

ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

TO:	<u>Services Committee</u>
PREPARED BY:	Chris Chalk (DH&CI)
SUBJECT:	<u>Review of Estate Management Policy</u>
DATE OF MEETING:	<u>21 November 2023</u>
APPROVED BY:	<u>Paul Martin (Chief Executive Officer)</u>

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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Estate Management Policy is to outline how Milnbank Housing Association (MHA) plans to effectively manage our neighbourhoods. We will ensure that all residents live in well managed and maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

The Association will ensure that our Estate Management services are planned, implemented, regularly inspected and maintained to the highest possible standard and that Estate Management issues are acted upon promptly and effectively.

Below are the policy commitments in relation to estate management, ensuring customers:

- live in well managed and well maintained housing, in an environment that is attractive, safe, and secure, free from nuisance, annoyance, intimidation and harassment;
- are made aware of and accept their responsibilities in relation to the upkeep of their property, gardens, and the surrounding environment;
- are made aware of our responsibilities in relation to estate management;
- are satisfied with the estate management service provided by the Association;
- are given opportunities to influence and participate in decision making relating to estate management; and
- are aware that the Association endeavours to reduce the time it takes to re-let a property by aiming to manage attractive and well maintained estates where people want to live;
- are aware that the Association will meet its legal duties, obligations and responsibilities and that the Association will ensure tenants also fulfil their tenancy obligations.

2. POLICY IN CONTEXT

The following legislation is relevant to the content of this procedure and may be referred to for further information and context:

- Abolition of Feudal Tenure (Scotland) Act 2000 and Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004: carry out maintenance to common parts and open spaces in order that the said common parts and open spaces are fit for use by the tenant and other occupiers.
- Antisocial Behaviour and Harassment Policy and Procedure
- Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982: describes the process for dealing with lost or abandoned property.
- Equality Act 2010
- Fire Safety Management
- Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcome 6: Estate management, antisocial behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes which encourages Registered Social Landlords

to take steps to ensure that tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe

3. **COMPLIANCE WITH THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER (SSHC)**

MHA recognises the need to work towards achieving the relevant Outcomes as set out in the SSHC, namely:

Outcome 1 – Equalities – 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 – tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get 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.

Outcomes 6 – Estate Management, Antisocial Behaviour, Neighbour Nuisance and Tenancy Disputes – tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

Outcome 11 – Tenancy Sustainment – tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.

4. **OUR RESPONSE TO ESTATE MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

MHA will ensure that prompt and appropriate action is taken to deal with Estate Management problems arising from either staff inspections or from direct complaints.

1 working day - Estate Management issues of a serious nature (e.g. graffiti, suspected drug use, vandalism) will be responded to within 1 working day. Please note that action taken in respect of such issues may also fall under the remit of MHA’s Dealing with Antisocial Complaints Policy.

3 working days - All other Estate Management complaints reported by residents will be responded to within 3 working days.

We will be non-judgemental and impartial when receiving and investigating all complaints. All complaints will be recorded within our register, and we will provide written or verbal updates of any action taken. The method and/or frequency will be agreed with the resident at the time of making their complaint.

Estate Inspections

In addition to maintenance contracts and/or work completed by Estates Services, Housing Management teams will carry out estate inspections to ensure housing stock and surrounding environments are kept clean, tidy, and safe. Regular inspections of estates and communal spaces within housing stock will be completed by the designated Housing Officer. These can take place with or without customers. Any issues identified during an inspection will be recorded and follow-up actions scheduled. Actions will be completed within a reasonable timescale depending on the nature and severity of the issue and before any reinspection is due.

If issues are identified during an inspection, these must be recorded, and follow up actions scheduled. Actions must be completed within a reasonable timescale depending on the nature and severity of the issue and before any re-inspection is due. For example, a re-inspection may be due within one month if the overall rating is 'poor' but if there is dangerous waste such as sharps left in communal areas these should be cleared immediately (or as soon as practically possible if a specialist cleaning contractor is required) and the area re-inspected within one working week

MHA provides a Community Janitor service covering landscape maintenance to all Association properties. The service also lift bulk items in Milnbank areas free of charge on the days that Glasgow City Council used to collect this, and residents are asked to ensure that all bulk is placed in the appropriate place ready to be uplifted.

5. ESTATE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

In an attempt to minimise problems, MHA will ensure that residents are informed of what their, and the Association's, responsibilities and obligations are in relation to Estate Management.

- (a) Tenants - Estate Management responsibilities are outlined during the accompanied viewing, at the signing-up interview and at the post allocation visit. The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement details responsibilities of tenants and MHA as the landlord. The Tenants Handbook details Estate Management issues.
- (b) Owner Occupiers - When a change of ownership occurs, details of all aspects of MHA are given via the Owner Occupier or Sharing Owners' Handbook.

To manage estates effectively, the Housing Officer will work in partnership with relevant internal teams and external Agencies such as the Police Scotland and Local Authorities.

Specific details on how the Association will deal with issues and the scope the Housing Management teams' responsibilities is set out in the Procedure which includes:

- vandalism and graffiti;
- fly tipping or dumped rubbish and litter;
- pets;
- abandoned, untaxed, and un-roadworthy vehicles and parking;
- signage;
- bin stores;
- landscaping and gardening and damaged trees;
- the exterior of buildings;
- maintenance of paths and stairwells;
- play areas and ball games - misuse or damage;
- management of garages;
- boundary queries;
- lost or stolen keys/fobs;
- security of schemes and properties;
- infestations; and
- fire safety including storing goods in communal areas.

MHA encourages residents to take both a positive and active interest in their local community and surrounding environment. The Association's newsletter and website will be used whenever possible to circulate Estate Management information to all residents.

We will do our utmost to foster good working relationships with external agencies, groups and individuals who work within our communities.

All personal information that we gather about individuals will be processed, retained and kept secure in accordance with the fair Processing Notice within the General Data Protection Guidelines.

6. WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

MHA identifies and prioritises problems within the area and works in partnership with other agencies. Examples include Community Safety Glasgow (CSG), Police Scotland, Land and Environmental Services, Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP).

7. ACTION

Appropriate action for Estate Management problems will vary dependent upon the nature of the incident (e.g. cases may involve the Association; others may involve an external agency, and on occasion a combination of both may be necessary). Housing management staff will, whenever possible, carry out home visits and speak to residents face to face to deal with complaints.

Residents are encouraged to lodge their complaints through MHA office. All complaints will be treated in confidence and appropriate action will be taken. The action may take the form of:

- (a) Noting the complaint with no action required
- (b) House visit/interview
- (c) Referral to MHA Community Engagement Team
- (d) Removal of items (bulk etc.)
- (e) Involving other agencies - Mediation, Police, HSCP
- (f) Close/Committee Meetings
- (g) Issue warning letters
- (h) Legal action (this will only be considered as a last resort and if all other options have been exhausted)

In terms of the individual Estate Management problems, the Association will apply the following series of action points:

Staircleaning -The Association provides a free weekly stair cleaning service. However, it is the responsibility of each resident to ensure that they maintain the standard between weekly cleans to ensure that all residents are able to live in a safe, clean and tidy environment.

Refuse Disposal/Litter - The Association will ensure that guidance is given to residents concerning the disposal of household refuse and bulk items by Environmental Protection Services. MHA may impose a charge or financial penalty on residents for the removal of any waste item(s) disposed by any resident other than by use of the bins provided or any bulk or other item(s) deposited anywhere, at any time, other than at the agreed collection point and date, where MHA have removed the item(s) from the site of disposal.

Close Entry Systems - All common front controlled entry door latches automatically lock. It is the duty of every resident to ensure both common close doors are kept closed at all times. Failure to adhere to this will be addressed by the Association via a house visit.

Satellite Dishes - MHA will not permit individual satellite dishes to be erected on the front elevation of its property in accordance with local planning rules as determined by Glasgow City Council. Any satellite dish sited inappropriately will be removed and the costs recharged to the tenant or owner. MHA will, however, facilitate the installation of communal dishes or cable systems whenever possible.

Pest Control - MHA will respond to cases of vermin and pest infestation within its stock in a prompt and appropriate manner, and will consult with the relevant agencies such as Land and Environmental Service on the resident's behalf.

Pets - MHA will deal with pet issues where the animal is causing a nuisance either within the house or common property. In relation to dog fouling, all residents are bound by the Local Government Byelaw whereby a fine can be imposed on dog owners who allow their dog to foul in non-specified areas (e.g. pavements or backcourts). In this situation residents should contact CSG or Police Scotland to report the incident. Housing Management staff will, upon request, provide a witness statement for residents to complete in writing, and this would then be passed to CSG to consider enforcement action. This must be done within 7 days of the incident. A fine of £80 can be issued in respect of dog fouling.

Children - The Association will deal with issues relating to children damaging MHA property or causing a disturbance within their own home or the common close by reference to the Dealing with Antisocial Complaints Policy. Where children are a proven source of annoyance to other residents out-with the above (e.g. playing football in the street and causing damage to cars or property), residents should contact Police Scotland to lodge a complaint. MHA will then liaise with the police should further action be required, in accordance with the Dealing with Antisocial Complaints Policy.

Security - The Association will liaise with the appropriate agencies to ensure that street and communal lighting is maintained and in good working order. Where a tenant has absconded appropriate action will be taken to repossess the house. Any furniture will be removed and the property will be made secure.

Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) - Where MHA suspects that a property is being used as a House in Multiple Occupancy (HMO), initial enquiries will be made to gather evidence. Thereafter, a referral shall be made to the HMO Unit within GCC in order that they investigate appropriately.

Neighbour Disputes - In non-serious neighbour disputes, the Association will normally encourage both residents to try and resolve the problem themselves without the formal involvement of the Association.

Advice on mediation is also available from the Association.

In more serious cases of neighbour disputes, reference should be made to the Association's Dealing with Antisocial Complaints Policy.

Noise Levels - Infrequent complaints in relation to noise levels will be dealt with by MHA. Residents should report excess noise levels directly to CSG Noise Enforcement Team on 0800 027 3901 (24 hour helpline, Officers work between the hours of 5pm and 3.30am) and/or Police Scotland on 101 in order that MHA can request a report of the incident. In the case of persistent excessive and nuisance noise levels, this will be dealt with under the Dealing with Antisocial Complaints Policy.

Vandalism - MHA will take firm action against residents who are found to be responsible for vandalism within the house, common close or common areas of any property where MHA has responsibility.

In the first instance, all forms of vandalism should be reported to Police Scotland. Where MHA has proof, repairs resulting from acts of vandalism will be recharged to the perpetrator (or parent/guardian should be perpetrator be less than 16 years old). This may involve a written statement from the resident who reported the vandalism.

Graffiti - All forms of graffiti will be removed within 1 working day, dependent upon resources.

Drug Related Issues - MHA will either remove or contact Land and Environmental Services to uplift discarded needles and syringes within 1 working day. Drugs and solvent misuse are dealt with in accordance with the Dealing with Antisocial Complaints Policy.

Harassment - In all instances Police Scotland should be contacted where harassment of any nature takes place. The Association will liaise with the police to seek guidance in appropriate circumstances. Harassment of a more serious nature is dealt with in accordance with the Harassment and Racial Harassment Policies.

8. MONITORING & POLICY REVIEW

The Services Committee shall monitor the Estate Management function on a monthly basis.

This policy shall be reviewed on a triennial basis or otherwise if deemed necessary. The review will take account of legislative changes, good practice guidance notes, changes in other relevant policies and resident feedback.