective ways of ensuring tenants and residents can enjoy living in a well-cared environment. Preventative measures include elements of sustaining tenancies, design/construction, tenant and resident awareness and participation and management arrangements aimed at preventing or minimising problems.

4.6 The sustaining of tenancies involves ensuring each tenancy begins on a sound footing. At the accompanied viewing and at the sign-up interview the tenant will be fully briefed and will understand the landlord and tenant roles and responsibilities as covered by the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. Tenants are also given a copy of the Estate Management Policy.

4.7 At the sign-up stage, the new tenant will be given a calendar/handbook that includes information with a summary of landlord and tenant responsibilities. The new tenants will also sign a Good Neighbour Charter form. This will be followed up by a 'settling-in visit' within the first six weeks of the tenancy.

4.8 Housing Services staff will note and act upon problems and issues through actively listening to tenants' complaints and concerns about issues that affect the quality of life locally. The key approaches to effective estate management are housing led but also need input from other agencies, such as the Police and Council service departments. These may include:

- The attention to detail with relatively minor problems that have the potential for escalation such as disputes over litter within a tenement close
- Planning and providing housing and other support where required

- Taking early action to address new problems such as with graffiti appearing for the first time
- Inspections by staff will be carried out to monitor various service quality issues
- The co-operation with partners, including Police on addressing crime related issues, such as vandalism and car theft/abandonment
- The use of Newsletter/Website and other forms of communication routes to highlight landlord and tenant roles and responsibilities, service standards and special initiatives.
- Tenant satisfaction surveys.

4.9 When a tenancy has ended or been established to have been abandoned, Housing Services Section will arrange to inspect the house, including gardens, where appropriate, and will arrange to charge the outgoing tenant for any repairs or removal of abandoned possessions, for example left in garden areas, repairs to fences thought to have been damaged or neglected by the tenant

5. Tenant Awareness of Responsibilities

5.1 Outlining the Associations & Tenants responsibilities is of great importance for an effective estate management which will form a key part of the tenancy sign up and subsequent settling in visits. This will be a key Housing Services responsibility. Tenants will be made aware of their responsibilities, of the arrangements that are in place for the maintenance of common areas and of the procedures for reporting and dealing with problems should they arise. Tenants will also be made aware of more general activities and developments through Newsletters and other communication routes.

5.2 The Association's Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement specifies tenants' responsibilities including:

- The tenant, the person living with the tenant or visitors must take reasonable care to prevent damage to their houses, their neighbours property and all common areas.
- Taking all reasonable steps to prevent pets from causing a nuisance, annoyance or a detriment to health and safety or presenting a danger to anyone living with the tenant or the tenant's neighbours
- Take reasonable care of gardens and backcourt areas.
- Appropriate storage of belongings and parking of vehicles
- Careful and appropriate disposal of refuse, including bulk for uplifting.

5.3 The Association's Repairs and Maintenance Policy provides for rechargeable repairs, where tenants can be charged for repairs resulting from willful damage caused by them, members of their family/household or visitors to the house.

Design and Construction

- 5.4 The Association's investment programme is aimed at improving the quality and attractiveness of the existing housing stock. In delivering that programme, the Association will seek to incorporate all (or as many as possible) Secure by Design features in its work. Specific attention will be given to the design and improvement of shared and common areas to provide residents with the maximum amount of clearly defined, defensible space and to minimise large and open access common areas.

6. Responsibility and Authorisation

- 6.1 A crucial part of the prevention of problems lies with providing tenants and others, e.g. owners, with clarity on key issues of responsibility. What is permissible within Tenancy Agreements, Deeds of Condition and other agreements needs to be clearly explained and properly understood. Equally, the consequences of failure to adhere to such agreements must be clear. The following are examples of such issues:
- Satellite dishes
 - Refuse disposal and
 - Keeping domestic animals (pets)

The Association may review its position on such matters from time to time. Such reviews can be independent of the general review of this policy.

- 6.2 The Association's areas will be regularly inspected with services provided by various contractors, such as close cleaning and common ground maintenance.
- 6.3 Regular and routine inspection of common areas, such as common stairs, common backcourts and common landscaped areas including fixtures such as fencing, lighting, etc. will be the responsibility of the Senior Housing Services Officer.
- 6.4 The Association shall set down the timing and scope for such inspections and will have regard to any contracts or Service Level Agreements with other agencies. The purpose of such inspections shall include both the appraisal of work that has been done and the identification of work that may be required.
- 6.5 The Association will also have specifications for seasonal communal landscape maintenance, including close cleaning, weed control and grass cutting.
- 6.6 Where the upkeep of an area is the responsibility of the tenant, it shall be the responsibility of the Housing Services Section to enforce the conditions of the tenancy.
- 6.7 Monitoring specific areas shall be the responsibility of the Senior Housing Services Officer and shall be on the basis of a cycle of programmed inspections.

6.8 Every tenancy will be inspected over a five-year period by the Housing Services Section to ensure that Association's fixtures and fittings are being maintained. A planned programme will be developed to cover all phases and tenants will be notified in advance of these inspections. The Association will also use these visits to update household details.

7. Response to Complaints

7.1 The Association will ensure that prompt and appropriate action will be taken to deal with estate management problems arising either from regular staff inspections or from tenant and resident complaints.

7.2 All tenants and residents who wish to make a complaint:

- Will be given information detailing how to make a complaint concerning estate management whether it is about a tenant, a contractor or the Association or the Association's services.
- All complaints will be recorded and dealt with in accordance with the Complaint Policy.
- Where one tenant is complaining about another, the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy will be used.

7.3 Legal action may include action for eviction, but the Association may seek lesser or different sanctions depending on the nature of the problem and the legal remedies open to the landlord.

7.4 The Association will avoid the use of legal action in relation to estate management as far as possible, but will be prepared to take such action where a tenant is in breach of their Scottish Secure Tenancy agreement and all other action has been tried and has failed to remedy the situation. The Association may take legal advice with regards to breaches of occupancy agreements in the case of shared owners.

7.5 If the use of legal action is to start, the Senior Housing Services Officer will initiate a Notice of Proceedings and a full report must go to the Director for approval. Any decision to implement the Decree and re-possess the property will be taken by the Association's Board.

7.6 Where complaints relate to the performance or failure of a contractor to properly maintain an area, e.g. common ground, to the standard agreed as part of their contract, Maintenance Services Officer will:

- Establish the extent of the failure.
- Where appropriate provide the contractor with an opportunity to make good the failure.
- If necessary, enforce the clauses within the contract relating to performance failure.

7.7 The above is a summary of the steps to be taken by staff in addressing contract failure. Individual contracts and agreements will include separate and detailed clauses relating to performance and sanctions for performance failure and staff will follow the agreed procedures to seek resolution.

8. External Agencies

8.1 Many estate management issues essentially involve a number of different agencies with overlapping jurisdictions. Examples of this include:

- Police: dealing with vandalism, drugs, anti-social behaviour
- Environmental Health: nuisance pets, noise, health hazards
- Social Work: anti-social behaviour, vulnerable families. Where necessary, the Association will seek the involvement of other agencies to assist in resolving any such nuisance.

9. Monitoring and Performance

9.1 We will provide quarterly reports to the Operational Services Committee on neighborhood managements.

9.2 We will provide an Annual Return on the Social Housing Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator to tell them how we have performed against the performance indicators in the Social Housing Charter, specifically:

- Indicator 17: the percentage of customers satisfied with the management of the neighborhood they live in.
- Indicator 19: the percentage of Anti-Social behaviour cases reported in the year, which were resolved within locally agreed targets.

10. Consultation

We aims to deliver excellent services which respond to local needs and reflect what is most important to our customers. We aim to provide good quality neighborhoods. We aim to provide a sensitive and effective service for tackling nuisance behaviour, neighbour nuisance and disputes to make sure that all our customers can enjoy living in their homes.

10.1 To do that, we need our customers to tell us how our policy is working and help us to make the changes which will improve it. In line with our Customer Engagement and Participation Policy.

- We make it easy for customer and local people to give us their comments and views – face to face, by telephone, e-mail or in a letter.
- We commission formal independent customer satisfaction surveys on a continuous monitoring basis.
- We publish how we have performed against our targets.
- We use customer feedback to review our policies.

11. Complaints

We have a separate complaints policy and procedure. Leaflets and copies of the complaints procedure are available from the Association's office and on our website. We also provide information on how our customers can make a complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS , telephone 0800 377 7300 or 0131 225 5300 and how to contact the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The Ombudsman will not normally deal with complaints unless customers have followed the Association's complaints' procedure.

12. Review of Policy

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner, in response to a change in legislation or circumstance.

13. Equalities and Human Rights

We aim to ensure that all services, including the delivery of this policy, provide equality of opportunity.

We will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals. We will not discriminate against any individual for any reason, including age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or other status.

14. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The organisation will treat personal data in line with our obligations under the current GDPR regulations and our own policy.

15. Freedom of Information (FOI)

The Association is subject to FOI and all enquiries with respect to Estate Management will be handled strictly in line with FOI and confidentiality policies.