

Introduction and Overview

The primary aim of the Association's estate management procedures are to ensure that the Association continues to provide the highest possible standard of housing and living environments that will be viewed as a desirable place to live and to protect the Association's investment in the stock and surrounding areas. Housing Management and Maintenance will have joint responsibility for estate management

The term "Estate Management" is very wide ranging and can encompass many tasks that collectively are required to maintain the Association's housing stock. It is accepted that if we manage our tenancies well it will increase tenant satisfaction and enable us to minimise time taken to re-let empty homes, reduce arrears levels, the incidences of neighbour problems and our management costs.

A lot can be done to prevent estate management problems arising by ensuring that tenants and residents are made fully aware of their obligations either under their tenancy agreement or deeds of conditions. A clean and tidy estate means a lot to residents. Well maintained trees, shrubs, grassed areas and other forms of soft landscaping, keeping on top of rubbish and litter not only achieves an attractive safe environment, but also proves to residents that the Association takes a pride in their estate. An attractive well cared for area is only possible if residents also take responsibility for managing it. To achieve consistently high standards it is essential that there is close partnership co-operation between tenants, residents and staff.

The following procedures should be read in conjunction with the Association's Estate Management Policy, Residents' Handbook, Neighbour Nuisance and Anti-social Behaviour Policy and Harassment Policy and aims to ensure that the estate management service is provided as efficiently and effectively as possible. The procedures, when followed should allow properties to be well maintained and allow the Association to maintain a good quality living environment for all residents.

Estate Management Procedures

This document provides staff procedures in relation to the following areas:

1. Setting Standards
2. Estate Management Reports and Inspections.
3. Outcomes to Inspections.
4. The Association's Ground Maintenance and Backcourt Services
5. Working with external agencies.
6. Dogs.
7. Graffiti & vandalism.
8. Needles & syringes.

1. Setting Standards

Staff should actively listen to tenants' complaints and concerns about issues that affect their quality of life. Staff should ensure that issues are dealt with promptly and efficiently. All complaints should be recorded and dealt with in accordance with these procedures however, persistent nuisance will be dealt with under the Association's Neighbour Nuisance and Anti-social Behaviour policy and procedures. Staff should make use of the newsletter to highlight landlord and tenant obligations.

Reports of estate management issues or nuisance should be recorded in the Estate Management Nuisance Register, including the nature of complaint and the outcomes. Following a report of an estate management issue, efforts should be made to resolve the matter within five working days.

2. Estate Management Reports and Inspections

The Association's common areas should be inspected by staff on a regular basis, the purpose of which is to ensure that these areas are being properly maintained and potential problems identified and acted upon as soon as possible. Staff should inspect closes when visiting the properties on any business (e.g. rent arrears visits, complaints, settling-in visits, viewings). A record of issues, complaints, inspections and outcomes will be kept in the Association's Estate Management Register. Where a problem is identified, the most appropriate action will be taken to remedy the situation.

Common Landing & Stairs

Under the terms of tenancy agreements and deeds of conditions, tenants / residents have a responsibility to prevent unauthorised access to the common close by ensuring that close doors are kept locked and landing windows properly closed. Window safety catches must be on at all times to ensure maximum security and safety.

All tenants / residents are directly responsible for ensuring the cleanliness of the common stairs and landing. Where there are no tenants / residents on the ground floor it is the responsibility of all other households to take turns to ensure that the ground floor area is swept and cleaned.

All tenants / residents are directly responsible for ensuring that no items are left or stored in common areas such as bicycles, motorcycle, prams, furnishings or personal belongings as this represents a significant fire and health and safety risk. The Association reserves the right to remove and dispose of items should resident(s) fail to co-operate in voluntary removal. The associated costs will be re-charged to the resident(s) responsible and reminders issued for breach of tenancy where applicable.

Where tenants / residents have bulk items requiring uplift by Glasgow City Council then these must be placed in the backcourt adjacent to the bin shelter. The Association operates a bulk pull-through system on a fortnightly basis and the appointed contractor will co-ordinates this service with Glasgow City Council for uplift.

Staff should give guidance to tenants about how to use the bins and plastic sacks for disposal. Guidance should also be given on ways of disposing of bulky household items and that they must contact Glasgow City Council directly to arrange the uplift of fridges.

Common Backcourt / Garden

Under the terms of tenancy agreements and deeds of condition, tenants / residents are required to comply with any local arrangements for the use and sharing of the common parts including drying greens and areas. The erection of sheds are not permitted.

Glasgow City Council's Cleansing Service is responsible for the removal of domestic refuse and bulk uplift. The Association provides the following backcourt services:

- Ground maintenance
- sweeping and de-littering
- bulk pull-through services (refer to section 4)

Where tenants have exclusive use of a garden they must take reasonable care to keep it from becoming overgrown, untidy or causing nuisance. Residents must not remove, chop down or destroy any bushes, grass, hedges or trees without written permission unless they had planted them. Guidance should be given on ways of disposing of garden waste.

Staff should identify tenants who neglect their garden, investigate their reasons for this, and enforce tenancy conditions or arrange practical advice and assistance where appropriate for tenants who are infirm or disabled. This could include a referral to Glasgow City Council to be included in their garden service or landscape contractor to provide a service at a direct cost to the tenant.

2. Estate Management Reports and Inspections (Continued)

Inspections

Staff will carry out regular inspections of common areas owned or managed by the Association to monitor the upkeep of the estate, to check the general condition of the Association's property and to note any repairs and / or improvement works required. During inspections particular attention should be paid to the condition of the close or estate and the following reported and acted upon by the appropriate section. The main checks should be for:

Maintenance

- Door Entry Systems and Windows
- Roofs, Guttering, Downpipes and Overflow Pipes
- Service Boxes and Hatches
- Defective Stairs, Tiles, Plasterwork, Cabling, Balustrades and Railings
- Vandalism, Graffiti or erection of Satellite Dishes

Housing Management

- Close Security
- Obstruction caused by Storage of Personal Belongings / Rubbish / Bulk Items in Common Areas
- Cleanliness of Common Areas (stairs, landing and backcourt)
- Condition of Gardens and Common Grounds
- Fly-tipping and Street Cleaning

An inspection of common closes will be carried out according to a weighting for each close. Where main door property inspections are carried out then staff must grade the property based on the exterior condition and garden area. The following categories should be used:

Rating	Score	Description
Good	5	Property in good overall condition
Average	3	Property in satisfactory condition but some attention is required
Bad	1	Property in poor condition overall

Property conditions should be noted in the Estate Management Register following each property inspection so that the progress with regards to the condition of the close / property can be monitored. To make best use of staff time and ensure that resources are concentrated into the areas most needed, staff should ensure that poorer graded closes are most often scheduled for inspection.

Where properties are not maintained to a satisfactory standard or a breach of tenancy occurs, staff will ensure that the Estate Management Inspection Register is updated and the most appropriate course of action taken (refer to section 3). Where maintenance repairs or defects are noted during inspections then staff should record this in the Estate Management Inspection Register and report issues to Maintenance Services.

As property managers the Association has a responsibility to ensure that owners and private tenants comply with the terms of the deed of conditions and fulfil their obligations conferred by these documents. However, staff should note that the Association's powers of enforcement are more restricted and may be limited, depending on the terms of the individual deed.

3. Outcomes to Inspections

Where there is an unsatisfactory inspection or minor breach of tenancy of tenancy identified then staff may wish to consider the following courses of action (this list of actions is not exhaustive):

- Issue cards through the letterbox advising of the issue.
- Issue letters (tenancy reminder letters).
- Arrange interviews with residents.
- Issue cleaning rotas.
- Arrange a clean of a close and recharge the costs.
- Arrange for items to be removed from common areas and recharge the costs.
- Liaise with a contractor regarding the quality of a service being provided.
- Report issues to the relevant local authority department.

The outcome to all inspections, including actions taken (e.g. cards, letters, interviews, clean up) should be recorded in the Estate Management Inspections Register. Staff should detail the date of inspection, property grading, the staff member inspecting the property and note actions taken. Housing Management and Maintenance issues must be recorded. Copies of any written correspondence such as letters, photographs or reports should be saved in the Scheme House Files.

Where one or all of the tenants fail to keep common areas to an acceptable standard, staff should instruct the works and recharge the costs incurred.

Where an estate management issue identifies a persistent breach of tenancy agreement and the tenant fails to address the matter as required then consideration should be given to raising an investigation in accordance with the Association's Neighbour Nuisance and Anti-social Behaviour procedures.

4. The Association's Maintenance, Ground Maintenance and Backcourt Services

The Association will ensure that suitable arrangements and contracts are in place to provide a responsive repair service to keep communal areas in a safe and acceptable condition.

Landscape areas and grassed areas designated as communal will be the responsibility of the Association. A contractor will be employed to cut the grass and maintain the shrubs. The Association will also employ contractors to maintain the backcourt areas by sweeping the bin stores, de-littering and managing household bulk for collection.

Where the Association receives a complaint against a contractor who provides estate management services (e.g. stair cleaning, bulk uplift, ground maintenance) then the complaint should be raised and investigated in accordance with the Association's Complaints Handling Procedures.

5. External Agencies

The key approaches to effective estate management are housing and maintenance led but also need the input from other agencies such as Glasgow City Council Cleansing Services, Community Safety Glasgow or Police Scotland. The Association will seek to establish good working relationships with these agencies that have expertise or an interest in the management of the Association's area. Estate Management issues can be directly linked to criminal activity, for example broken windows, graffiti or fly-tipping. Both residents and the Association have access to Police Scotland services and they should report any criminal related issued to the Police as well as the Association. The following provides a guide for staff on the main external agencies:

- Glasgow City Council's Community Relations Unit Mediation Services for low level neighbour disputes or disagreements.
- Glasgow City Council Cleansing Department regarding issues with refuse collection, bulk not being removed from the kerbside and fridges not being removed from backcourts.
- Glasgow City Council's Community Relations unit regarding issues relating to dog fouling.
- Glasgow City Council Environmental Protection Services regarding for the removal of needles.
- Clean Glasgow regarding issues with fly-tipping or street cleaning.
- Appointed contractors in relation to ground maintenance, stair cleaning and de-littering, bulk control and common repair issues.
- Police Scotland on matters relating to community safety or criminal activity.
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on matter relating to common safety (close obstruction or hoarding).

6. Dogs

Tenancy Agreements permit tenants to keep one dog. Written permission is required to keep more than one dog. The conditions are that the keeping of the dog is not prohibited by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or by any other law. Staff should check the tenancy agreement to ensure that the dog has not been excluded from the backcourt area. Tenants must ensure that they are responsible owners and must take reasonable steps to ensure they keep their dog under control. They must ensure that their dog must not cause nuisance or annoyance to other residents. Tenants are responsible for ensuring that fouling is removed and disposed of properly. We are entitled to require removal of a dog if it is causing nuisance or damage.

If evidence of dog fouling is noted during a close / property inspection or a complaint of dog fouling is received, staff should carry out investigations by contacting surrounding neighbours with a view to determining the household responsible. Where corroborating evidence is obtained confirming the household responsible then staff should write to the household responsible giving them forty- eight hours to clean the fouling. The letter should warn that failure to clean the fouling will result in the Association arranging for a clean-up and the cost of this being recharged to the householder.

Where no corroborating evidence is obtained and the perpetrator is not identified then the Association will arrange for a contractor to clean up the fouling as soon as reasonably possible.

If during investigations any neighbours confirm that they have witnessed a specific person allowing a dog to foul without cleaning up the mess then the witness should be encouraged to complete a Witness Statement that should in turn be passed to Glasgow City Council's Community Relations Unit (CRU) for a fixed penalty notice (FPN) to be issued. Staff should contact CRU within forty-eight hours of receiving a witness statement. The Witness should also be advised that in the event that the perpetrator appeals the FPN then they may be required to attend court.

7. Graffiti & Vandalism

Offensive or racist graffiti should be reported to Maintenance Services and removed as an emergency response repair. Other graffiti should be removed within fourteen working days. The Association will treat this as anti-social behaviour and we will do everything to identify the person(s) responsible. Appropriate action will be taken in accordance with this policy and procedures and the offending household re-charged to remove the graffiti.

It is noted that graffiti removal on sandstone may require a specialist contractor and as such this may cause delays in having the graffiti removed. In circumstances where such a contractor is required, staff should ensure that the removal should be requested within twenty-four hours of the graffiti being noted.

Repairs due to vandalism will be treated as anti-social behaviour and we will do everything possible to identify the perpetrator. Appropriate action will be taken in accordance with this policy and procedures and the offending household re-charged for the damage.

8. Needles & Syringes

Needles and syringes are hazardous to health and also act as a danger to the public. If staff note any needles or syringes or received a report of needles from residents then this should be reported to Environmental Protection Services immediately for removal.