



## ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

<b>POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST</b>	
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Author:	Operations Director
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KPIs / reporting arrangements implemented:	In place
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# CALEDONIA HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

## POLICY STATEMENT: ESTATE MANAGEMENT

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Association recognises that Estate Management is a vital part of the housing management role of the landlord and an important service from tenants and other residents' viewpoint.
- 1.2 In terms of the Association's policy, estate management refers to the management of its property, the surrounding areas and other services which aim at enabling our tenants and residents to have a quiet enjoyment of their homes and a decent, safe and secure living environment.
- 1.3 Estate Management encompasses a diverse range of issues such as: providing advice and assistance on tenancy matters and on services which enhance the local community (such as initiatives to reduce crime and environmental improvements); enforcing tenancy conditions; the management of communal areas and facilities in the Association's ownership; and the management and upkeep of the physical environment in the Association's ownership.
- 1.4 The Estate Management Policy applies to all rented, shared ownership and mixed tenure developments owned or managed by the Association.

### 2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The aims of the Association's Estate management Policy is to ensure that:
  - Tenants, sharing owners and owners live in well managed and maintained housing providing a decent, secure, safe, clean and tidy environment,
  - Ensure that tenants, sharing owners and owners are made aware of, and accept, their responsibilities in relation to the upkeep of their property and surrounding environment,
  - Ensure that tenants, sharing owners and owners are made aware of the Association's responsibilities in relation to Estate Management,
  - Tenants, sharing owners and owners are satisfied with the Estate Management service provided by the Association,
  - We provide opportunities for tenants, sharing owners and owners to feedback in order to influence and participate in decision making relating to estate management,
  - The upkeep of the housing stock and surrounding environment are managed and maintained to a standard which reduces the duration and level of void properties,

2.2 To achieve the above objectives the Association will:

- Work closely with tenants, sharing owners, owners, local tenant groups and estate representatives regarding the quality of estate management services provided,
- Closely monitor the performance of contractors and the Estates Service regarding the upkeep of all common areas,
- Carry out regular surveys on the quality of all estate management services,
- Take every opportunity to encourage tenants, sharing owners and owners to contribute to estate management by participating at the annual estate inspections,
- Involve tenants, sharing owners and owners in developing initiatives for the improvement of their local environment and amenities,
- Keep tenants, sharing owners and owners informed about activities affecting their community,
- Provide good quality information and advice on estate management services, including at the tenancy sign-up stage, new tenant visits, officer surgeries, information leaflets, newsletter articles and customer service standards,
- Carry out regular inspections of our housing developments, including annual estate inspections and officer surgeries,
- Make the most effective use of internal recording systems including IT systems, email and standard pro-formas,
- Ensure staff maintain a visible presence throughout the Association's housing developments,
- Be proactive and take appropriate and early action to enforce tenancy conditions where applicable,
- Work closely with other agencies and statutory bodies with the aim of ensuring that the Association's housing developments and surrounding environment are well looked after,
- Ensure good relationships are developed with tenants, sharing owners and owners to encourage interest and involvement within their area for the mutual benefit of both the Association and the local community.
- Encourage feedback on services and publish findings from surveys and visits.

### 3. Legislation & Regulatory Framework

3.1 The Estate Management Policy meets with legislative and good practice requirements including:

**The Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST)** – the Association can exercise direct control over its tenants via the terms of the SST and the tenancy conditions. The purpose of this is to protect the interest of tenants, the wider community and the Association.

- 3.2 **The Social Housing Charter** – the Scottish Government, through the Social Housing Charter, sets the outcomes it expects Housing Associations to achieve for its residents. In terms of how Associations manage their estates and neighbourhoods the Social Housing Charter states that:

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

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.

- 3.3 The Estate Management policy supports the strategic requirements of the Association's Business Plan and links to the Association's Tenant Participation Strategy, Void Management Policy, anti Social Behaviour Policy, Equal Opportunity Policy and Risk Management Strategy.

**4. Policy and Procedures**

- 4.1 The Estate Management Policy is supported by detailed procedures which include guidance for staff and information for residents. To ensure that the Association delivers on the Estate Management Policy aims and objectives and for absolute clarity in terms of service delivery the following policy statements will apply:

- Provision of quality information and advice;  
The Association will provide information to tenants and sharing home owners on the estate management services they can expect via the Tenancy or Exclusive Occupancy Agreement, the Tenants or Sharing Owners Handbook, as detailed in our published Customer Service Standards, by publishing and distributing a Good Neighbour leaflet, publishing articles in Caledonia News, placing information on our website and through face to face contact with residents at tenancy sign ups, new tenant home visits, officer surgeries and the annual estate inspections.
- Roles and responsibilities of Operations Department staff:  
All Operations Department staff have a shared responsibility for looking after the Association's estates and properties. Housing and Maintenance Officers will be primarily responsible for responding to and dealing with estate management matters. However, these staff will be supported by Scheme Managers at our sheltered housing schemes, by the Estates Service, by the Home Help Service and by our Customer Services Team.

- Frequency of estate management visits by Operations Department staff:  
The Housing and Maintenance Officers will visit their designated schemes and estates on a regular basis whilst undertaking home visits for tenancy matters, repair inspections, tenant meetings, officer surgeries and annual estate inspections.
- New tenant visits:  
The Housing Officer will visit all new tenants within two months of commencement of their tenancy. The purpose of the visit being to ensure that the tenant has made a satisfactory start to their tenancy and that the tenancy conditions are being complied with.
- House inspections:  
The Housing and Maintenance Officers will undertake house inspections in response to reports that the tenancy conditions are not being maintained. The Officers will also observe compliance with the tenancy conditions when undertaking ad hoc visits to houses.
- Officer surgeries:  
The Housing Officers will organise tenant surgeries for their designated schemes and developments as required. The frequency of surgery will be increased where estate management difficulties or “hot spots” are identified. The Housing and Maintenance Officer will attend the Stakeholder meetings held at our sheltered housing developments.
- Annual estate inspections:  
The Housing Officer and Maintenance Officer will organise and attend an annual estate inspection for their designated schemes and estates. The Factoring Officer will arrange estate inspections of sharing owner and owned properties. Residents will be advised in advance and will be invited to participate in the inspection. Issues arising and actions to respond will be recorded. Residents will be surveyed to provide feedback on their satisfaction with the estate management of their scheme.
- Monitoring the standards of cleaning of communal areas, windows, communal landscape maintenance and the general environment:  
The cleaning and maintenance of the communal areas at the Associations’ schemes and estates is undertaken by a range of external contractors and internal staff and services (such as the Estates Service, the Home Help Service and the Sheltered Housing Service). The Housing and Maintenance Officer will regularly inspect these areas to ensure that services are being provided and are satisfactory. The Officer will take responsibility for taking forward actions to resolve concerns about performance or poor standards.
- Upkeep of gardens areas:  
Residents who have gardens are responsible for maintaining them and keeping them tidy. The Housing Officer will ensure that tenancy conditions are maintained and that action taken to resolve issues is taken promptly.

- **Keeping pets:**  
Residents may keep a domestic pet, however, the Association's written permission is required in advance. This permission will be withdrawn if the resident does not properly control their pet or it causes a nuisance. The Association retains the right to designate certain blocks or schemes to be "pet free" and permission will not be granted under any circumstances. The Housing Officer is responsible for considering requests to keep a pet and for investigating issues of non compliance.
- **Car parking:**  
Where car parking is provided this is available to our residents on a "first come, first served" basis. The Association will only issue formal permits and use external car park attendants where the parking is regularly being abused by non residents and the parking service costs are included within residents' service charges. The Association will consider the provision of a parking bay for use by disabled badge owners provided that the request is made in writing, that there is sufficient space for the bay and the provision is supported by a majority of the residents.
- **Abandoned vehicles:**  
The Housing Officer will investigate reports of any abandoned vehicle on the Associations' property or land. Steps will be taken to identify and contact the owner of the vehicle and request its removal. The vehicle will be removed to a place of storage if the owner fails to comply. The vehicle will be disposed of if the owner fails to contact the Association and remove the vehicle from storage.
- **Arrangements for snow clearing:**  
The Associations' staff will not undertake the clearing of snow or ice. The Association will provide grit, grit bins and ice clearing facilities which residents are welcome to use during icy conditions. The Association is not responsible for ensuring the safety of walkways or roads during extreme weather conditions. The Association will consider arranging contractors to clear snow and ice if the extreme conditions are prolonged. The Association will consider the provision of a snow clearance service at a scheme provided this is supported by a majority of the residents and the costs of the service is included within the service charge. The Maintenance Officer is responsible for arranging the provision of grit and grit bins.
- **Vermin and other infestations:**  
Where vermin or infestation is reported and found in common areas, the Maintenance Officer will arrange appropriate contractors to undertake remedial works. The Housing Officer will take responsibility for resolving an issue directly attributable to a tenant's living conditions or habits. This may involve other agencies (social work, GP, etc.) and actions to ensure compliance with the tenancy conditions.

- Feeding birds:  
Residents should only feed birds using appropriate bird seed feeders or tables; ground feeding will not be permitted. The Housing Officer will investigate reports of non compliance with the tenancy conditions.
- Condition of bin store areas:  
Residents are responsible for ensuring that their bin stores areas are kept clean and tidy and free from any refuse or other items. The Association will arrange for certain bin store areas to be swept and washed down, particularly those at our sheltered housing schemes and where an Estates Service is provided. The Housing Officer will regularly check the condition of the bin stores and will investigate reports of non compliance with the tenancy conditions.
- Dealing with dumping of large items:  
Where large items (furniture, boxes, etc.) are left in or near bin stores, in communal areas or in stairwells the Housing Officer will investigate and seek to identify the owner or culprit and secure removal under the terms of the tenancy conditions. The items will be removed if ownership cannot be identified. The Association's priority under these circumstances will be to ensure that bin stores, communal areas and stairwells are kept safe and free from fire hazards.
- Dealing with graffiti:  
Where walls, doors and other communal areas are defaced by graffiti, the Maintenance Officer will arrange to have it removed in compliance with the timescales stipulated by the Anti Social Behaviour Policy, in particular the swift removal of graffiti of a racist or offensive nature.
- Hazardous materials:  
The Housing and Maintenance Officer will arrange for a suitable contractor to remove any hazardous items, such as used syringes and needles or any other type of dangerous material. The Housing Officer will take responsibility for resolving an issue directly attributable to a tenant's living conditions or habits. This may involve other agencies (social work, GP, etc.) and actions to ensure compliance with the tenancy conditions.
- Motability scooters or buggies:  
The Association will permit residents to keep a motability scooter or buggy provided that they have obtained our written permission in advance, that the scooter or buggy can be stored within the residents' home and that it meets a specified criteria. The Association retains the right to designate certain blocks or schemes to be "scooter or buggy free" where permission will not be granted under any circumstances. The Association will not permit the storage of scooters or buggies in communal areas or stairwells. The Housing Officer is responsible for considering requests to store a scooter or buggy and for investigating issues of non compliance.

- Operations Estate Management budget:  
The Association provides an annual estate management budget which is devolved to the Housing Officers on a pro rata property number basis. The fund is to be used to provide improvements to estates and communal areas following suggestions from residents during the annual estate inspection or other ad hoc visits. The aim of the budget is to provide small scale improvements that will help the general outlook or use of an area (i.e. provision of benches, hanging baskets, paths, signs, etc.).
- Involving other agencies:  
Where the Association cannot solve or is not responsible for solving an estate management issue, the Housing and Maintenance Officers will liaise with and request assistance from other agencies, such as environmental health, the Police, social work and local councils. The aim being to ensure that the Association remains proactive in working to improve the conditions on its estates and in its neighbourhoods.

4.2 The Association will ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and support in order to meet the requirements of this policy and related procedures.

## **5. Equal Opportunities Implications**

5.1 The Association will ensure the promotion of equal opportunities by publishing information in different community languages and other formats such as large print, tape and Braille, as required.

5.2 The Association will ensure that no individual is discriminated against on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes, including beliefs, or opinions, such as religious or political beliefs.

5.3 All communication with tenants or other customers will be in 'plain language' and it will be made clear who the most appropriate person is to contact in the event of a query. The Association will make appropriate arrangements for communicating with tenants and other customers who have special needs such as people with sight, hearing or learning difficulties, for example by using signers.

## **6. Sustainability Implications**

6.1 This policy has no direct sustainability implications.

## **7. Risk Management**

7.1 The Management Board will consider the risk management factors of Estate Management including:



- Non-compliance with outcomes from the Social Housing Charter,
- The potential harm to the Association's reputation as a provider of quality housing developments as a consequence of the poor application of this policy.

## **8. Tenant Participation**

- 8.1 The Association has consulted with tenants and staff when formulating the Estate Management Policy and procedures in accordance with the regulatory and legislative requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and of the Social Housing Charter, Outcome 3: Tenant Participation.
- 8.2 Estate Management is an area of our work where partnership with tenants, sharing owners and owners and tenants / resident groups has the potential to extend tenant involvement and to encourage tenants, sharing owners and owners to take part in this and other aspects of the Association's work.

## **9. Complaints Procedure**

- 9.1 Any tenant, sharing owner and owner may submit a complaint, using the Association's complaints procedure if it is felt that the Association has failed not to correctly apply the Estate Management policy.

## **10. Performance Monitoring**

- 10.1 The Operations Director will have overall responsibility for monitoring the standards covering this policy. The Association will have regard for feedback provided at annual estate inspections, officer surgeries, estate visits and via complaints.
- 10.2 The Association will also conduct regular surveys of residents in receipt of our estates management services and will develop performance monitoring systems to report to the Scottish Housing Regulator on the following Social Housing Charter performance indicator:

Indicator 17: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in.

## **11. Policy Review**

- 11.1 The Association will carry out a further review of the Estate Management Policy in 2017. Amendments may be made as required following consultation with service users and other agencies.