

Estate
Management
Policy



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1.0 Introduction

Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association's mission is "ensuring successful places and enabling people to reach their potential in Scotland through building more homes, creating sustainable places and delivery of valued services". This Policy plays a major part in meeting this mission, focussing on the physical environment.

2.0 References

This Policy reflects the Social Housing Charter outcome: "Tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe".

3.0 General Principles

We will:

- Visit all neighbourhoods regularly and tackle any problems identified;
- Set aside a budget for estate improvements;
- Enforce tenancy agreements and deed of condition requirements relating to estate management in a firm, fair, prompt and sensitive manner;
- Work with other agencies where necessary, including the statutory authorities, to ensure that estate management standards are achieved;
- Ensure wherever possible the safety and security of residents and visitors to our property;
- Ensure that estate management services are adequately resourced and effectively budgeted and controlled.

4.0 Common Stair Inspections

The main way we will meet the above principles is through Stair Inspections. These have the dual purpose of checking fire safety and ensuring the stair is clear of rubbish and not used as a store for bikes, prams and other goods. There will also be scope to add services or amenities, where funding is available or through charging additional rent.

5.0 Estate Management Services

5.1 Common Stair Cleaning

We will maintain the cleanliness of common stairs and communal areas in our ownership in order to ensure the safety and well-being of users. This includes the encouragement and enforcement of tenant obligations. Where we have sole or majority ownership of existing developments we will organise cleaning services if agreed with residents. We will provide a stair and stair-window cleaning service in all new developments. We will inspect communal areas on a regular basis to ensure that agreed cleanliness standards are

maintained. Where we have properties in tenement blocks where we do not have majority ownership, we will not provide this service directly but, as owners, we will pay our share of any external factoring arrangement and recharge our customers through an increase in their rent.

5.2 Refuse Disposal and Litter

Local authorities are responsible for refuse disposal. We will, in conjunction with the local authority, ensure that the appropriate facilities for the disposal of refuse are provided and properly maintained. We will keep residents advised of the arrangements for the uplift of rubbish and bulky items such as furniture. Residents are responsible for ensuring that their rubbish is disposed of safely, tidily and securely wrapped, and for making arrangement for the uplift of large items and garden refuse. We will liaise with the local authority to take immediate action on inappropriate disposal of bulky items, dumping of rubbish and litter.

5.3 Grounds Maintenance

We will maintain all hard and soft environmental and landscaped areas, including roads, car parks and play areas in our ownership to agreed standards. Our staff and those appointed on our behalf will ensure that these standards are maintained by inspecting all environmental and landscaped areas on a regular basis. We will not maintain roads and footpaths which have been “adopted” by the local authority as this is their responsibility but we will alert them to any problems.

5.4 Private and Shared Gardens

We will ensure that all private and shared gardens in our ownership are maintained to an agreed standard. The minimum standard for both private and shared gardens is that they are tidy and used only for the purpose of a garden and in compliance with the tenancy agreement. If a resident has exclusive use of a garden it is their sole responsibility to maintain that garden. Residents can apply to Local Authority Garden Aid schemes if they are unable to manage their garden but these are either closed to new applicants or much reduced in scope. Our prior written permission is required before huts, greenhouses, garages or other structures are built in a garden.

When the garden is shared, then each resident shares the obligation to ensure it is used with consideration for others and in compliance with the tenancy agreement. Where we have sole or majority ownership of the scheme we will organise a gardening service in consultation with other owners where appropriate. The rent will be increased to cover this service. Where we have properties in tenement blocks where we do not have majority

ownership we will not provide a grounds maintenance service. We will inspect all private and communal gardens during planned estate walkabouts to ensure that standards are maintained.

We will be responsible for the basic upkeep of gardens of any properties empty for longer than 4 weeks.

5.5 Car Parking and Garages

We are responsible for the maintenance of communal parking areas and the external maintenance of garages in our ownership. If residents have their own parking space they are responsible for maintaining it in a clean and tidy condition. Parking areas and spaces should not be used for extensive car maintenance. If residents have one of our garages they are responsible for its internal maintenance. Our written permission is required before commercial vehicles, trailers, caravans or boats can be parked in parking spaces, areas or in gardens. Abandoned or untaxed vehicles on our property will be reported to the police and the local authority and removed where appropriate.

We will liaise with other agencies where appropriate to resolve parking disputes but cannot guarantee residents a parking space.

5.6 TV Aerials and Satellite Dishes

We require that prior written permission is obtained for satellite dishes or other types of communications equipment. There are some areas/developments where Planning policies do not allow them at all. In most areas, permission will be granted provided that the necessary external permissions have been received and our recommendations are followed. We will investigate the feasibility of communal dishes if there is a sufficient demand, and where the cost of the installation can be recovered via a service charge. We will require that aerials/dishes be taken down if they have been erected without permission or are causing a nuisance to neighbours.

5.7 Drugs, Alcohol and Solvent Abuse

We will take action against drug, alcohol or solvent related nuisance or anti-social behaviour as stated in our Anti-Social Behaviour and Harassment Policy. We will involve the police where common areas such as stairwells or gardens are being used for illegal drug use. We will give urgent priority to cleaning up evidence of drug use such as needles or foils.

5.8 Vandalism

We will respond promptly when incidents of vandalism are reported. We will make good any damage caused by vandalism which is not the responsibility of the customer or has

been inflicted on empty properties in our ownership. Residents are responsible for making good or paying for damage caused by deliberate acts of vandalism by them, any member of your household or your visitors. We will assess the extent of malicious damage within 1 working day and take the required action within agreed repairs time-scales. Graffiti of an offensive nature will be removed within 1 working day of it being reported to us. We will actively participate in any local initiatives to prevent and tackle vandalism. Residents who witness vandalism should report it to the police immediately.

5.10 Pets

Residents are responsible for supervising their domestic pets and ensuring that they do not cause a nuisance to neighbours or deterioration in the condition of the property or common areas. They must adhere to the conditions of your tenancy agreement in relation to keeping pets and livestock (e.g. pigeons). We will investigate complaints about pets and may withdraw permission where necessary. We will also liaise with the Dog Warden and Environmental Health on issues including stray dogs and dog fouling.

5.11 Vermin and Pest Control

Customers have a responsibility to keep their property in a good and clean condition in order to prevent infestation of mice, ants etc. We will respond promptly to reports of vermin and pest infestation in common areas of buildings and will offer advice and assistance to eradicate the problem in customer's homes. Customers should contact their local authority who may charge for the service.

6.0 Training

Training on the Estate Management Policy and the associated procedures will be provided for all staff who are likely to deal directly with Estate Management issues. Members of Customer Direct will also receive training on request.

7.0 Complaints

All customers have the right to complain if they feel that an Estate Management issue has not been dealt with in accordance with our policy. If you want to complain please contact the office for a copy of our Complaints leaflet.

8.0 Policy Availability

Copies of this Estate Management Policy are available on request and free of charge from our offices. A summary of the Policy can be made available in a number of other languages and on tape, if required.

9.0 Policy Review

This Estate Management Policy has been approved by the Board of Management. No major changes will be made to the policy without consultation with residents.

April 2018