

**BLOCHAIRN**



*housing association*

**LIMITED**

|                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Policy:</b>            | <b>Estate Management Policy</b>     |
| <b>Housing Management</b> |                                     |
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## Estate management policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Blochairn Housing Association is a community-based Housing Association operating in in Royston, Glasgow, owning and managing a total housing stock of 293 flats and houses. The housing stock comprises 173 rehabilitated former Glasgow City Council flats 120 new build flats, cottage flats and houses. We are also property factors to 33 owner occupied units.
- 1.2 Through development activities, the Association has improved the condition of much of the housing in the area and wider environment such as the creation of parking bays, play areas, shrub beds, trees and open space grass areas for the enjoyment of residents.
- 1.3 This policy outlines the way in which Blochairn Housing Association will deliver estate management services and how we will work in partnership with residents and other agencies to achieve sustainable communities. We recognise that good quality housing needs to be coupled with a decent quality neighbourhood, to make our areas desirable and sustainable in the long term.
- 1.4 We are keen to maintain standards in order to protect our interest to allow residents to enjoy their home and environment. The Association has a **Maintenance Policy** and a **Void Management Policy** that cover issues related to the upkeep of our properties and environment. This policy also links to our **Anti-Social Behaviour Policy** and **Fire Safety in Common Areas Policy**. These are available from our office.

### 2. Background and Overall Aim

- 2.1 The Association provides a responsive service to tenants and owners, which will ensure the efficient and effective management of all estates. Estate Management can be defined as the term, which refers to services, which aim to allow residents to have a quiet enjoyment of their homes and a decent, safe and secure environment to live in. It can therefore cover a wide range of activities, which focus both upon the people living in an area and on the physical environment of the areas itself.
- 2.2 The overall aim of this policy and the associated procedures is to provide guidelines that set out clear lines of responsibility, is transparent, understandable and easily accessible to staff, tenant's and members of the public on all issues related to the management of the Association's properties and estates.

### 3. Purpose

3.1 The purpose of estate management is to;

- Inspect the standard of estate contracts e.g. cleaning, bulk uplift and landscaping
- To identify common repairs particularly in relation to security and health & safety such as trip hazards or security doors not closing and take affirmative action to address
- Ensure resident participation to maximise estate satisfaction levels.
- To ensure compliance with tenancy agreement conditions e.g. stair cleaning
- To identify and minimise fire hazards within communal areas e.g. items left on landings or flammable materials stored in communal cellars
- Follow up on estate management complaints such as condition of bins or dog fouling
- To contribute to future planned and cyclical maintenance projects through real life observations
- Build positive relationships with other agencies such as Glasgow City Council who have a role and responsibility in neighbourhood management.
- Minimise stock turnover through proactive estate intervention
- To ensure effective communication between the Association and our residents by highlighting estate management issues and procedures in our publications including newsletters, posters open days and social media platforms.
- To enhance and maintain the quality of environment, security and health of our residents

### 4. Policy context

4.1 The Association aims to meet the Scottish Government Social Housing Charter outcomes, 1,2,3,6 and 13 which state;

- Outcome 1- **Equalities** – Every tenant and customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services
- Outcome 2 - **Communication** – Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides
- Outcome 3 - **Participation** - Tenants and customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords decision at a level they feel comfortable with
- Outcome 6- **Estate management** – tenants and customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe

- Outcome 13 –**Value for money** – tenants, owners and other customers receive services To enhance and maintain the quality of environment, security and health of our residents that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay

## 5. Obligations and Responsibilities

5.1 The obligations and responsibilities of the tenant and the landlord are contained within the tenancy agreement. The Estate Management policy is concerned with ensuring that tenants and staff are fully aware of their obligations and that these are adhered to in order that tenants are allowed the ‘**quiet enjoyment**’ of their home. There are two main categories of the tenancy agreement that apply, physical care of properties and behaviour. The following provides examples of estate management obligations and defines ownership;

| <b>Category</b> | <b>Estate obligation</b>  | <b>Responsibility</b>  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Physical        | Maintain property in tenable condition and good decorative order  | Tenant & landlord  |
| Physical        | To keep common areas clean and tidy   | Tenant & landlord through estate contracts                         |
| Physical        | To maintain gardens in a tidy well-kept condition   | Tenant & landlord where services are provided                      |
| Physical        | To keep landlord advised of repairs to individual properties and common areas   | Tenant & landlord through estate management inspections            |
| Physical        | No property to be stored in common areas  | Tenant & landlord to enforce through estate management inspections |
| Behaviour       | Not to cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbours or other tenants of the Association or to allow other household members or visitors to do so   | Tenant   |
| Behaviour       | Not to commit or allow household members or visitors to commit any form of harassment which may interfere with the peace or comfort, or cause, offence to any neighbours or any member of their household | Tenant   |
| Behaviour       | To keep pets under control  | Tenant   |
| Behaviour       | Not to cause or allow visitors or household members to cause deliberate damage to the house or common parts   | Tenant   |

|           |   |        |
|-----------|---|--------|
| Behaviour | Not to allow the house to be used for illegal or immoral purposes | Tenant |
|-----------|---|--------|

## 6. Managing the Estate

6.1 To ensure the estate is maintained to the highest level, Blochairn Housing Association will provide a range of estate services that are funded through either rental or factoring income.

### 6.2 Programmed Inspections

- a) We will carry out a weekly planned programme of inspections to common properties in line with our procedures, where each common block will be inspected at least every 7 weeks.
- b) In the interest of complementing our **Fire Safety in Common Areas Policy** We will focus on items stored within the common areas that could potentially result in an impeded exit from the building in the event of fire. There will be additional visits undertaken if residents are not adhering to their Tenancy Agreement or Deed of Conditions.
- c) We will carry out settling in visits to new tenants within 8 weeks of their date of entry. At this time, the property and common area will be inspected to assess for carelessness, neglect or vandalism. In such circumstances, we may undertake work and recharge the cost. With permission, we might also involve other agencies.

### 6.3 Cleaning of Common Property

- a) We will advise residents to brush and wash common areas in weekly rotation with their immediate neighbor. We will visit in response to complaints or if it is, clear that residents are not complying. We may provide a rota for stair cleaning or take further legal action if there is no improvement in the condition.
- b) The Association will arrange monthly cleaning of close windows in all common blocks.

### 6.4 Garden/Backcourt Maintenance

- a) We will employ a landscaping contractor to undertake a planned programme of works all year round. During the growing season of April to October, the works will include grass cutting, shrub maintenance and weed control on a regular basis. De littering will take place all year round.

- b) Our landscape contract will provide maintenance for gardens, communal backcourts and open spaced areas. Our garden maintenance service is basic in specification and is in place to ensure the area meets a minimum standard. It does not include any aspect of garden design or bespoke work.

#### 6.5 Disposal of Household Refuse and Equipment

- a) Residents are advised to securely bag refuse and put it into the bins in the bin store. Refuse should not be left in, or around the bin store, or at the entrance or exit to or from either the house or the close.
- b) We operate a weekly bulk uplift service where items will be collected either from the pavement outside the property or the bin store. Alternatively, residents are entitled to use the designated disposal facilities provided by Glasgow City Council.

#### 6.6 Household Pets

- a) Those wishing to keep pets should request in writing permission from Blochairn Housing Association. We will not withhold permission unreasonably but might set conditions.
- b) We will not give permission to keep animals prohibited by legislation such as Dangerous Dogs act 1999. Permission will not be granted to keep exotic animals, e.g. snakes.
- c) We will advise tenants to make other arrangements for care of the pet if permission to keep a pet is not given or permission is withdrawn. If the tenant does not make other reasonable arrangements, the Association will take any necessary action. This might include court action for eviction.

#### 6.7 Communal Aerials and Satellite Dishes

The Association will provide and maintain common aerials. Permission will not be given to put up an aerial if a communal aerial is in place. Residents will not normally be given permission to put up individual satellite dishes.

#### 6.8 Trampolines

- a) We will generally not give permission for trampolines to be kept in front gardens or communal backcourts due to the difficulties associated with ongoing landscape maintenance. We will ask that such equipment be removed.

#### 6.9 Dealing with estate issues

- a) Estate Management inspections will identify a wide range of problems including repairs to communal areas, failings in cyclical contracts, management issues and reaction to tenants complaints. All repairs identified will be authorised in line with the Associations Maintenance Policy response times.

- b) The association recognises that successful estate management can only be achieved by taking a multi-agency approach, with particular liaison being required with Police Scotland and Glasgow City Council Community Safety Services.
- c) Where persistent problems emerge, special initiatives may be developed to deal holistically with the situation.
- d) We will always try to establish the cause of problems in the estate by both carrying out investigations and also making use of the CCTV camera network.
- e) Where estate management issues can be resolved by improvements to design or specification standards, solutions will be identified and budgetary consideration given to potential solutions.
- f) The safety of colleagues on the estate is an important consideration of the Association. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure risk to colleagues is kept to a minimum in line with our health and safety procedures.

## 7. Communication and Participation

- 7.1 We recognise the value of engaging with residents in respect of estate management issues and priorities. We will notify you in advance of our planned visits and invite you to meet with us to talk about the area in which you live.
- 7.2 We will use a variety of methods to consult, inform and communicate with you in respect of estate management. The range is shown below;

|                  |                       |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Tenancy sign up  | Settling in visits    | Annual report         |
| Tenants handbook | Quarterly newsletters | Policy review         |
| Website          | Inspection findings   | Complaints monitoring |

## 8. Financial planning and value for money

- 8.1 Annually, we will identify the services required to maintain the estate to the highest possible standard. These services will be tendered in line with the Associations Procurement Policy. This method ensures we obtain the best value from our contracts.
- 8.2 We will plan, control and monitor estate management spend in relation to budgets set.

## 9. Legal action and delegated authority



- 9.1 On occasion, officers may come across persistent breaches of tenancy. In all cases, we will attempt to resolve problems informally before considering further action. Where, however, the Association has unsuccessfully exhausted other means available to address these breaches, legal remedies will be used.
- 9.2 There are three types of legal action that may be pursued;
- Recouping Costs
  - Repossession Action
  - Other legal remedies open to the landlord
- 9.3 The Housing Officer will have authority to recoup costs under the recharge repair policy. The Operations Manager will have the authority to implement any other legal remedies, including the service of notice of proceedings.
- 9.4 Once legal action has been instigated the association will work closely with all relevant agencies and ensure that the case is well coordinated and substantiated with necessary evidence
- 9.5 If a decree for repossession is granted, authority for proceeding to eviction must be obtained from the Management Committee. Where this is granted, the tenant will be notified of the decision and given advice on homelessness.
- 9.6 Where it is identified that a contractor is not meeting their obligations in terms of the contract specification they will be given the opportunity to make good the failure. If this does not materialise then the association will seek to invoke relevant penalty clauses within the contract.

## 10. Record keeping & complaints

- 10.1 Computer records, including, photographs, will be maintained up to date to show details of our inspections, findings, outcomes and all other associated estate management work.
- 10.2 Wherever possible we will deal with estate management complaints “on the spot”. Where this cannot be achieved we aim to deal with any non-urgent complaints within 5 working days. Where matters are likely, to take longer to resolve, we will keep the complainant informed of the reasons for this and the anticipated timescales involved.

## 11. Training, review and distribution

- 11.1 The Association is committed to training and developing colleagues to their full potential in order to deliver a high quality of service in all areas. As such, relevant training will be provided on this policy and procedures.

- 11.2 This policy will be approved by the Management Committee. It will be reviewed three yearly. The review will incorporate changes in legislation, complaints, comments and feedback from customers.
- 11.3 This policy will be publically available on our website.

## 12. Equality Statement

- 12.1 Blochairn Housing Association is committed to promoting an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all. Throughout the Association, there will be a consistent approach in promoting equality and diversity across all areas. We will ensure that our monitoring of the policy has due regard to our equal opportunities policy.