

| ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY | |
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| **Policy Number** | HM 3.8<br>Version 2.0 |
| **Prepared by** | Dan Thompson, Director of Housing Services |
| **Date of Review** | May 2024 |
| **Date of Next Review** | May 2027 |
| **Reviewed & Approved by:** | Housing Committee |
| **Date** | 1 May 2024 |

# OSPREY HOUSING ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

***Osprey Housing believe that effective and efficient estate management is vital to the success of maintaining good quality services for all our tenants and provide value for money.***

We embrace quality estate management and this is encompassed in our Core Values:

- **Ambition and Achievement** – we are a high performing organisation delivering through innovation and challenge.
- **Equality and Respect** – we recognise and celebrate the unique value in everyone.
- **Quality and Professionalism** – we strive to deliver high standards.
- **Agile and Responsive** – we are flexible and quick to deal with change without diminishing our delivery.

# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline the way in which we propose to manage the environment in and around our developments so that they are as pleasant and maintained as well as they can be.

We recognise that the environmental management and maintenance of our developments are integral parts of both the Housing Management and the Asset functions. We have adopted this policy to ensure a common and consistent approach to these key activities. We realise, due to the mixed tenure of some of our developments, or where some are factored and some are non-factored, that there may from time to time be limitations on our management. We will try to liaise with all residents and parties to maintain high standards of estate management.

The management of tenancies and estate management are linked activities; however, activities such as the management of neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour are covered by our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, and our Drug statement.

# 2. Policy Aims

Estate Management crosses a number of areas covered by other policies and covers issues which may not be solely within our control. In many instances we have to work with other agencies such as the Police, Environmental Health, Health & Social Care (incl. Social Work) and Community Wardens to provide effective estate management.

We have identified the main policy aims as follows:

- To maintain and sustain our properties and the developments in which they are located to an appropriate standard in line with our legal obligations and those contained within our Tenancy Agreement.
- Tenants are satisfied with the services Osprey provide both within their home and within their local community.
- Mutually beneficial good landlord/tenant relationships are developed and maintained.
- To enable residents to live in a safe environment.
- To maintain an environment that is clean and tidy.
- To respond to complaints and enquiries within a reasonable timescale.
- To monitor the quality of service provided by our gardening and cleaning contractors to check it is efficient and represents good value for money.
- To work closely with all other agencies to provide effective estate management.

## 3. Policy Principles

To deliver our aim, we will:

- Provide advice and assistance on tenancy matters to help residents maintain their tenancies and the environment to the best of their abilities.
- Implement tenancy conditions, using multi-agency or legal action where appropriate.
- Monitor our properties, their gardens and surrounding areas so that our developments remain attractive and secure.
- Provide advice and assistance to both our tenants and owners occupiers in developments, including signposting them to services which help them look after their property and gardens.

This policy is supported by procedures outlining our day to day practice which will enable us to meet the aims and objectives of the policy. We aim to be consistent, but we also aim to be flexible and proactive, meeting local needs and expectations when providing an estate management service.

### 3.1 Property and Environmental

#### 3.1.1 Condition of Property

A planned maintenance programme will be put in place and regular surveys carried out to ensure its effective implementation. The surveying of stock condition will be in line with Osprey's Asset Management Strategy.

In the course of their regular duties, all members of staff will identify and report any signs of deterioration to our properties or their gardens. Action will be taken by either the Housing or Asset teams to identify tenant related issues including recharges and work with the tenant on these aspects to ensure our properties are kept in good condition.

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

#### 3.1.2 Common Areas

To maintain good standards in common areas such as stairways, entrances, drying areas, common pathways, parking areas, and bin stores, we will:

- Carry out regular inspections to check on both fabric and cleanliness of internal areas.
    - maintain contact with tenants to identify specific problem areas.
    - inform tenants in writing of action which we propose to take to remedy any such problems.
    - 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 to obtain feedback on our service.

- Carry out regular inspections to check external areas.
  - Common pathways, communal bin stores, parking areas etc. will be inspected to ensure they are safe and clean.

- Where common roads and pathways have not been adopted by the local Council, Osprey will provide and maintain grit bins to allow residents to grit roads and footpaths.

### 3.1.3 Garden Areas

Housing Officers will carry out regular inspections of tenants' garden areas.

Where a tenant fails to maintain their garden to an acceptable level 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.

If a tenant fails to respond to Housing Officer contact to bring their garden up to the required standard, Osprey will carry out the work and recharge the full costs incurred to the tenant. Tenants will receive at least 7 days' notice that this action is being taken.

If a tenant is unable to maintain their garden to the specified condition due to ill health or other identified vulnerability, Housing Officers can submit a Garden Action request to the Director of Assets and Sustainability for consideration.

### 3.1.4 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. Osprey will:

- arrange for a contractor to maintain such areas to a defined specification and apply a charge to appropriate tenants in the relevant area.
- monitor the standards of landscape maintenance, as detailed in the specification and follow-up any shortcomings.
- carry out monthly scheme inspections and complete a survey form on each occasion.

### 3.1.5 Play Areas and Equipment

The landscape maintenance contractor is required to visit and inspect play areas on a monthly basis. Asset Management staff will also make regular checks to monitor the safety of play areas and equipment.

Osprey will also ensure that:

- an annual inspection is carried out by a qualified play area inspector and a full report submitted.
- where play equipment is found to be damaged, prompt action is taken to have the equipment repaired or removed.
- the involvement of tenants in the maintenance and monitoring of such areas is encouraged, in an attempt to minimise vandalism.
- all equipment installed complies with the prevailing safety standards.

### 3.1.6 General Environment

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

This action will include litter, street cleaning, lighting, abandoned cars, parking of caravans or boats and other large vehicles/craft, conditions of footpaths, bird roosts, etc.

### 3.1.7 Pets

Up to two pets per household may be kept by tenants where prior permission has been applied for and granted.

Owners must apply for permission to keep a pet and a decision will be made and communicated to the tenant within 28 days of the application being made. Requests for permission to keep a dangerous dog will require the applicant to produce an exemption certificate as part of their application.

Where legislation requires owners to take additional steps to ensure compliance and safety, these steps must be followed. For example, owners of XL bully breeds who have provided an exemption certificate and requested formal permission will also be required to muzzle the dog and walk it on a lead at all times.

Where any pet is the subject of a complaint or where damage to people or property is attributable to a pet, and can be evidenced, then the tenancy conditions will be enforced and other appropriate agencies e.g. Dog Warden, will be notified.

### 3.3.8 Vermin and Pest Control

The control of vermin and pest control is the responsibility of tenants, and they will be advised accordingly to source their own contractor where required. They will be liable for the costs involved in removing any vermin or pests. Osprey will take action relevant to their responsibilities, e.g. where a bird has accessed a property, we will ensure the access is blocked up.

Reports from tenants alleging vermin or pest infestation will be referred to Local Authorities Environmental Health Services.

### 3.2 Tenancy Matters

#### 3.2.1 Settling In & Routine Visits

When a property is allocated, staff will go over a summary of the tenancy conditions to help ensure that the incoming tenant has an understanding of both their rights and obligations. "Settling In" visits will be carried out by Housing Officers within 6 weeks of a new tenant moving in. Routine visits will be carried out on an annual basis.

Any issues raised with or by the tenant will be monitored by further visits or support will be arranged. The Tenancy Sustainment Policy details how we will support tenants who require support mechanisms to maintain their tenancy.

#### 3.2.2 Contact with Tenants and Residents

As part of our aim of encouraging good tenant/landlord relationships Osprey will encourage tenants to take an active interest and participate in the wellbeing of their community and surrounding environment.

Osprey 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 to deal with specific scheme related issues.
- 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 Osprey.

#### 3.2.3 Neighbour Disputes or Harassment Problems

Our approaches to neighbour disputes or harassment are set out in our Anti-Social Behaviour policy.

## 4. Equality and Diversity

We shall strive to ensure equality of opportunity, and by definition, that all individuals are treated fairly regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Osprey opposes, and shall adopt a zero tolerance stance towards, all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

In this regard, Osprey acknowledges the protected characteristics and types of unlawful behaviour defined within the Equality Act 2010. As a minimum all practices shall aim to ensure compliance with the legislative provisions therein.

## 5. Monitoring and Reporting

Outcomes expected from the Scottish Social Housing Charter:

*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.*

*This **outcome** covers a range of actions that social landlords can take on their own and in partnership with others. It covers support for victims/survivors of domestic abuse, action to enforce tenancy conditions on estate management and neighbour nuisance, resolving neighbour disputes, and arranging or providing tenancy support where this is needed. It also covers the role of landlords in working with others to tackle anti-social behaviour.*

*Charter Outcome 11: Tenancy Sustainment*

*Social landlords ensure that:*

- *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.*

*This **outcome** covers how landlords on their own, or in partnership with others, can help tenants who may need support to maintain their tenancy. This includes tenants who may be at risk of falling into arrears with their rent, and tenants who may need their home adapted to cope with age, disability, health conditions or caring responsibilities.*

## 6. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless the following criteria dictate that it would be best practise to review sooner:

- applicable legislation, rules, regulations and guidance, both those which affect Osprey directly and those which affect the resources available to significant numbers of our customers to enable them to sustain tenancies.
- changes in the organisation.
- continued best practice.

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| **Osprey**<br><br>**Equality Impact Assessment Tool**<br><br>**PLEASE READ THE GUIDANCE FOR COMPLETION: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance.doc** | |

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| Name of the **policy / project proposal** to be assessed | Estate management Policy | Is this a **new policy / proposal or a revision**? | Revision |
| Person(s) responsible for the assessment | DHS | | |
| **1.** Briefly describe the **aims, objectives and purpose** of the policy / proposal | The Estate Management Policy outlines how staff will identify and attend to issues affecting the management of the estates and areas within which we operate. | | |

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| **2. Who is intended to benefit** from the policy / proposal? *(e.g. applicants, tenants, staff, contractors)* | Tenants, staff, applicants and any other party. |
| **3**. What **outcomes** are **wanted** from this policy / proposal? *(e.g. the benefits to customers)* | To be able ensure that we manage our estates to a high standard and provide a consistent and fair service. |

**4**. Which **protected characteristics** could be **affected** by the proposal? (*tick all that apply*)

☒ Age ☒ Disability ☒ Marriage & civil partnership ☒ Pregnancy/maternity
☒ Race

☒ Religion or belief ☒ Sex ☒ Gender reassignment ☒ Sexual orientation

**5.** If the policy / proposal is not relevant to any of the **protected characteristics** listed in part 4, state why and end the process

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| here. | | |
| | **Positive impact(s)** | **Negative impact(s)** |
| **6.** Describe the **likely positive or negative impact(s)** the policy / proposal could have on the groups identified in part 4 | Provide a consistently fair and high level of estate management | We do not anticipate any negative impacts |
| **7.** What **actions** are **required** to address the impacts arising from this assessment? *(This might include; collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative impacts).* | To follow the policy | |

Signed: D. Thompson (Job title): Director of Housing Services

Date the Equality Impact Assessment was completed: 17/10/2023