



Muirhouse Housing Association

MUIRHOUSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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Policy: Estate Management

Our Vision, Our Mission, Our Values

Our Vision is an engaged, thriving, desirable and eco-friendly Muirhouse with high quality, truly affordable and greener homes.

Our Mission - We will provide high quality, truly affordable homes and services for residents and strengthen our engagement and partnerships to enrich the community and safeguard our environment.

Our Values - In upholding our central value of providing high quality, affordable homes and services, our behaviours and decisions will demonstrate our commitment to

Excellence: Ensuring the highest standards in all that we do and innovating to continually improve. Across the MHA Group, we are committed to providing a high quality, customer focused service that demonstrates value for money.

Caring: Being compassionate about and responding appropriately to the needs of our residents, staff, and Board.

Mutual Respect: Valuing the views, knowledge, expertise, and skills of others and collaborating to achieve good outcomes for residents, staff, and the Association. We will continue to be a leading member of the local community, working with our customers and statutory, voluntary, and private sector partners.

This policy applies to

This policy applies to staff of Muirhouse Housing Association for their work in relation to estate management and sets out what standards we expect of tenants, how we monitor these standards and what action we will take if tenants fail to adhere to these standards.

Policy Summary

This policy outlines how Muirhouse Housing Association will ensure our tenant live in well managed housing in safe, clean, and tidy environment.

Equalities

Muirhouse Housing Association are committed to ensuring people or communities do not face discrimination or social exclusion due to any of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex or sexual orientation.

This document complies with our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.

Privacy

This policy has been developed and will be applied in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (2018).

Compliance

SHR Regulatory Standards

1. The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.
2. The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.
3. The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford
4. The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.

Other Guidance

Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement
The Social Housing Charter

Related Policies

Allocation Policy
Anti-Social Policy
Void Management
Reactive Maintenance
Tenant participation Policy and Strategy

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1. Introduction

1.1 We take a proactive approach to the management of our properties, estates, and neighbourhoods. We aim to promote a sense of pride and community ownership within the local area. Estate management is a central element of the service we provide to our tenants and is considered a high priority by our customers.

1.2 Estate Management is a general term used to define tenancy management and environmental.

‘Tenancy Management aims to encourage and support a tenant to keep the terms of their tenancy agreement. Where appropriate and necessary it will involve taking action to enforce compliance.’

‘Environmental Management aims to create a well-maintained neighbourhood in which tenants and other customers feel safe.’

1.3 Estate Management covers a diverse range of issues such as:

- Providing advice and information on tenancy matters
- Inspecting the condition of common areas
- Enforcing tenancy conditions
- Providing advice and assistance to tenants and residents on services that enhance the local community
- Supporting initiatives to reduce crime
- Environmental maintenance and improvements
- Maintenance of communal areas
- Co-operation with other agencies delivering services in the community

1.4 Estate Management is linked to, but separate from, the management of Anti-Social Behaviour. The Association’s Anti-Social Behaviour policy sets out how we deal with anti-social behaviour. In some instances Estate Management could escalate and be dealt with under the guidelines of the Anti-Social Behaviour policy.

2. Aim of the Policy

2.1 We recognise that Estate Management is a vital part of our role as a landlord and therefore the key aims of this policy are:

- To provide a direct housing management service, ensuring that tenancy conditions are adhered to, and providing or arranging advice and support where required
- To develop mutually beneficial good landlord/tenant/resident relationships.
- To ensure that our homes and surrounding area are managed and maintained to a high standard, within pleasant, safe, and secure

neighbourhoods, and that provision is made for future investment in the stock.

- To have in place a robust asset management strategy to ensure the long-term maintenance of the Association's properties.
- To ensure compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), Energy Efficiency in Social Housing (ESSH), and any subsequent Government regulatory requirements

2.2 We also recognise that the services standards and level of resources dedicated to Estate Management need to respond to any issues identified by tenants. We will encourage tenants to be involved in the shaping the services which we provide through various channels including tenant focus groups, close and area meetings, surveys, and complaints etc. The aspiration is to have tenants who are proud of the area they live in.

3. Legal and Regulatory Requirements

3.1 The Estate Management policy meets with legislative and & good practice requirements including:

Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Social Housing Charter states what tenants can expect from social landlords, in terms of the quality and value for money of the services they receive, the standard of their homes, and opportunities for communication and participation in the decisions that affect them. This policy aims to ensure we meet the Charter standards and outcomes, in particular:

Outcome 1, Equality: Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Outcome 2, Communication: Social landlords manage their businesses so that 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 other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

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.

Outcome 13, Value for Money: Tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

3.2 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

This Act covers the statutory framework for Scottish Secure and Short Scottish Secure Tenancies, and Tenant Consultation requirements.

3.3 The Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) and Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST`s)

The Association can exercise direct control over its tenants in the terms of SST. The purpose of this is to protect the interests of tenant's, the wider community, and the Association.

3.3 Equality Act

We aim to promote equality and diversity and operate equal opportunities policies which inform all aspects of our business. We will ensure that it adheres to the Equality Act 2010 by being committed to equal and fair treatment for all and opposed to any form of unlawful discrimination.

In the implementation of our estate management policy, no one will be treated differently or less favourably than others because of any of the protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

We will ensure that we comply with the Equality Act 2010 when evaluating our buildings and surrounding environments.

Upon request, we will make information about our Estate Management Policy and procedures available in alternative formats, such as large print, audio, Braille, and community languages

4. Approach and Method

- 4.1 We will undertake detailed surveys of our stock on a regular basis, and have in place an Asset Management Strategy to ensure our properties continue to be maintained to a high standard

Our Housing Services team will carry out regular estate visits during which we will inspect stairwells, entrances, bin areas, drying areas, parking areas, gardens, and open spaces. We will keep a written record of each visit, including the issues noted and action taken.

Staff carrying out estate visits will check for any maintenance issues and arrange repairs or other action promptly. The Association is responsible for the following areas of Estate Management:

- Repair and maintenance of housing stock.
- Stair cleaning.
- Stair lighting.
- Bulky item uplift.
- Secondary litter picking.
- Graffiti removal.
- Maintaining communal areas and gardens.
- Promote and encourage gardening within Association.

Staff will also check cleanliness and general upkeep of the area (including issues such as graffiti, fly tipping, litter, dog fouling, unkempt gardens, parking, abandoned vehicles), and action promptly either directly with tenants or by liaising with other agencies

To enable us to take effective action on issues which are outwith our direct control, we will place a high priority on the importance of establishing close working relationships with other agencies such as City of Edinburgh Council environmental services and cleansing, the Community Safety Team, the Police, and external contractors.

We will monitor the performance of external contractors such as garden contractors and cleaners of communal stairs, to ensure that services are provided to a high standard.

4.2 Tenants Responsibilities

We encourage all tenants of the Association to look after the environment in which they live and have respect for their surroundings. Specifically, tenants are responsible for:

- Taking care of common stairs.
- Looking after individual gardens and communal gardens.
- Looking after their pets and being responsible pet owners.
- Disposing of all rubbish in the bin stores provided.
- Ensuring that caravans, boats, and trailers are not parked within shared parking areas.
- Parking responsibly and not abandoning cars within the estate.
- Reporting any repairs or concerns about the estate.

Tenants will be made aware of their responsibilities in terms of Estate Management at the time they sign their tenancy agreement and during their allocation interview.

Where it is felt that individuals are failing to adhere to their tenancy conditions, or where there is a clear breach, the Association will take the appropriate action required

4.3 Stakeholders/Partnership

There are several partners within Estate Management who have clear primary areas of responsibility:

- ***City of Edinburgh Council (CEC)***

- Refuse Collection

- Litter collection

- Roads, pavements, and street lighting

- Dog control

- Emptying Dog Bins

- Environmental maintenance

- Playparks

- ***Police***

- All aspects of law and order

- Vandalism

- Disturbances

- Traffic issues including abandoned vehicles

- Anti-Social behavior

- Drug related issues

- Provision of effective Community policing

- Effective liaison point for Association staff

- ***Local community groups***

- Promote and encourage an active interest

- Encourage activities in children's/youth groups, which encourage respect for property

4.4 Effective Management

It is vital that the Association takes a pro-active and co-ordinated approach to Estate Management and facilitates and encourages a multi-agency approach. The following are key areas of Estate Management:

Stair Cleaning

The Association will:

- Clean all stairwells once weekly and undertake full cleaning of all parts on a four weekly rota basis.
- Undertake fortnightly stair cleaning inspections to check the quality of all work.

Gardens, Landscaping, Communal areas

The Association will:

- Carry out regular inspections of garden areas, communal areas, and landscaping to ascertain their condition.
- Take required action to ensure that all garden areas are looked after and remain in good condition.
- Employ a landscaping contractor to cut grass and maintain communal gardens owned by the Association, from March to October.
- Review annually the landscaping specification and the performance of the landscaping contractor.
- Liaise with CEC to ensure that play parks are maintained in good condition.
- Arrange for hedging to be cut on an annual basis.

Repairs and Maintenance

The Association will

- Carry out regular structured and ad hoc inspections of the physical condition of its properties and any common areas including stairwells, fences, bin stores, walls, roofs etc.
- Arrange for prompt cost effective repairs of any defective items identified in inspections, in line with its repairs and maintenance policy
- Carry out post completion inspections to check the quality of work.

Policing/Anti-Social behaviour

The Association will

- Maintain effective links with the police, drug squad, and community police officer.
- Report any incidences of vandalism, abandoned cars, anti-social behaviour, and drug misuse on a reactive basis.
- Assist police with investigations as required.
- Respond quickly to remove graffiti and aim to remove offensive graffiti within 48 hours of it being reported.

Roads/Street Lighting/Stair Lighting

The Association will

- Report road, pavement, and street lighting defects immediately to Edinburgh City Council.
- Inspect stair lighting every six months, clean all fittings, and replace/repair any defective bulbs, starters, lights etc. notwithstanding any repairs required out with that period.

City of Edinburgh Council have responsibility for:

- Gritting main roads and pavements during adverse weather.
- Repairs and Maintenance of all street lighting within Muirhouse

4.5 Pets and Dog Control

Under the terms of the tenancy agreement, tenants are allowed a maximum of one dog if they have a separate and sole entrance to their property and a private garden. Tenants without a private garden can have a domestic pet in the property provided they have written approval from the Association. Permission will not be unreasonably withheld but will be given subject to the following conditions:

- Regard will be given to the Guidance on the Control of Dogs (*Scotland Act 2010).
- The keeping of the pet is not prohibited under any other law.
- The pet is properly supervised and kept under control at all times.
- The animal is not allowed to cause nuisance, annoyance or be a danger to other residents in the area.
- The pet is not allowed to cause damage to the house, to neighbouring properties or to any property belonging to the Association.
- The animal does not create excess noise or smell.
- Pets, especially dogs, are not allowed to foul gardens, public footpaths, shared back courtyards, play areas or any other common

areas and that the owner of the pet is responsible for cleaning up any faeces immediately.

- In all instances pet owners should comply with current local and national legislation in relation to dogs and dog fouling.

In the event of a problem pets warning letters will be sent initially to all residents or specific dog owners.

Where tenants allow their pets to cause a nuisance (e.g., by fouling the backcourt or other common areas) the Association will enforce conditions of tenancy by requesting that the pet be brought under control or removed (which may lead to court action such as applying for an Interdict).

Private owners who allow their pets to cause a nuisance to neighbours will be reported to the Council's Environmental Health Department.

The Association will, when necessary, make use of external agencies such as Environmental Health, Dog Wardens, and the RSPCA.

5. Housing management and tenancy issues

Our staff will be approachable and encourage tenants to speak to them about issues and problems in the local area. Staff will have detailed knowledge of the area for which they are responsible.

Where neglect or breach of tenancy conditions is noted, we will remind tenants of their obligations, offer advice and assistance as appropriate, monitor the situation, and enforce tenancy conditions where necessary.

We will treat all instances of vandalism and graffiti as serious and take urgent action to repair and to identify the offender. Where the offender can be identified and is a tenant we will recharge the cost of repair/graffiti removal and may report this to the Police.

Where bulk items of refuse have been dumped improperly and we can identify the person responsible, we will pursue them to ensure correct procedures for removal are followed and if necessary for the costs of removal. We will arrange for disposal where the person responsible cannot be identified.

5.1 Abandoned Properties

We aim to make the best use of our housing stock by identifying early any unoccupied properties, complying with legislation to repossess these properties, and then reletting them swiftly to meet the needs of our tenants and applicants. We are aware that there is a long wait for housing in Muirhouse and we expect everyone who has been granted a tenancy to

occupy it as their main and permanent home. We will deal swiftly with any instance where a tenant is not doing so and thereby depriving someone else of a home. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gives legal provision for a Scottish secure tenancy to be repossessed by the landlord if it appears to have been abandoned. The Scottish Secure Tenancies (Abandoned Property) Order 2002 specifies procedures to be implemented whenever property is found in abandoned houses. This is specified in section 6.4 of the Scottish Secure Tenancy agreement and in our detailed procedures.

6. Tenant involvement in the management of the local area

In line with our commitment to involving tenants in all aspects of our work, we will support and provide practical assistance to any group of tenants and residents who wish to set up a local group such as a residents group or Neighbourhood Watch scheme. We will work closely with tenants and residents' groups and will ask for feedback and respond to their views on the quality of estate management services we provide.

Where there are particular issues in a specific estate, street, close or building, we may hold meetings especially for the residents concerned, to hear their views and agree on a plan for resolving the problems.

We will carry out regular surveys on the quality of estate management services we provide.

We will carry out regular joint estate inspections and walkabouts with representatives of tenants and residents' groups, and with representatives of City of Edinburgh Council.

We will use special events such as garden competitions, good neighbour awards, and litter picking days to promote the involvement of tenants in the improvement of neighbourhoods.

7 MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT REPORTING

- 7.1 It is the responsibility of the Housing and Asset Management Team to implement and monitor this policy.
- 7.2 Estate Management satisfaction will be measured through regular tenant satisfaction surveys.
- 7.3 We will report annually to the Board on our performance in relation to estate management.
- 7.4 We will report annually to the Scottish Housing Regulator in the Annual Return to the Charter on the level of tenant satisfaction with our management of their neighbourhood.
- 7.5 We will report to tenants regularly on our performance in relation to estate

management through Performance Reports and tenant's newsletters.

8 Complaints

- 8.1 We recognise that in the delivery of our services to customers there may be occasions when a customer is not satisfied with the way a particular issue was dealt with. Tenants, their representatives or others who use our service can make a complaint to any member of staff who will try to resolve the matter straightaway. If this is not possible, we will make sure the matter is fully investigated in line with our complaints policy and procedure. Copies of these are available from our office or on our website. Feedback from complaints will be used to help improve our service.

9 Policy Availability

This policy will be available on our website and on from our office. It can be made available in a different language or format on request.

10 Policy review

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless key changes are required earlier to comply with legislation, guidance, or new learning.