



Aberdeenshire *housing partnership*

ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

MARCH 2005

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership recognises that Estate Management is a vital part of our housing management role as a landlord and is a particularly important service for all our residents.

Estate Management is not solely about looking after buildings and the physical environment. It is also about working with other agencies to maintain and develop safe, strong and attractive communities.

ABERDEENSHIRE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

- enforcing tenancy conditions;
- monitoring of long term empty properties;
- providing advice and assistance to tenants and residents on services which enhance the local community, such as initiatives to reduce crime, and environmental improvements;
- the management of communal and play areas;
- the management and upkeep of the physical environment in our ownership and co-operation with other agencies such as the local authority to ensure that areas under their ownership and responsibility are maintained to a satisfactory standard.

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- tenants are satisfied with the services Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership provide both within their home and within their local community;
- mutually beneficial good landlord/tenant relationships are developed;
- the upkeep of our houses and surrounding environment is managed and maintained to a standard which reduces the duration and level of void properties.

3.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

3.1 This policy was compiled with reference to the following:

The following relevant legislation:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Race Relation Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Data protection Act 1998

3.2 Performance framework

This policy complies with Communities Scotland Performance Standard AS1.10.

4.0 OUR ESTATE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

4.1 Property and Environmental Issues

4.2 Our Houses

A planned maintenance programme will be put in place and regular surveys carried out to ensure its effective implementation.

In the course of their regular duties all members of our housing staff will look for, and report on, any signs of deterioration to our properties.

Where applications for alterations or improvements are approved, we will require such works to be carried out to a high standard and in full compliance with current building and planning requirements.

4.3 Common Areas

To maintain good standards in common areas - such as stairs, entrances, drying areas, common pathways, and parking areas – we will:

- carry out regular inspections to check on both fabric and cleanliness;
- maintain contact with tenants to identify specific problem areas;
- inform concerned tenants in writing of action which we propose to take to remedy any such problems identified;
- monitor on a continuing basis to ensure that required standards are achieved and maintained;
- arrange for repairs to be carried out promptly once the need has been identified or reported;
- issue satisfaction surveys on which tenants may enter their comments on the promptness and quality of repair work.

4.4 Garden Areas

Housing Officers will carry out regular inspections of garden areas.

Where a tenant fails to maintain their garden to an acceptable level they will be issued an untidy garden leaflet. Where necessary they will be contacted by a Housing Officer, reminded of the conditions of their tenancy and given a reasonable time to achieve the necessary improvements.

4.5 Communal Gardens and Landscape Maintenance

All tenants and residents will be encouraged to recognise their responsibility for and to take a pride in the upkeep of communal gardens and landscaped areas. Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership will:

- In communal areas we arrange for contractors to carry out such work and we apply a service charge to appropriate tenants in the feuing area.
- The landscape contractor is required to have a satisfaction survey form completed by a tenant in the general vicinity and to present these with their monthly invoices.

- Our standards of landscape maintenance, as detailed in our specification, will be monitored regularly by Officers.

4.6 Play Areas and Equipment

Our landscaped maintenance contractors are required to visit and inspect the play areas on a monthly basis. Housing staff will also make regular checks to monitor the safety of play areas and equipment provided by us.

We will also ensure:

An annual inspection will also be carried out by a qualified play area inspector and a full report submitted to Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership.

Where play equipment is found to be damaged and therefore a potential danger to users, our contractor must inform us the same working day and prompt action will be taken to have the equipment repaired or removed.

We will encourage the involvement of tenants in the maintenance and monitoring of such areas, in an attempt to minimise vandalism.

We will ensure that all equipment installed by ourselves complies with the prevailing safety standards.

4.7 The General Environment

Housing staff will regularly monitor matters affecting the general environmental conditions for our tenants. Where appropriate we shall liaise with other agencies to ensure that action is taken to secure and maintain a desirable level of environmental amenity.

This action will cover such matters as litter, street cleaning, lighting, abandoned cars, parking of caravans or boats and other large vehicles/craft, conditions of footpaths, pigeon roosting, etc.

4.8 Pets

More than one pet may be kept by tenants only where prior permission, has been applied for and given by us. Pets will not normally be allowed in flatted properties or sheltered and very sheltered schemes.

Where any pet is the subject of a complaint and/or where damage to people or property is attributable to a pet, then the tenancy conditions will be enforced and other appropriate agencies i.e. RSPCA will be notified.

4.9 Vermin and Pest Control

All reports from tenants alleging vermin and/or pest infestation will be referred to Aberdeenshire Council's environmental health Department. Currently this service is sub contracted out to a private firm and all residents in the Aberdeenshire region are given a reduced fixed price. Tenants will be responsible for paying for this service directly unless the problem is a direct result of Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership's actions.

4.10 Tenancy Matters

4.11 Welcome Visits

Welcome visits will be carried out by Housing Officers within 2 months of a new tenant moving in. Any issues agreed with the tenant requiring further visits or support will be arranged.

Advice and assistance in respect of all tenancy and maintenance matters will be available to tenants, at any time during office hours alternatively, home visits can be arranged.

4.12 Contact with Tenants and Residents

As part of our objective of encouraging good tenant/landlord relationships we will encourage tenants to take an active interest and participate in the well-being of their community and surrounding environment.

We will aim to achieve this through:

- Regular communication with individual tenants through home visits and newsletters,

- Encouraging the setting up of organised tenant and resident groups;
- Encouraging the involvement of tenants at a local level to improve their community by liaising with other agencies and to report problems in the area promptly to Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership.

4.13 Neighbour Disputes or Harassment Problems

Our policies in respect of neighbour disputes or harassment are set out in separate documents covering each area.

4.14 Complaints

All complaints are logged individually and kept in the complaints file.

A quarterly report on complaints received is submitted to the Board. Bi annually a report will also be submitted to the Housing Committee to identify areas for service improvement.

5.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 5.1 We will monitor all relevant aspects of the estate management service. A monthly estate inspection will be carried out in all developments/areas where; we are the majority landlord or, have a responsibility for communal items i.e. footpaths, open spaces.

Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership will also monitor such items as:

- monitoring landscaping costs to achieve value for money;
- Gathering and incorporating tenants views into the next review;
- checking that the service is effective and fair to all tenants;
- seeking tenants' views on the service;
- reporting results on a regular basis;
- reviewing policies, practices and performance at regular intervals.

- 5.2 The Housing & Property Services Manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy and the procedures which support it are implemented by all relevant staff.

- 5.3 This policy is to be reviewed by the Housing Committee every 3 years, or less following a substantive legislative or performance requirement.

6.0 OTHER RELATED POLICIES

- Complaints policy
- Open space maintenance policy
- Maintenance policy
- Anti social behaviour policy
- Harassment policy

Policy reference number	H02
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policy complies with	Performance Standard AS1.10