

Estate Management

H.07

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Equality and diversity policy statement

This policy document can be produced in various formats, for instance, in larger print or audio-format; and it can also be translated into other languages, as appropriate.

Our equality and diversity policy statement describes our key equality commitments that we use to develop all organisational services; this includes employment services and services to tenants and other customers.

Our core values include providing a fair and equal service for all people and this is detailed in our Equality and Diversity Policy. Our approach to implementing this policy will reflect that commitment.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the way in which Pineview Housing Association will carry out our estate management functions.

1.2 Estate management refers to the effective management of the Association's property, the environment around our properties and any common areas, to ensure that the neighbourhood is an attractive, well maintained, safe and secure place to live.

1.3 Estate management therefore encompasses a diverse range of issues such as: - providing advice & assistance on tenancy matters and on services which enhance the local community (e.g. 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.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 The overall aim of this policy is to provide a service to tenants and owners which enable them to have quiet enjoyment of their homes in a safe, attractive and secure environment that they can take pride in.

2.2 The specific objectives of this policy are: -

- To 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.
- To ensure that tenants, sharing owners and owners are made aware of the Association's responsibilities in relation to estate management.
- To closely monitor the performance of contractors and the Estates Service regarding the upkeep of all common areas.
- To seek to work closely with other relevant agencies and statutory bodies with the aim of ensuring that the Association's properties and surrounding environment are well looked after.
- To ensure staff maintain a visible presence within the area, are proactive and take appropriate early action to enforce tenancy conditions where applicable.
- To comply with legal duties, regulatory requirements and good practice requirements.
- To provide good quality information to promote effective estate management and manage the expectations of service users.
- To carry out regular estate inspections and communicate effectively with other agencies/departments
- To carry out regular satisfaction surveys to ensure that the aims and objectives of this policy are meeting the expectations of our residents.
- To 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.

- To create sustainable tenancies and provide properties that are safe and attractive to applicants at the time of offer.

3. Compliance with Performance Standards, Legislation and Good Practice.

3.1 Pineview Housing Association will have full regard to legislative and good practice requirements in this policy and also its approach to estate management including:

- **The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (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 interests of tenants, the wider community and the Association.
- **The Scottish Social Housing Charter** – The Scottish Government, through the Scottish 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 it 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 as far as reasonably possible that:

- Tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

4. Service Standards

4.01 This Estate Management Policy is supplemented by detailed working procedures which will be used by staff in implementing the policy.

4.02 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:

4.1 Estate Management Inspections

4.1.1 All Housing Services staff have a shared responsibility for looking after the Association's properties and area.

4.1.2 Housing Services staff will visit their designated streets / properties on a regular basis whilst undertaking home visits for tenancy matters, repair inspections, tenant meetings and estate inspections. Any issues will be recorded for action in accordance with this policy and the Association's procedures.

4.1.3 We will also ensure that we carry out programmed estate inspections to manage and monitor the condition of the Association's areas of ownership / responsibility.

4.1.4 This will include:

- Regular inspections of common areas, including stairways, external pathways, garden areas etc.

- Monitoring of our common landscaped areas
- Monitoring close cleaning arrangements.
- Effective management of 'hot spot' areas that have been identified by Housing Officers in consultation with tenants.
- Organising meetings with tenants to deal with and resolve complaints.
- Record and monitor responses to complaints
- Liaise with other appropriate staff and agencies to share information and to ensure the effective implementation of this policy and to prevent problems escalating. We will work with other agencies such as Cleansing; Street Lighting; Stair Lighting; Environmental Protection; Road Departments and the SSPCA etc as applicable to remedy problems as they arise.
- Repairs identified during inspections will be processed by staff in accordance with our Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

4.2 Common Areas

4.2.1 Responsibilities for common areas are set out in the Tenancy Agreement between the Association and our tenants. The responsibility of owners for common areas is set out in their title deeds. All tenants and owners sharing common areas must keep these areas clean and tidy and comply with local arrangements for the use and sharing of common parts.

Common areas include:

- Entrance doorways
- Close area/stairs
- Bin stores
- Backcourts/drying areas
- Pathways
- Driveways/parking bays

4.2.2 The Association will regularly inspect these areas to ensure that they are maintained, kept clean and litter free. Where services are provided by another agency e.g. stair lighting, faults will be reported directly to them. Where recurrent problems arise, we will work with the relevant agencies to enable them to be resolved.

4.2.3 We will ensure that repairs to controlled entry systems, close doors, close windows, bin stores, loft hatches and any other common repair items are actioned in accordance with our Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

4.3 Close Cleaning

4.3.1 We aim to provide a stair cleaning service for residents of tenemental properties in order to assist them in their obligation to keep the stairs and closes in a clean and tidy condition.

4.4 Back Courts/ Ground Maintenance

4.4.1 We aim to provide a ground maintenance service for residents in order to assist them in their obligations to keep the area in a clean and tidy condition.

4.4.2 Tenants and owners must comply with any local arrangements for use and sharing of back courts/communal areas as advised by the Association.

4.5 Individual Gardens

4.5.1 We will ensure that tenants maintain gardens in accordance with their Tenancy Agreement.

4.5.2 If a tenant has exclusive use of a garden, they must take reasonable care to keep it from becoming overgrown, untidy or causing a nuisance.

4.5.3 If gardens are not maintained to a reasonable standard, the tenant will be contacted to find out the reason for this. We will advise the tenant of the action required to remedy the situation and will confirm a date when the garden will be re-inspected.

4.5.4 If there has been no improvement, we may explore legal options or arrange for the necessary work to be completed and recharge the tenant for the cost.

4.6 Household Refuse Disposal

4.6.1 We will work with Glasgow City Council to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided for refuse disposal and recycling. Bin stores should be kept in a clean and tidy condition.

4.6.2 All residents will be responsible for ensuring that their refuse is disposed of safely and securely in the refuse/recycling bins provided.

4.6.3 Tenants will be notified at the start of their tenancy of arrangements and scheduled days for uplift of refuse etc.

4.6.4 Any household waste or bulk items which have been dumped illegally or inappropriately will be thoroughly investigated by staff and action taken in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement and/or any relevant legislation.

4.7 Feeding Birds

4.7.1 Residents should only feed birds using appropriate bird seed feeders or tables; ground feeding will not be permitted.

4.8 Abandoned Vehicles

4.8.1 All residents will be made aware of their respective responsibility for vehicle parking, as contained in the Tenancy Agreement. No vehicle, caravan, trailer or boat may be parked on communal land unless that land is set aside for parking.

4.8.2 In any event parking should not cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours.

4.8.3 Tenants/Owners should ensure that vehicles in their ownership and no longer in use are disposed of through an approved contractor.

4.8.4 Where it is suspected that a car has been abandoned this will be reported to Police Scotland and Glasgow City Council for investigation and removal.

4.9 Vandalism/Graffiti

4.9.1 All incidents of vandalism will be reported to Police Scotland and a crime report number obtained for insurance purposes.

4.9.2 Where a repair arises as a result of vandalism (e.g. re-glazing), the tenant will be required to report the incident to the police, or the cost of the repair may be recharged to the tenant in accordance with our Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

4.9.3 Where the identity of a perpetrator of acts of vandalism to the Associations' property is known and proven and is a tenant or a member of a tenant's household, we will normally require that the cost of any repairs are met by the tenant concerned.

4.9.4 We will take action in accordance with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy where it is known that an individual has been responsible for an act of vandalism.

4.9.5 Graffiti will be removed in accordance with our Repairs and Maintenance Policy. However, graffiti of a racist, sectarian or obscene nature should be removed within 1 working day from when it is reported.

4.10 Keeping Pets

4.10.1 Pineview Housing Association accepts that keeping pets offers significant benefits to their owners and therefore supports responsible pet ownership.

4.10.2 Residents may keep a domestic pet; however, the Association's **written permission must be obtained in advance**. We have a standard application form available from our Office which tenants should complete and return to us in order to request permission to keep a pet.

4.10.3 This permission will be withdrawn if the tenant does not properly control their pet, it causes a nuisance or other conditions of the permission have been breached.

4.10.4 The number of pets in any one house / flat may be restricted when animal welfare and property characteristics/location etc. considerations are taken into account.

4.10.5 We will take action where a tenant fails to control their pet(s) in terms of the Tenancy Agreement. Should any tenant fail to adhere to the conditions listed in the Tenancy Agreement then we are entitled to require removal of the pet(s)

4.10.6 The keeping of fowl, pigeons or other livestock in Association property, gardens or common parts is forbidden.

4.10.7 Any pet which is prohibited by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or by any other law is also forbidden.

4.10.8 We will also work closely with Glasgow City Council staff in terms of breaches of the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003.

4.10.9 Stray dogs will be notified to Glasgow City Council, Police Scotland and/or the SSPCA as applicable.

4.10.10 In instances where a dog is considered to pose a danger to the public, we will reserve the right to initiate legal action for removal of the animal.

4.11 Vermin/Pests/Insects

4.11.1 Where vermin, pest and insect infestation is reported and found in common areas we will arrange appropriate contractors to undertake remedial works.

4.11.2 Where infestation can be directly attributed to a tenant's living conditions or habits, we will advise the tenant on how best to rectify the situation and ensure it does not re-occur.

4.11.3 The Housing Officer will take responsibility for resolving such issues. This may involve other agencies (social work, GP etc.) and actions to ensure compliance with the tenancy conditions.

4.12 Property Condition

4.12.1 Tenants are responsible for taking care of their home and keeping it in a clean condition as noted in their Tenancy Agreement.

4.12.2 Where it is found that the tenant is not maintaining the property to a reasonable standard, including causing a hazard or nuisance, we will give assistance and advice on how best to rectify the situation.

4.12.3 Legal options may be pursued if the tenant does not comply with our requests to bring the property up to a reasonable standard.

4.12.4 If it is identified that a special need or vulnerability would prevent the tenant from maintaining the tenancy conditions, we will liaise with other agencies to ensure appropriate support is requested for the tenant.

4.13 Satellite Dishes

4.12.1 Written permission from the Association should be obtained if a tenant wishes to install a satellite dish on any of our properties. We will not refuse permission unreasonably.

4.14 Garages, Sheds, Summerhouses etc.

4.14.1 Written permission from the Association should be obtained if a tenant wishes to put up a garage, shed, summerhouse or similar structure. This should be sought from us prior to the work commencing and will not be unreasonably refused.

5. Proactive Estate Management

5.0.1 We recognise that the level of tenant satisfaction within an area can be assisted by proactive measures concerning estate management. Consequently, the following processes will be implemented to minimise the effect of environmental problems occurring:

5.1 Design Issues

5.1.1 We will ensure that the design brief for work we carry out on our properties/communal areas acknowledges the importance of factors such as appropriate density for the site location, quality sound insulation, privacy, security including appropriate lighting, minimal communal areas and appropriately located play areas etc.

5.2 Tenancy Matters

5.2.1 The conditions of tenancy will be explained in detail when the Tenancy Agreement is signed by the new tenant. The Tenants Handbook will also provide a comprehensive summary of the landlord and tenant responsibilities.

5.2.2 Thereafter a settling in visit will be carried out after the tenant has moved into their home to reaffirm the information given at the sign up.

5.2.3 We will also liaise with other agencies to ensure appropriate support is requested for the tenant, as applicable, to enable them to sustain their tenancy.

5.3 Environmental Audits

5.3.1 Housing Officers will undertake a minimum of monthly Estate Environmental Audits which ensure that each street will be walked around and, if applicable, an Estate Management Action Plan drawn up to deal with any issues that arise.

5.3.2 This will be in addition to the expectation that in the course of their day to day visits staff will record, report and action any estate issues they become aware of. We will encourage joint audit inspections/walk abouts with the local/street Management Committee members and/or tenant representatives as applicable.

6. Partnership Working

6.1 We fully recognise that estate management has to be tackled in partnership as no single agency can tackle the potentially wide-ranging issues in isolation.

6.2 We are committed to the development of multi-agency partnerships to deliver an effective service for our residents.

7. Training and Development.

7.1 The training requirements of Management Committee and staff will be regularly assessed to ensure that they have the necessary skills to effectively implement and monitor this Estate Management Policy.

8. Performance Monitoring

8.1 We are committed to continuously improving estate management practice. We understand that effective monitoring and reporting is fundamental to the process of evaluating and reviewing performance.

8.2 We will provide regular reports to Management Committee on the production and outcomes of any Environmental Audits and Estate Action Plans.

8.3 We will also conduct exit interviews and monitor and report on the information provided and any patterns concerning estate management issues arising from these.

9. Links to other Policies

9.1 Pineview Housing Association recognises that the effective operation of this policy is dependent on policies and performance in a variety of service areas, some of these are:

Allocations Policy
Abandoned House Policy
Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
Repairs and Maintenance Policy
Rechargeable Repairs Policy
Tenancy Management Policy
Void Management Policy
Tenant Participation Policy
Complaints Policy

10. Complaints/Appeals

10.1 Anyone who is not happy /satisfied with the service they have received as a result of this policy has a right to complain. Please see the Association's Complaints Policy for details on how to do this.

11. Review/Consultation

11.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless amendment is prompted by a change in legislation or monitoring/reporting reveals that a change in policy is required sooner.

Procedures and working methods may be altered more frequently where this is needed.

11.2 Policy review will involve consultation with our tenants, our Customer Forum and may include as applicable other service users / agencies. We will take account of any views or representations in revising our policy and service provision to assist in the development of effective service delivery.

11.3 We will regularly publish information about our performance in estate management through annual reports or other appropriate methods.

11.4 We will also seek feedback from tenants about the operation of this policy through regular satisfaction surveys and any other appropriate methods.