

Melville Housing Association



Policy: Estate Management

Subject:	Estate Management
Section:	Housing Services
Objective:	To define the role of Estate Management within the Association
Scottish Social Housing Charter	Outcome 1 Equalities Outcome 2 Communication Outcome 3 Participation Outcome 6 Good neighbourhoods Outcome 11 Tenancy Sustainment Outcome 13 Value for Money
Relevant Legislation	Data Protection Act 2018 Human Rights Act 1998 Equality Act 2010 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 The Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003
Issue Date:	May, 2024
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Effective estate management is a vital part of our role as a landlord and plays an important part in promoting safe, secure, sustainable, and desirable communities.
- 1.2 Looking after our neighbourhoods is an important part of both the Housing Management and Property Services functions. It involves working with tenants, neighbouring residents, and other agencies to ensure that the environment is safe for anyone who visits.
- 1.3 Estate management covers a wide range of areas including:
 - a. providing information, advice and assistance on the rights and responsibilities of Melville and of tenants and residents.
 - b. enforcing tenancy conditions and deed of condition requirements in a firm, fair, prompt, and sensitive manner.
 - c. providing advice and assistance to tenants and residents on services which enhance the local community, such as initiatives which improve the environment and reduce crime.
 - d. consulting tenants on estate management issues and ensuring that estate management services meet local needs.
 - e. agreeing and meeting standards for the management of communal areas and facilities that we own.
 - f. working with other agencies including statutory authorities to meet estate management standards.
- 1.4 The Estate Management policy does not sit in isolation and works alongside the Tenancy Agreement and key policies, including Asset Management Strategy, Health and Safety, Empty Homes Management, and Neighbour Disputes and Anti Social Behaviour. We will also aim to design new properties in a way that prevents major issues arising.
- 1.5 This policy is supported by a number of procedures to assist staff in delivering a consistent and effective service.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 This policy aims to ensure:
 - a. that tenants and residents of our properties can live in their homes in clean, safe, and secure environments.
 - b. the development of mutually beneficial landlord/tenant relationships.
 - c. the housing stock and surrounding environment is managed and maintained to a standard which enhances tenant/resident satisfaction, and which contributes to any empty homes being quickly filled.
 - d. that estate management services are planned, adequately resourced, effectively budgeted, controlled and monitored.

3.0 Achieving our aims and objectives

- 3.1 The delivery of an effective Estate Management policy depends on:
- Good quality design and layout of developments.
 - A Asset Management strategy which includes appropriate programming and provision for cyclical and major repairs.
 - Money within our Reactive Maintenance budget to carry out alterations that will address management and estate issues.
 - A staff presence in developments which supports proactive management through early identification of issues and appropriate preventative or remedial action.
 - Regular estate walkabouts by Melville staff which will monitor:
 - Ground maintenance
 - Stair cleaning (where appropriate)
 - Common areas, including drying and refuse areas, stairwells, car parking, footpaths, garages, and equipment we own
 - That tenants are following the terms of their tenancies

We will ensure tenants can report concerns to us in the ways they wish. This includes through our website, using social media, over the phone, and face-to-face. We will inform tenants of the outcome of their suggestions.

- 3.2 Tenants also have a role to play in helping us to monitor services such as stair cleaning and ground maintenance. Where we receive feedback we will investigate and advise tenants of the outcome.
- 3.3 We will consider proposals put forward by residents which will result in improvements to buildings or the external environment. These improvements must improve the living environment for current residents and improve the future desirability of the development.

4.0 Tenant responsibility

- 4.1 As set out in the Tenancy Agreement, tenants must take reasonable care to prevent damage to their home, its fixtures and fittings, common parts, and any adjoining properties.
- 4.1 There will be an annual budget to cover the cost of clearing things like rubbish and dumped furniture. However, this will only be used where there is a health and safety issue and we are not able to charge the responsible tenants.
- 4.3 We may recharge tenants who are identified but fail to address the situation. Rechargeable costs may include contractor's fees, legal fees or fees required to any other agencies. These will be pursued in line with our rechargeable repairs policy.

- 4.4 When a tenant hasn't paid for previously recharged work to their garden:
- We won't carry out any more work in the garden unless on health and safety grounds.
 - The tenant must pay the cost of the work up front.
 - We will take legal action if the debt is excessive and/or they have breached the conditions of their tenancy.

5.0 Breach of tenancy conditions

- 5.1 Where an estate management inspection or similar identifies a breach of tenancy and the tenant fails to address the matter as required, we will take action. This could be in the form of:
- Escalation meetings with a manager
 - Tenancy warnings
 - Notice of Proceedings
- 5.2 We do not want to use legal action but we will especially if there are multiple or continuous breaches. All tenants will be given every opportunity to resolve matters and avoid legal action.
- 5.3 Where necessary we will report to any appropriate agency such as the police, fire service or environmental health and charges will be pressed if appropriate.

6.0 Estate management standards

6.1 Rubbish disposal

Local authorities are responsible for the disposal of rubbish. We will, as far as possible, work with them to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided for the disposal of rubbish. We will maintain any communal bin stores provided and will also take responsibility for the disposal of rubbish on land we own.

At the start of a tenancy we give tenants information about who to contact about the uplift of rubbish. Tenants are responsible for ensuring that rubbish is disposed of appropriately and for making arrangements to have large items uplifted.

We will work with the relevant local authority to take action on the illegal dumping of rubbish and litter on our land or premises.

Where possible we will charge tenants the cost of clearing rubbish from communal areas or private gardens.

6.2 Garden areas

We will ensure that all of our private and communal gardens are maintained to an agreed standard, as set out in the Tenancy Agreement. We will take action if the rules of the Agreement are broken.

A tenant who has exclusive use of a garden is solely responsible for its maintenance. Where a tenant has no access to garden tools, we can provide the hire of a strimmer and/or mower for a small deposit. Where a tenant is unable to maintain the garden, we will direct them to organisations that may be able to help.

Where tenants are unwilling to maintain their garden, we may arrange for the work to be carried out and charged to the tenant.

We are responsible for the upkeep of gardens in empty properties.

6.3 Communal areas

Communal garden ground will normally be maintained by us through contracts with grounds maintenance companies. In newer developments, the cost of this will be recovered through a service charge.

We do not allow trampolines to be kept in communal areas as this poses a health and safety risk.

We are responsible for **Communal parking areas** and the external maintenance of garages we own and for liaising with the local authority over adopted areas. Parking areas should not be used for extensive car maintenance.

Garages - tenants who have been allocated a garage are responsible under the terms of the lease for keeping it clean and in a proper condition and for the cost of repairing all wilful or careless damage to the garage during their occupancy.

Abandoned Vehicles - abandoned or untaxed vehicles, including caravans, on our property will be reported to the police, DVLA and the local authority and removed where appropriate. Local authorities have a statutory duty to remove vehicles abandoned on land in the open air or on any other land which forms part of the highway.

The Tenancy Agreement requires that no vehicle, caravan, trailer, or boat belonging to a tenant or anyone living with them or visiting may be parked/stored on our land or property permanently or temporarily unless:

- that land or property is set aside for parking or storage and
- written permission has been given by the Association and

- in every case it does not cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours.

New Developments - where possible we will seek to ensure new developments comply with Secured by Design standards.

Vandalism - we aim to respond promptly when incidents are reported. We will make good any damage caused by vandalism which is not the responsibility of the tenant or which has been caused to empty Melville properties. Vandalism must have been reported to Police Scotland and an incident number obtained from them. Failure to do this may result in us being unable to make good any damage caused. The tenant is responsible for making good or paying for damage caused by deliberate acts of vandalism by themselves, any member of their household or visitors. Residents who witness vandalism should always report it to the police.

Graffiti – once reported, we aim to remove any graffiti from our properties of an offensive, sexual, or racist nature within one working day.

Pest Control – we will advise tenants to contact their local authority or a pest control company if they discover vermin, pests, or insects in their home.

Where infestation can be directly attributed to a tenant's living conditions, or habits, we will instruct the tenant on how best to address the problem to ensure it does not recur.

We will arrange to treat any infestation of bed bugs, at our cost, to prevent the spread to neighbouring properties. Where required we will work with the local authority to assist.

4.9 **Pets** - tenants are responsible for their pets and ensuring that they do not cause a nuisance to neighbours or deterioration in the condition of the property or common areas. Tenants will be asked to remove their pets if they cause a nuisance or present health risks. We will work with protective services on issues including stray dogs and dog fouling and as appropriate, will utilise aspects of the Dog Fouling Act.

4.10 **Communal systems** - in many older properties the tenure within our blocks of flats can prevent installation of communal systems, such as door entry systems, satellite systems and solar panels, due to owners refusing to pay their share.

We will consider the installation of communal systems in new build properties where this is appropriate and cost effective.

4.11 **Stair cleaning service** - in new build developments and in our Mayfield walk up flats, communal stairs comprising above ground and first floor, we provide a stair cleaning service.

4.12 **ASB in common areas** - we will take action against drug, alcohol, or solvent related nuisance under our Neighbour Disputes and Anti-social Behaviour policy. We will involve the police where common areas such as stairwells or gardens are being used for illegal drug use. We will urgently prioritise cleaning up drug use items such as needles or foils.

5.0 Tenancy sustainment

5.1 We are committed to assisting tenants, where possible, to remain in their homes. We recognise the individual needs of tenants and take these into account in all aspects of our service. Where we are unable to offer direct assistance, we will signpost tenants to other agencies and services.

6.0 Training

6.1 Training on the Estate Management policy and associated procedures will form part of the induction process for all new staff. Additional and ongoing training will be provided for staff who deal directly with estate management issues.

We will provide appropriate training for tenants who wish to be involved in Estate Walkabouts or who wish to act as tenant representatives.

7.0 Appeals

7.1 If a tenant is unhappy with our actions under this policy, they can make an appeal to the Allocations & Tenancy Sustainment Manager.

7.2 If after investigation, the tenant's appeal is not upheld, the tenant has the right to make a formal complaint. If the tenant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

8.0 Equal opportunities and human rights

8.1 In carrying out this policy Melville Housing Association will ensure that nobody will be treated less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, ethnic or national origin, an ex-offence, family circumstances, marital status, political or sexual orientation, race religion or gender.

8.2 We will ensure that nobody's human rights are adversely impacted by this policy.

9.0 Data Protection

- 9.1 Melville takes data security and protection very seriously and strictly follows the guidelines of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), together with any domestic laws subsequently enacted.
- 9.2 Information on how we manage our duties is detailed in our Privacy Policy. Details on how we use personal information can be found in our GDPR Fair Processing Notice. Further information is available at www.melville.org.uk or on request from our office.

10.0 Monitoring and Review

- 10.1 The Head of Housing will ensure this policy is reviewed every three years or earlier if there are any changes to legislation. The Senior Management Team have delegated authority to approve minor changes. Significant changes will be submitted to the Board for approval.