



**Drumchapel
Housing**

Co-operative Limited

Estate management policy and procedures

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Drumchapel Housing Co-operative is committed to providing good quality affordable housing and to manage the property owned by the Co-operative to the highest possible standard within existing financial constraints.
- 1.2 Estate Management is a vital part of housing management and a particularly important service from the tenants' viewpoint, yet there is no accepted definition of what tasks it covers. The Chartered Institute of Housing uses the term in its widest sense to refer to property management and services to tenants, leaseholders and sharing owners which aim to enable tenants to have quiet enjoyment of their homes and a decent, safe and secure environment. Estate Management is not just about looking after buildings and the physical environment, but also involves providing or arranging necessary advice and support to tenants, and involves working with other agencies to achieve decent living conditions. Tenancy management also comes under the heading of estate management and is best described as intervention action necessary to ensure tenants and tenants are aware of their responsibilities in relation to their property and their neighbours.
- 1.3 Maintenance of the properties and the common areas in our ownership is the responsibility of the Co-operative. Estate management therefore is seen as a fundamental aspect of this service. Ground maintenance and the many other day-to-day tasks that go into looking after the estate are all important in creating and maintaining a clean, attractive and safe estate. Although taking good care of our area is primarily the Co-operatives responsibility, some services that impact on estate management, such as refuse collection, close lighting and street lighting are not within the Co-operatives direct control. The Co-operative will endeavour to foster good working relationships with Glasgow City Council to ensure that their departments provide a good quality service in our area. A multi-agency approach to estate management is required particularly with a high profile for the police and community wardens. This policy places a strong emphasis on a proactive and supportive approach to estate management.
- 1.4 For the Co-operative this means having the responsibility to inspect and maintain its housing, the common areas of that housing, the surrounding environment within the curtilage of the buildings and any land within the Co-operatives ownership.

- 1.5 For tenants it means compliance with their responsibilities for maintaining in good order their surrounding environment, as well as their own individual property, and in doing so respect the rights of their neighbours and the surrounding community, as laid down in their Tenancy Agreement.
- 1.6 This policy cross relates to the neighbour disputes policy, racial harassment policy, pet policy, and anti-social policy as these are tenancy related, and compliance with the tenancy agreement.
- 1.7 The aforementioned policies and procedures govern how staff should deal with nuisance problems caused by the behaviour of tenants and their guests and for responding to customers' complaints about problems such as:
 - General domestic noise, foul language, DIY activity
 - Noise from amplified music
 - Late night parties
 - Car repairs in the street, abandoned cars
 - Nuisance caused by animals
 - Racial, sexual and other forms of harassment
 - Violence
 - Drug dealing

2. Legislative & regulatory framework

- 2.1 This policy meets The Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcome No. 6: Estate Management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes. Social landlords working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure that:

“Tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe”.

3. Housing management - setting standards

- 3.1 A clean and tidy estate means a lot to tenants. Well maintained trees, shrubs, grassed areas and other forms of soft landscaping, keeping on top of graffiti, rubbish and litter not only achieves an attractive and safe environment, but also proves to tenants that the Co-operative takes a pride in their estate.

Whilst the Estate Caretaker is responsible for monitoring the performance of the landscape maintenance contractor the Housing Officer has a role to play in monitoring the condition of the landscape common areas and taking prompt action to remedy the situation by alerting the Estate Caretaker immediately any instances of suspected non-conformance of the contractor becomes apparent.

- 3.2 It is the responsibility of the Co-operative to ensure that the appearance and cleanliness of each property on the estate is maintained to as high a standard as possible, and that conditions of the tenancy agreement are adhered to. An attractive well cared for estate is only possible if tenants also take responsibility for looking after it. Partnership and co-operation with tenants is of paramount importance. To achieve consistently high standards, it is essential that there is close co-operation between tenants and staff.
- 3.3 Tenants therefore have their part to play in ensuring the estate is kept at its best. Tenants have certain responsibilities under their tenancy agreement to take care of their homes and estate and they can contribute ideas, views and experiences to help with service planning and delivery.
- 3.4 Housing staff should give guidance to tenants about how to use the bins, and plastic sacks for refuse disposal. Guidance should also be given on ways of disposing garden waste and bulky household items such as refrigerators and furniture.
- 3.5 Caretaking staff should make no less than twice weekly inspections of the communal bin store areas to ensure that they are kept tidy and clear of rubbish and take appropriate intervention action if found to be unsatisfactory.
- 3.6 Housing staff should identify tenants who neglect their garden, investigate the 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 providing a name of a landscape contractor to provide service at direct cost to the tenant.

4. Housing management staff responsibilities - maintaining standards

- 4.1 Drumchapel Housing Co-operative believes that a lot can be done to prevent problems arising by ensuring that tenants are fully aware of their obligations as tenants.
- 4.2 The basis of the Tenancy Agreement is that tenants have specific responsibilities, which are made clear to them at the commencement of their tenancy.

This will be done in a number of ways:

4.2.1 New Tenants

- (a) Tell people at an accompanied viewing and again at time of signing for their tenancy what their specific responsibilities are in relation to close cleaning, gardens etc.
- (b) New tenants will be issued with a tenancy agreement that is written in plain English.
- (c) They will also be given a Tenants Handbook which will give more detailed information about their tenancy, what is expected of them and what they can expect from their neighbours.
- (d) The Housing Officer will carry out a new tenant visit once the tenant has moved into the property and explain in detail their responsibilities. This is an opportunity for the Housing Officer to identify and deal with any problems being experienced. These visits will normally be carried out within six weeks of date of entry, during which the Housing Officer will reiterate responsibilities, encourage membership of the Co-operative and answer and note any other points requiring clarification. The settling in visit will be recorded and filed in the tenant's house file.

4.2.2 General

The Housing staff should note and act upon problems and issues through actively listening to tenants' complaints and concerns about issues that affect the quality of life locally. The key approaches to effective estate management are housing led but also need input from other agencies such as the Police, Glasgow City Council service departments and Community Safety Glasgow.

This will be done in a number of ways:

- (a) dealing promptly and efficiently with relatively minor problems that have the potential for escalation such as litter within a close.
- (b) Taking early action to deal with graffiti.
- (c) Co-operation with partners including community police and community wardens on addressing crime related issues such as vandalism, and car abandonment
- (d) Participate in the anti-social forum to agree a common approach to deal with perpetrators with cross boundary problems
- (e) The use of newsletters to highlight landlord and tenant responsibilities, incidents and remedial action taken/proposed
- (f) Garden competition to encourage tenants to make improvements.

4.2.3 Property Inspection - Internal

- (a) Property inspections will be carried out by the Housing Officer.
If a house is found to be in a poor condition internally action will be taken in an effort to remedy the problem. Where a poor standard of cleanliness is revealed which is likely to cause deterioration in the condition of the property action will be taken to ensure that the tenant complies with the terms of their tenancy agreement. There would then be regular inspections until the problem was resolved. Where appropriate, other agencies will be informed of the position. In cases where there is no improvement, and the Co-operative has adequate grounds, action will be taken to remedy the situation. This may include an action for eviction.
- (b) Any damage to a property or to the fixtures and fittings which is caused by carelessness, neglect or vandalism must be remedied by the tenant at their expense. If necessary, the Co-operative will carry out the work and invoice the tenant accordingly.
- (c) Housing and maintenance staff should, during routine visits, identify tenants who fail to take reasonable care of the property and/or fail to keep the property in a reasonable standard of internal decoration and cleanliness.

4.2.4 Estate Management Visits

- (a) All common closes and backcourts, and common gardens, and private gardens will be inspected on a weekly basis by the Estate Team. A record of inspection will be kept. Where a problem is identified, prompt action will be taken to remedy the situation. Additional time will be allocated to visit a property where it is evident that tenants are not complying with the terms and conditions of their tenancy.
- (b) Proper records of all action taken will be kept i.e. inspections, rotas, letters and photographs. Consideration will be given to reproducing photographs in the Newsletter to highlight problems and praise good gardens.

4.2.5 Gardens

- (a) Landscape areas and grassed areas designated as communal will be the responsibility of the Co-operative. A contractor will be employed to cut the grass, and tidy these areas. A de-littering service is undertaken of the common and back court areas.
- (b) Where a property has its own garden the tenant will be responsible for maintaining that area to a satisfactory standard i.e. grass cut regularly and free of litter and other debris. If a garden is unsatisfactory due to infirmity or disability the Co-operative will attempt to place the tenant on the Co-operative's maintenance scheme.
- (c) The Co-operative has an annual garden competition and prizes are offered to all property types. The Housing Officer should promote the garden competition as an incentive to encourage tenants to look after the garden.

4.2.6 Backcourts

- (a) Glasgow City Council's cleansing Department is responsible for removal of domestic refuse and bulk uplift. The Co-operative employs a contractor to move the bulk to the designated areas for uplift and to de-litter the hard areas and bin storage areas of the tenement properties.
- (b) This does not absolve the tenants from their responsibilities in terms of ensuring that the backcourt and bin stores are kept in a tidy condition.

4.2.7 Pets

- (a) The main responsibility for keeping and controlling pets lies with the tenant. All tenants must have written permission to keep a pet(s) (maximum of two pets) and permission will not be withheld unreasonably. Full information on the keeping of pets and the pet register is outlined in the Co-operative's Pet Policy.

5. Remits and delegated authority

- 5.1 The Housing Officer is responsible for conducting estate management visits, investigations, interviews, record keeping and reporting on all estate management issues.
- 5.2 A Notice of proceedings may be issued by the Housing Officer when authorised to do so by the Depute Director.
- 5.3 The use of legal action should be avoided in relation to estate management as far as possible however where a tenant is in breach of their tenancy agreement and **all** other action has been tried and failed court action can be considered. Court action must be approved by the Depute Director and if decree granted the Board must authorise eviction.

6. Complaints

- 6.1 The Co-operative will ensure that prompt and appropriate action will be taken to deal with estate management problems arising either from the weekly inspections or from tenant complaints.
- 6.2 All complaints will be recorded and dealt with in accordance with the neighbour disputes policy unless it is a complaint about the service, then it will be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Handling policy and procedure.

7. Tenants involvement

- 7.1 The opinion of tenants on estate management issues will be sought on a regular basis. The main method for seeking comments will be through tenant consultation, newsletters, the Tenants Panel, office questionnaires and property inspections. Newsletters are issued monthly (10 per year) to all tenants and this will assist in raising tenants' awareness of the Co-operative's policies and objectives.

8. Equality and diversity

- 8.1 The Co-operative's Equality and Diversity policy, which was approved by the Board in April 2017 following community consultation, outlines our commitment to promote a zero tolerance to unfair treatment or discrimination to any person or group of persons, particularly on the basis of any of the protected characteristics¹. This includes ensuring that everyone has equal access to information and services and, to this end, the Co-operative will make available a copy of this document in a range of alternative formats including large print, translated into another language or by data transferred to voice.
- 8.2 We are also aware of the potential for policies to inadvertently discriminate against an individual or group of individuals. To help tackle this and ensure that it does not occur, best practice suggests that organisations carry out Equality Impact Assessments to help identify any part of a policy that may be discriminatory so that this can be addressed (please see section 6 of the Equality and Diversity Policy for more information).
- 8.3 In line with section 6.3 of the Equality and Diversity Policy, the Co-operative will apply a screening process based on that recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to ascertain whether each policy requires an Impact Assessment to be carried out. The screening process was applied to this policy and it was decided that an impact assessment is required (refer to Appendix 1).

¹ The Equality Act 2010 identifies the "protected characteristics" as age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

9. Risk management

9.1 The Co-operative, in implementing this policy seeks to ensure that where a problem is identified prompt action will be taken to remedy the situation. The Co-operative will ensure that good practice in relation to estate management is adopted and encouraged at all times. It is vitally important that the high amenity of the area is maintained and tenancy breaches dealt with swiftly and appropriately to ensure the Co-operatives housing stock remains desirable and that people are happy to remain in the area. Failure to do this would result in the Co-operatives housing stock or pockets of the housing stock becoming difficult to let and the consequential rent loss due to voids.

10. Policy reporting and policy review

10.1 The Management Board shall review this policy no less than every three years and the success of this policy will be measured against the following outputs and outcomes.

OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Tenant satisfaction surveys	High levels of tenant satisfaction with estate management
Inspection on estate management visits	Breaches of tenancies identified and corrective action taken promptly
A proactive and supportive approach taken to estate management	Heightened awareness of tenants' responsibilities and maximum number of satisfactory gardens, tidy common areas and a safe and pleasant environment for tenants

Appendix one

Impact assessment

Is further action required? Yes No

Is the action achievable? Yes No

Timescale for action Year End Report (see 4.1)

1. Aims of the policy

a) What is the purpose of the policy?

- To outline the Co-operative's commitment to equality and diversity
- To ensure that we never act in a discriminatory manner towards any individual or group
- To outline the guiding principles of our equality and diversity thinking and to re-affirm our zero tolerance approach
- To inform our Equality and Diversity Action Plan
- To help ensure that we meet our obligations with regard to legal, regulatory and best practice requirements

b) Who is affected by the policy/who will benefit from the policy and how?

- Drumchapel Housing Co-operative tenants and others who live in our properties.
- People who live in our area of operation and housing applicants.
- Staff and Board.
- Contractors and consultants who are required to observe the policy.
- Partner agencies and other organisations who contact us.

c) Who is be responsible for delivering the policy?

The Technical Manager on a day-to-day basis and ultimately the Board.

d) How does the policy fit into our wider or related policy initiatives?

The policy underpins all of the work that we do and is linked to all policies and policy initiatives.

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2. What do we already know about the diverse needs and/or experiences of our target audience?

• Age	Yes	
• Disability	Yes	
• Marriage and Civil Partnership		No
• Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes	
• Race	Yes	
• Religion and Belief	Yes	
• Gender	Yes	
• Gender Reassignment		No
• Sexual Orientation	Yes	

Tenants and other tenants

- 2.1 Whilst we require to update and broaden the information we have on tenants and other residents, we would expect all of the protected characteristics to be represented within this target audience. One of the main barriers to equality in service provision is likely to be inaccessibility. The policy outlines our commitment to addressing this and, further, it requires us to be proactive in seeking out and responding to all the communications and access needs that may exist.
- 2.2 The policy helps us ensure that we are providing services (which, in this context, includes addressing physical housing requirements) that are responsive to the requirements of all groups.

People who live in the local area and housing applicants

- 2.3 As at 2.1 and 2.2, above.

Staff and Management Board

- 2.4 The policy ensures that we observe equality and diversity issues in employment and in the recruitment of Management Board members. The office and Board areas are not completely accessible; this is something that the Co-operative is working to address and, consequently, it will form part of the equality action plan. We do, however, provide information in any format that would make it possible for staff or Board to better fulfil their roles.

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- 2.5 All staff and Board are made aware of theirs and the Co-operative's rights and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity and receive periodic training. They know about the Co-operative's zero tolerance approach and are aware of how to raise any concerns.

Contractors and consultants and partner organisations

- 2.6 The policy requires the Co-operative to observe equality and diversity issues in the procurement of consultants and contractors and our relationships with partner organisations.
- 2.7 Any contractors or consultants working for or representing the Co-operative are made aware of our commitment to equality and diversity and are advised of our expectations in terms of how we require them to observe our policy at all times. Any consultants/contractors or anyone representing a partner organisation who feel they have been discriminated against are aware of how to raise these concerns.
- 2.8 The policy requires action to be taken against any consultants or contractors found to be in breach of our policy.

3. **What does the information we have tell us about how this policy might impact positively or negatively on the different groups within the target audience?**

- 3.1 We have some information on age, disability, gender and race/ethnicity but this mainly relates to tenants and housing applicants and requires to be updated regularly in order to remain accurate. We have not yet collected information on sexuality and gender reassignment, but this is being introduced and, over time, we will begin to build up a picture of sexuality and gender reassignment of our tenants and other stakeholders.
- 3.2 The equality and diversity action plan, which was approved by the Management Board in April 2017, will address in more detail what the impact may be on the different groups within our target audience.

4. **Do we need to carry out a further Impact Assessment?**

- 4.1 At each year end, when reporting to the Board, if we have any cases of racial harassment then a further Impact Assessment will be carried out.

5. How will we monitor and evaluate this policy to measure progress?

- 5.1 Ongoing monitoring by staff and an annual revision of the equality and diversity action plan (any issues or concerns highlighted by the ongoing staff monitoring will be reported to the Board via an exceptions report). We will also produce an article in the Annual Report which is sent to tenants.