



## **ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

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

## YORKHILL HOUSING ASSOCIATION

### Estate Management Policy and Procedures

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#### 1.0 Introduction and Relationship with Performance Standards

1.1 The Performance Standard relating to estate management states that:

<b>B5.1</b>	<b>RSLs should have legal, fair and effective policies and procedures for dealing with estate management matters relevant to their areas of operation.</b>
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1.2 Compliance with this Performance Standard will take account of the context within which the RSL is working, and assessments will be made in relation to:

- The quality of the RSL's estate management policies and procedures.
- The RSL's awareness of the estate management problems relevant to its areas of operation and the RSL's assessment of its impact on estate management issues in terms of the resources expended and the operation of its policies.
- The quality of the planned environment of the areas being managed and maintained by the RSL and customer satisfaction levels.
- The RSL's handling of anti-social behaviour by tenants.
- The quality and implementation of the RSL's policy for dealing with harassment.
- The RSL's system for gathering information in relation to estate management issues and the quality of reports presented to the governing body.

1.3 An RSL is a "Registered Social Landlord" as defined by Scottish Homes, and incorporates Housing Associations.

1.4 Where this document overlaps with other policies of the Association, reference will be made to that document.

#### 2.0 Estate Management Policy Statement

2.1 The following Policy statement encompasses the Association's

commitment to a high quality estate management service for all residents.

- 2.2 **Yorkhill Housing Association is committed to providing a high quality, professional estate management service to all residents where a management service is given. The main principle behind this service will be to ensure that all residents are entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of their homes surrounded by a clean, tidy and safe environment.**

### **3.0 Association's Aims and Objectives in relation to Estate Management**

- 3.1 The Association aims to ensure that all residents in property where we provide a management service can live in their homes in a clean, tidy and safe neighbourhood, free from nuisance and harassment.
- 3.2 To achieve these aims, it is necessary to ensure that residents are clear on the Association's responsibilities and their own responsibilities, and this Policy gives clear direction on these.
- 3.3 As the Association's stock is mainly tenemental, with common closes and backcourts, it is expected that Estate Management problems will occur between neighbours due to different expectations and interpretations of cleanliness.
- 3.4 It is also expected that the Association will receive complaints regarding noise, as different lifestyles and tolerance levels will be evident between tenants.
- 3.5 In addition, the Association works in a multi-cultural area, and this will mean that additional resources may be required to ensure that all tenants understand the Association's and their own obligations in relation to estate management such as the need for translated material, interpreters, taped media, tenant participation and bi-lingual staff.
- 3.6 The Association must recognise these potential problems, and take steps to ensure these issues are addressed.

### **4.0 Risk Assessment**

- 4.1 The quality of the environment, and the wishes of tenants to lead a peaceful and secure life are priorities to tenants.
- 4.2 Failure to deal with estate management issues could lead to a lack of confidence from tenants and applicants to the area leading to:
- Properties becoming difficult to let

- The area getting a reputation for being a poor area to live
- A rise in crime, as residents lose interest in their surroundings believing the Association no longer care
- A lack of confidence in the Association as a good landlord

4.3 All these could affect the financial viability of the Association, as well as the effect on their reputation.

## **5.0 The Associations Responsibilities**

5.1 Effective estate management is not just about visiting properties or responding to neighbour complaints, but requires a consideration of various housing management and maintenance issues such as allocations, void control and repairs, to ensure that neighbourhoods are stable and balanced.

5.2 The Association therefore requires to:

- provide a full range of housing services to a high quality for all tenants
- let houses in a fair way in line with our allocations policy
- keep the number of empty houses to a minimum and re-let all properties as quickly as possible
- keep all houses safe and in good repair by making sure all repairs that the Association is responsible for are carried out to a high standard within the timescales set out in our repairs policy
- visit neighbourhoods regularly to make sure that common areas are kept clean and tidy, back courts or gardens maintained and grass cut, vandalism reported etc. and take action where needed
- check the quality of services provided by other organisations (e.g. refuse collection and street lighting) and take up complaints or suggestions about these services on behalf of tenants which are of a common nature
- involve tenants wherever possible in decisions that affect their area
- support tenant / resident and neighbourhood groups and community events
- operate a straightforward complaints procedure
- provide clear and up to date advice and information on the Association's structure, policies and services provided, in appropriate media e.g. translated into other languages or on tape

- ensure that at all times, all persons acting on behalf of the Association are polite and professional, act in a sympathetic and fair way, and respect confidentiality

5.3 By following these guidelines, this should ensure that neighbourhoods are kept safe and secure, and continue to be popular places to live.

5.4 In addition, the Association require to ensure they have procedures in place that can deal with serious anti social behaviour and harassment.

5.5 The Association's responsibilities are detailed in the Good Neighbour Agreements that all tenants will be asked to sign up to (See Appendix 1); in the Tenancy Agreement; and in the Tenant's Handbook.

## **6.0 The Tenant's Responsibilities**

6.1 Tenants are expected to contribute to looking after their neighbourhoods by:

- helping to keep common shared areas clean and tidy
- looking after garden or back court areas, and keeping them tidy
- putting all rubbish in the bins provided and arranging for the proper disposal of bulky items
- respecting their neighbour's privacy
- contacting the office with repairs which are the responsibility of the Association so they can be rectified as quickly as possible. Repair responsibilities are listed in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenant Handbook.
- giving access for annual gas maintenance checks (as failure to do this could lead to a danger to themselves and other tenants if a gas appliance is faulty)
- not using their property as the base for any business

6.2 Tenants can be good neighbours by:

- not letting anyone living in or visiting their household, including children, cause a nuisance or disturbance to anyone else (either in their property or in their neighbourhood).
- not harassing or allowing anyone living in or visiting their household, any neighbour, particularly on the basis of race, ethnicity, colour, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, physical or mental disability

- being aware of and trying to avoid disturbing others by loud and persistent noise, particularly very early in the morning or late at night
- thinking before parking in a space that may cause problems for other people, particularly older people or those with mobility difficulties
- keeping all pets under control - in particular not letting dogs wander around on their own or foul common areas or other people's property
- being responsible for the behaviour of any visitors to their house
- making sure nobody living in or visiting their home causes any vandalism
- reporting any acts of vandalism to the Association and the Police
- supporting neighbourhood groups and attending local meetings wherever possible

6.3 The Tenant's responsibilities are detailed in the Good Neighbour Agreements that all tenants will be asked to sign up to (See Appendix 1); in the Tenancy Agreement; and in the Tenant's Handbook.

## **7.0 Preventative Measures**

7.1 By ensuring tenants are aware of the Association's and their responsibilities at an early stage, and on a regular on-going basis, problems can be prevented.

7.2 The main preventative measures that the Association will use are:

- ensuring the Allocations Policy and applications procedure highlights that previous anti-social behaviour could lead to an applicant not being accepted on to the housing list, or having restrictions placed upon them
- having a Tenancy Agreement that clearly defines what is expected of the tenant and the Association, and ensuring that in the signing up procedures, time is taken by staff to explain the Agreement
- having a clear, concise Tenant's Handbook for all tenants, which will give more detailed information about the tenancy, what the tenant can expect from the Association and what the Association expects of the tenant
- having tenants sign up to the Good Neighbour Agreement

- visiting all new tenants within 3 months of their date of entry, to remind them of the terms of the Tenancy Agreement and identify and deal with any problems being experienced
- advising tenants through information leaflets and newsletters of the Association's Tenant Participation Policy and their ability to become more involved in the running of the Association, from attending a tenants meeting on an annual basis through to becoming a member of the Management Committee
- gauging tenants satisfaction and opinions about their neighbourhood and estate management issues on a regular basis via surveys
- advising tenants through information leaflets and newsletters of the Associations Policies on Equal Opportunities and Racial Harassment, to ensure they are aware of the serious consequences of breaching these
- re-enforcing responsibilities of both the Association and tenants through articles in the newsletter
- visiting neighbourhoods on a regular basis to ensure they are in a clean and tidy condition, and free of graffiti including where possible common area cleaning and ground maintenance are carried out by the Association's contractors, and charged as service charges
- build up good contacts and relationships with e.g. local Community Police, Environmental Health and Cleansing Departments, and local community groups

## **8.0 Various Estate Management Issues**

8.1 This section details the Association's Policy on various estate management issues.

### **8.2 Common Areas:**

#### Common Closes:

The Association staff will inspect all common closes on at least a quarterly basis with a report submitted quarterly to the Management Committee. Inspections will also be made upon receipt of complaints.

Tenants and other owners including shopkeepers, in accordance with the tenancy agreement and City of Glasgow Bye-Laws are responsible for keeping the common close in a clean and tidy condition.

Where applicable, the Association will contract a cleaning firm to give common closes a general clean on a regular basis with the cost of this charged through services.

Where this service is not provided, tenants will be responsible for the cleaning of closes and these closes will be regularly inspected.

Backcourts / Common Gardens:

The Association staff will inspect all backcourts and common gardens on at least a quarterly basis with a report submitted quarterly to the Management Committee. Inspections will also be made upon receipt of complaints.

It is the responsibility of all residents to maintain the back courts in a clean and tidy condition, and any failure to do noted from inspections will be taken up with the residents concerned.

Bin Shelters:

It is the responsibility of all residents to ensure that household refuse is placed in the bin shelters provided.

Action Where Obligations on Common Areas are Broken:

Tenants who fail to meet their obligations in respect of keeping common areas clean and tidy will be considered to be in breach of their tenancy agreement and therefore will be liable to action by the Association.

It is envisaged that such action will commence with warning letters, regular inspections, home visits etc. Should such action fail to produce the required response then the assistance of outside agencies will be sought such as Environmental Health. Legal action will also be considered once all other remedies have been exhausted. The full procedure is detailed in the Neighbour complaints section.

**8.3 Empty Properties:**

Abandoned or Deserted Properties:

Housing Management staff will investigate reports of possible abandoned properties. If upon investigation it appears that a property has been abandoned housing management will serve the appropriate notice, upon expiry of which arrangements will be made to force entry.

Where it is deemed necessary steps may be taken to secure a property temporarily until expiry of the notice period.



## 8.4 **Pets:**

### General

Yorkhill Housing Association (1988) Ltd. is only willing to grant tenants permission to keep certain pets.

All prospective pet owners require to obtain the Association's permission before taking in a pet.

All requests must be submitted on a Pet Request Application Form (see Appendix 2) which is available from the Association's office.

On receipt of an application all details submitted will be checked and if they are in accordance with the Association's policy a Pet Certificate will be issued to the owner of the pet.

Where the owner of the pet is not the tenant of the flat, the Association will hold the tenant responsible for ensuring that the pet owner complies with the policy.

No pets will be permitted into the Common rooms within the Sheltered Housing Complex.

### Aims

The Association's policy is to ensure that all tenants undertake to look after their pets and that other residents are not subjected to annoyance from uncared for or uncontrolled pets.

### Permitted Pets (and the number)

The Association will only permit the keeping of the following pets on the understanding that the owner will comply with the terms laid out in the policy : dogs, cats, birds and fish.

### Dogs

- The Association will only permit 1 dog per flat.
- it requires to be kept on the lead at all times when leaving or entering the property.
- it must be exercised outwith the property, i.e. not the backcourt area.
- it must not cause annoyance to other residents, e.g. no excessive barking or whining.
- no breeding of dogs will be permitted.

- dog owners are requested to consider that dogs are neutered.
- it must not be allowed to foul on the footpaths.
- if an “accident” occurs on the common stair or close the owner must clean up the mess immediately.
- any tenant wishing to acquire a dog covered by the Dangerous Dogs Act will only be granted permission to obtain the dog on the strict understanding that the owner will register the dog with the police immediately on acquiring it, and provide the Association with a copy of the registration papers.

#### Exceptional Circumstances Only

The Association may grant a tenant permission to look after another dog in the case of exceptional circumstances.

The maximum period of time which will be granted to a tenant who applies to keep another dog under this clause in the policy will be 1 month.

After this period of time the tenant must make alternative arrangements to have the dog looked after.

Any tenant applying to look after another dog under this section of the policy must put their request in writing stating fully the reasons for their request.

Should the Association grant permission the tenant must ensure that the dog will not remain in their flat for longer than the permitted time of 1 month.

The exceptional circumstances statement will apply to dogs which are only being looked after during the day and to dogs which stay overnight.

The Association will not grant permission to look after a dog which is covered by the Dangerous Dogs Act.

#### Cats :

- The Association will permit up to a maximum of 2 cats per flat.
- all cats must be fully house trained and an owner should not permit
- their cat(s) to wander about in the common areas of the property.
- all cat litter must be wrapped up securely and disposed of carefully

in the bins in the binstore.

- all male cats must be neutered and where possible female cats should also be neutered.
- no breeding of cats will be permitted.

In the case of a tenant wishing permission to keep dogs and cats, the Association will grant permission of 1 dog and 1 cat.

#### Birds :

- The Association will only permit up to a maximum of 2 birds per flat.
- No breeding of birds will be permitted.
- Owners must ensure that seed is swept up regularly so that vermin is not attracted.

#### Fish :

Owners must ensure that they bear in mind the weight factor of water and that they do not overload the weight bearing capacity of the floor area in their flat.

The Association will only allow one aquarium per flat at a maximum size of 5 cubic feet.

#### Pets not permitted

The Association will not grant permission to keep the following pets :

- Small caged animals e.g. mice, hamsters, gerbils etc.
- Rabbits.
- Pigeons.
- Exotic pets
- The Association will not give consent to any pet owner wishing to keep an animal or breed of animal banned by the Law of the Land.

The Pets section of the Estate Management Policy and Procedures will be separated and copies given to pet owners on receipt of a written request to keep a pet as per the Policy.

The pet owner will require to sign an agreement form as attached as Appendix 3.

### 8.5 **Alcohol Misuse:**

#### Consumption of Alcohol in Sheltered Housing:

The Association have adopted a distinct Policy on the consumption of alcohol in their Sheltered Housing development, where there are numerous areas deemed common to all residents.

The aims of this Policy are:

- To ensure that property, fixtures and fittings are not damaged as a result of carelessness when people consume alcoholic beverages within common areas.
- To ensure that a nuisance is not caused to residents as a result of people consuming alcoholic beverages in common areas.
- To ensure that health and safety is taken cognisance of and that residents safety is not put at risk by people consuming alcoholic beverages in common areas eg. The dropping of lighted materials.

In general terms, the Association will not permit the consumption of alcoholic beverages within common areas i.e. common close, stairways, landings and within the Sheltered Housing Complex, also common rooms, corridors, lift, public toilets and laundry areas.

However the consumption of alcoholic beverages will be permitted within the ground floor common room of the Sheltered Housing Complex only at a function organised by the Warden or with the Warden's knowledge.

People should refrain from causing a nuisance or disturbance to other residents or their guests within common areas. Any person who experiences either a nuisance or disturbance should report the incident to the Association's staff, in writing, as soon after the incident as possible.

Any damage caused to property, fitments or fixtures within common areas should be reported to the Association's staff in writing, and if known, the name of the person(s) responsible for the damage.

Where damage is caused to property, fitments or fixtures in common areas by a resident's guest(s) the resident will be held responsible for the damage as per their Tenancy Agreement.

## 8.6 **Vandalism:**

As part of the Association's normal estate management and maintenance procedures all common areas are inspected on at least a quarterly basis at which point any incidence of vandalism would be noted and entered in the Association's repairs system.

Aside from regular inspections, any reports of vandalism made to the

Association would be dealt with and their repair prioritised in accordance with timescales laid down in the Association's repairs policy.

Vandalism should be reported to the Police, and the Maintenance Officer advised to allow an Insurance claim to be made if applicable.

Graffiti which is of an offensive nature will be classified as an urgent repair.

Where such graffiti may have occurred as a result of the harassment of a tenant the removal of the graffiti shall be dealt with in accordance with the Association's policy on Racial Harassment.

The Association's stance on vandalism will form part of the Good Neighbour Agreement

#### 8.7 **Refuse Disposal and Litter:**

The tenant has a responsibility under the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement to maintain the common parts of the building in a clean and tidy condition.

This means that tenants must place their refuse in the waste bins provided in the back court. Tenants must not, in the interests of hygiene and safety/fire regulations leave household items on the landing or common close.

It is the responsibility of residents to contact the cleansing Department to uplift bulk household items, although these items may be left in the back court providing, they do not cause a nuisance to other occupiers.

Tenants who do not make such arrangements or who leave items behind in their homes at the end of their tenancy will be liable for the cost of removing such items.

#### 8.8 **Vermin and Pest Control:**

The responsibility for the control of vermin and pests lies with the Environmental Health Department of the local authority. In the interest of making suitable access arrangements the Association requests that tenants contact the Environmental Health Department directly, although the Association is happy to make contact on behalf of those tenants who are unable to do so.

Where vermin and pest control problems are exacerbated by tenants who live in filthy verminous conditions and who are unable to improve their living conditions the Association will liaise with social services and other relevant support agencies to arrange appropriate assistance.

The Association will also liaise with the Environmental Health Department as required in order that the Environmental Health Department may take action under its statutory powers as appropriate.

#### 8.9 **Satellite Dishes:**

The Association provides each property with a communal T.V. aerial system and in some instances a communal satellite systems, which eliminates the need for individual T.V.aerials. The Association does not allow the fitting of Satellite Dishes or other telecommunication devices on an individual basis where we own or manage the property.

#### 8.10 **Running a Business from Home**

Tenants are not normally allowed to run a business from their home.

If tenants are found to be doing this, they will be advised in writing that this is against their Tenancy Agreement, and if they do not stop, legal action may be taken.

However, if the tenant feels that the business they are conducting does not annoy neighbours e.g. Internet site, the tenant can appeal to the Management Committee who would decide whether the business can be run from home.

#### 8.11 **Security:**

##### In the Home:

The Association wishes each tenant to feel as secure as possible in their own home.

To reinforce this the following steps have been taken with regard to person employed by the Association.

All members of Association staff must carry identification

All persons employed by the Association or authorised by the Association to carry out repairs must carry identification.

The Association will promote the House Contents Insurance Scheme operated by the SFHA which is available to all tenants and also owner occupiers resident in properties factored by the Association. Details of the scheme are available from the Association's office.

##### Around the Home:

It is viewed as desirable from both a personal protection view and a

property protection one that access to all common back courts, closes and roof spaces is strictly controlled. In this respect the Association has fitted door entry systems to all close front doors and locks/bolts to all rear doors. All attic hatch doors are kept securely locked and access to open spaces limited to authorised personnel only via the Association.

#### Lighting:

Usually the existing stair lighting is the responsibility of Glasgow City Council and the Association will ensure that it is provided with effective certification to ensure that it continues to be maintained by the City Council in the future.

Street lighting is the responsibility of Glasgow City Council Street Lighting section, and tenants should report any faults directly to them.

#### Illegal Activities:

All illegal activities are deemed as primarily the responsibility of the police. However action will be taken by the Association against a tenant where it can be proved that a breach of the Tenancy Agreement has occurred - due to actions of the tenant, member of the tenant's family or visitors of the tenant.

Any complaint made of illegal activity will be handled in accordance with the Neighbour complaints section detailed later.

#### Insurance:

It is the responsibility of the Association to ensure that all properties under management whether owned by the Association or not are adequately covered by Building Insurance. All building insurance claims are handled by the Association maintenance section.

## **9.0 Neighbour Complaints**

- 9.1 The Association's properties are all flats which are often the source of neighbour disputes.
- 9.2 It is therefore important to have a coherent strategy in relation to neighbour disputes and responding to complaints, and an effective implementation of that strategy.
- 9.3 All social landlords receive, from time to time, complaints from tenants about neighbours. Complaints by tenants against the Association will be dealt with separately within the Complaints Procedure Policy.
- 9.4 Tenants who have complained about neighbours will usually be encouraged to try and resolve problems themselves without the formal

involvement of the Association. Advice may be given to the tenant on how this might best be approached.

- 9.5 If the Association's involvement is required then the Association will record the complaints about neighbours received by completing a standard form and also make an entry of the complaint into the register of complaints book. Tenants will be encouraged to put complaints in writing. Action taken with regard to anonymous complaints received will be at the discretion of the Housing Manager and / or Director.
- 9.6 The Association aims to ensure that it becomes involved in problems only where necessary but that where it has a responsibility to do so the response is speedy, purposeful and effective.
- 9.7 The Association will classify complaints into three categories as shown in Appendix 4.
- 9.8 The decision about where it is best to locate a particular complaint will not always be clear cut and will depend upon the judgement of the Housing Management staff member concerned as to which category is appropriate.
- 9.9 It is also recognised that a complaint may start in one category and then move to another as a situation worsens. If this is the case then advice should be sought where possible from the Housing Manager or Director.
- 9.10 It will be made clear to tenants that where appropriate, legal action will be used as a last resort to resolve persistent or very serious problems.
- 9.11 The decision to instigate legal action will be at the discretion of the Housing Manager. Any such Reports on the legal advice will be reported to the next available Housing Management Committee meeting. This committee will have discretion as to whether subsequent court action is taken.

## **10.0 Harassment and Anti-Social Behaviour**

- 10.1 Where neighbour complaints are identified as harassment of a tenant or as sustained anti-social behaviour, the Association will take appropriate action dependent on the severity of the offences and the wishes of the complainants.
- 10.2 Racial harassment is dealt with under the Association's Racial Harassment Policy and Procedures.

## **11.0 Procedures and Guidance for Staff on Dealing with Complaints**

- 11.1 Procedures for staff in dealing with Estate Management complaints is



given in Appendix 5.

- 11.2 Guidelines for staff in dealing with Estate Management issues is given in Appendix 6.

## **12.0 Responsibility for Estate Management**

- 12.1 Responsibility for Estate Management will lie with the Housing Management Section, with the support of the Maintenance Section.
- 12.2 As Estate Management is essentially a human service with all the complexities and variables which arise when dealing with people, provision of this service will therefore rely heavily on the abilities and judgements of the Housing Management Team.

## **13.0 Tenant Participation**

- 13.1 Tenants opinion on estate management services will be regularly sought through tenants meetings, forums and use of satisfaction surveys, and newsletters and information leaflets will be used to raise residents awareness of the Association's policies and objectives.
- 13.2 If necessary, information will be translated into appropriate media such as translations into other languages, on tape etc. or interpreters will be used.
- 13.3 Tenant involvement will be actively encouraged and welcomed in line with the Association's Tenants Participation Policy.

## **14.0 Reporting to Committee**

- 14.1 The Management Committee will receive quarterly reports detailing:
- visits and problems encountered for the previous three months
  - number and category of complaints reported in the previous three months
  - details and recommendations on serious cases where legal action is being considered or is on-going
  - details of any racial harassment incidents in the previous three months
- 14.2 In addition, the Housing Manager will report on any estate management issues where decisions require to be made between the quarterly reports.

## **15.0 Policy Review**

- 15.1 The Estate Management Policy should not be seen as static, and may

need adapted to meet changing circumstances.

- 15.2 This Policy will be fully reviewed in July, 2004, and every three years thereafter, although minor amendments may be made if considered necessary at any time between reviews.
- 15.3 In addition, changes may be required to comply with the law or new guidance where these cannot wait until the next programmed review.
- 15.4 With regards procedures and guidance for staff, these can be revised by the Housing Manager to take account of practical experience in their implementation, provided the aims and objectives of the Policy are not compromised.