



**SPIRE VIEW HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

**ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

**DATE APPROVED: MARCH 2019**

**NEXT REVIEW: MARCH 2020**

## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

To create and maintain a well-managed environment in which each resident can enjoy their home and surroundings in peace and without undue disturbance from others.

## 2.0 AIMS

- To seek out continual improvements in the aesthetic quality of our built environment by building working relationships with interested agencies and with local residents.
- To ensure that Association members, tenants, staff and Management Committee understand and fulfil their responsibilities as outlined in the tenancy agreement.
- To ensure that there are comprehensive procedures and checks to provide an efficient estate management service to all residents.
- To provide a system to allow breaches of the tenancy agreement to be reported and actioned.
- To ensure that appropriate action is taken to enforce the terms of the tenancy agreement whenever necessary.

## 3.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy statement aims to cover a variety of issues which effects residents use and enjoyment of their homes. This is not an exhaustive list. Under each heading, where appropriate, we shall examine the following principles:

- How we consult with and inform tenants.
- The need for a multi-agency response.
- Building relationships with tenants to help fulfil the terms of the missive.
- How we report outcomes of the policy to the committee.

## 4.0 CLOSE CLEANING

### 4.1 The Standard of Cleanliness

The standard of cleanliness required for the common parts is set down in the tenancy agreement under clause 2.8. It states that the tenant must ***'Take your turn with all other tenants and owner occupiers sharing the common parts, in keeping them clean and tidy and free from litter and dog or other animal dirt. If you share a common stair, you must also take***

*your turn in regularly cleaning, washing and keeping tidy the common stair, its window and banisters and any bin chute accesses so that the stair is kept in good and tidy order, free from litter and free from dog or other animal dirt and so that the windows, banisters and any bin accesses are clean'.*

The missive states in clause 5.4 that we carry out inspections of the common parts at reasonable intervals. Reasonable intervals will be a minimum of one month.

#### **4.2 Consultation with Tenants**

#### **4.3 Focus for Service Delivery**

A visible presence will remain the focus of inspections with emphasis placed on face to face contact with tenants and cleaning contractors and on repeat visits to poor closes or common areas. This form of communication enables staff to tackle effectively the causes of why certain common areas fall below our standard. It also represents an opportunity to develop good landlord / tenant / contractor relations.

On the initial monthly inspection, if an area is identified as being below the acceptable standard the Officer will immediately contact the contractor if close is cleaned by the contractor, or leave a card with the tenant or will ask the tenant or owner to clean the area, if it is the tenant / owner who is failing to carry out their duties.. The area will be re-inspected. The standard of cleanliness and action agreed at each visit will be entered into inspection sheets.

In order to improve the cleanliness the Officer may call a close meeting or set up a cleaning rota and monitor it regularly or liaise with the maintenance officer / Depute Director to commence action against the contractor if their contract is being breached In addition the Officer may identify and resolve other causes as to why the close / common areas are in a poor state. Problems can arise from pets, youth loitering or tenants / owners failing to lock the close doors. The Officer may also write to tenants / owners who repeatedly fail to maintain their common parts and threaten / commence legal action.

#### **4.4 Involving Other Agencies**

In certain cases the Association will ask for the assistance of Land and Environmental Services (Environmental Health) should the close or bin store continual fall below an acceptable standard. Land and Environmental Services has the authority to request that occupiers of tenement properties regularly clean the common parts. They can impose fines if this is not carried out.

Should the common parts deteriorate due to incidents of anti-social behaviour, the Association will seek the assistance of the Community Police, Community Safety Glasgow and CCTV operators to help identify those responsible and take appropriate action to stop nuisance behaviour.

#### **4.5 Reporting**

The standard of cleanliness within each close will form part of the monthly Estate Management Report. This will be expressed by the number of people who have failed to meet an acceptable standard, broken down by streets, on a month to month basis

#### **4.4 Assistance**

The Association will provide close cleaning for those tenants who are 65 years of age or over, physically or mentally unable to do so and in receipt of the high rate of DLA or PIP (Personal Independence Payment). This is conditional on there being no other person living in their home or no other relative in the Spire View area who is capable of cleaning the close.

### **5.0 GARDEN MAINTENANCE**

#### **5.1 The Standard of Garden Maintenance**

This is set down in the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. It states that tenants must take reasonable care to keep their garden from becoming overgrown, untidy or causing a nuisance. Communal gardens will be maintained by the Association.

In July 2015 as part of our full Tenant Satisfaction Survey we asked tenants if they thought it would be beneficial for the Association to provide a close cleaning and grass cutting section service for all tenants. 225 tenants were interviewed and 62.2% were in support of introducing a close cleaning service.

#### **5.2 Process of Inspection**

Monthly inspections will be carried out throughout the year to ensure that all gardens are being maintained to the above standard. If a problem is identified the Officer will aim to speak to the ground maintenance contractor / tenant to agree a course of action. Alternatively, the tenant may be carded or written to. This will be followed up until the matter is resolved. Should tenants fail to maintain their gardens, photographic records will be collected. Continual failure to maintain their garden may result in legal action to enforce the terms of the missive or the Association may cut the grass and charge the tenant.

#### **5.3 Open Plan Gardens and Driveways**

There are open plan gardens in Earlston Place, Earlston Ave, St Joseph's View, Rhymer St and Roystonhill. Every effort will be made to ensure that the open plan gardens in these areas are maintained to a high standard by the residents. As part of the monthly garden inspections, Officers will check that stones are swept off the footpaths and that driveways are free from litter and weeds.

#### **5.4 Assistance**

The Association will maintain the gardens for those tenants who are 65 years of age or over, physically or mentally unable to do so and in receipt of the high rate of DLA or PIP (Personal Independence Payment). This is conditional on there being no other person living in their home or no other relative in the Spire View area who is capable of using a lawnmower.

Each case will be judged on an individual basis.

## **5.6 Incentives**

A garden competition will be organised each year. The purpose of this is to acknowledge the contribution residents make over and above their contractual obligations to maintain their garden.

## **5.7 Reporting**

The condition of gardens and standard of grounds maintenance will be monitored by the Association staff on a continuous basis and will form part of the Estate Management / Maintenance Report to committee. This will include narrative identifying any areas of concern and how these are being addressed.

## **6.0 USE OF COMMON BACK AREAS AND BIN STORES**

The common back court area is for the mutual and equal enjoyment and use of all the residents sharing the area.

### **6.1 Maintenance**

The Association will maintain grassed areas and shrub beds. Tenants are responsible for keeping the bin store clean, free from litter and unwanted household bulk.

### **6.2 Inspections**

Officers will inspect the back court areas and bin store as part of the monthly communal inspections. Any remedial action will be drawn to the attention of the garden maintenance contractor or the respective tenant(s) / owner(s).

### **6.3 Reporting**

The condition of bin stores will be reported as part of the Estate Management Report.

## **7.0 VOID CONTROL AND TENANCY VISITS**

### **7.1 Purpose of New Tenancy Visits**

As detailed in the Allocation policy, all new tenants will be visited within 4 - 6 weeks of their date of entry. If any potential problems are identified, follow up visits and / or appropriate action will be arranged. This may include tenancy issues such as rent arrears, repairs and estate management matters.

### **7.2 Objectives of Void Control**

Empty houses detract from the overall appearance of our stock and are at risk of vandalism. Our objectives in dealing with void properties are to ensure that the outgoing tenants leave the property in a good condition and that the property is re-let as soon as possible. These procedures are detailed within the void policy.

### **7.3 Consultation with Tenants**

The Officer will also use the sign up / new tenancy visit as an opportunity to obtain views from the tenant on the void and allocation process. This will include an assessment of the following items:

- The usefulness of the information pack given to tenants at the time of the sign up.
- If the tenant (s) understands the terms of the missive.
- If the tenant (s) is happy with the standard of the accommodation.
- If the tenant (s) are happy with their new home and area

The results from this questionnaire will ensure that the information given to tenants is regularly reviewed and updated. This information will be helpful in reviewing what a lettable standard should be.

### **7.4 Reporting**

The results from the questionnaire and void control will be reported to Committee on a quarterly basis broken down monthly. .

## **8.0 TENANCY AGREEMENT**

### **8.1 Contents**

The contents of the tenancy agreement shall be explained to **the** new tenants at time of signing. This agreement sets out the obligations of the landlord and the responsibilities of the tenant(s) in terms of how the tenancy should be conducted. A tenant's handbook will also be provided.

### **8.2 Consultation**

The Association will review how well the tenant understood the terms of their tenancy agreement as part of survey conducted at sign up / new tenancy visit.

## **9.0 ERECTION OF AERIALS AND SATELLITE DISHES**

In response to an increased number of tenants requests to fit satellite dishes, the Association has reviewed its policy. The erection of satellites will be permitted provided that:

- The tenant has no access to a digital communal scheme
- Permission must be sought before any dish is installed
- Any dish installed should be of the 'mini dish' type.
- The dish is located in a position approved by the Association.

The erection of aerials and satellite dishes will follow the normal procedures for alterations in accordance with the terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. All applications have to be made and processed in accordance with the tenant alteration policy.

## **10.0 ABANDONED PROPERTY**

### **10.1 The Procedure**

Abandoned property will be treated in accordance with the guidelines set down in the current tenancy agreement and in accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that a property has indeed been abandoned and such action will be recorded on the Abandonment History pro-forma. If satisfied that the property has indeed been abandoned, a Notice of Abandonment will be served by two Association staff members.

Once a Notice of Abandonment has been served, the tenant has 28 days in which to contact the Association. At no time during these 28 days will the Association enter the property unless it is for security purposes or an emergency. If, at the end of the 28 day period, we believe the house to be abandoned, the property will be repossessed by serving another notice.

In the event that the Association takes possession and there are belongings in the house, the Association will store the items for a period of six months under the following conditions:

- The value of the items is greater than the cost of the store, plus any debts owed in relation to the tenancy.
- The Association will deliver items to the tenant(s) provided that they have paid for the storage and made arrangements for the delivery costs.
- The Association can dispose of any property if the tenant has not made arrangements for and paid for its delivery within the six month period.

The tenant should notify the Association in writing that he / she wishes to retain the tenancy and that it will be used as a principle home. In such instances, the abandonment notice will cease. However, should the Association continue to believe that the tenant fails to use the property solely as their only or principle home, legal action may be taken, by serving a Notice of Proceedings for Recovery of Possession citing grounds 1 and 5 of Part 1 Schedule 2 to the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

### **10.2 Report**

The number of abandoned properties will be recorded and reported to Committee on an annual basis.

## **11.0 PEST CONTROL**

Where the tenant reports a problem with vermin or pest infestation in a common area, the Association will contact the Land and Environmental Services (Environmental Health) to deal with the matter. If the problem occurs within the tenant's property, the tenant will be directed, where possible, to contact Land and Environmental Services (Environmental Health). This will allow the tenant to make arrangements for access to their home.

## **12.0 DISPOSAL OF HOUSEHOLD CONTENTS**

All residents wishing to dispose of bulky household items should contact Glasgow City Council Land and Environmental Services (Cleansing Department) or use the weekly uplift service. This service differs depending on the items to be uplifted and the property type. For tenants who live in tenement properties, household contents can be uplifted if items are left on the kerbside before 7.00am each Thursday morning. All other tenants should phone the cleansing department and arrange for items to be uplifted. If the household item is a fridge, irrespective of where the tenant lives, they have to phone Land and Environmental Services and make arrangements for uplift.

The Association will assist by passing on information to tenants about changes to service.

## **13.0 PETS**

### **13.1 Consultation with Tenants**

Clause 2.5 of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement outlines the conditions for keeping pets. These conditions were accepted by tenants as part of the consultation exercise in September 2015.

### **13.2 Summary of Conditions**

Permission is required from the Association before a resident may keep more than one domestic animal within the dwelling. It also states that animals owned by residents or visitors must be kept under control, not cause a nuisance, nor be allowed to foul any common areas, stairways or paths within the Association building.

### **13.3 Enforcement**

Should a tenant continually fail to abide by the conditions in the tenancy agreement, the officer will write to the tenant giving him / her 14 days to remove the pet. In the event that the Tenant fails to do so, the Association may apply to the court to obtain a Specific Implement. This is a court order requesting that the tenant fulfil the terms of their contract and remove the offending animal. The Association will also co-operate with the Council's Environmental Health Officers (community enforcement officers) who have the powers to impose fines on irresponsible dog owners who do not lift their dog's excrement.

### **13.4 Reports**

Court action will be reported to the Management Committee.

## **14.0 TENANCY DISPUTES AND ANTI – SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

### **14.1 Objectives**

These issues are covered by a separate policy and set of procedures, The primary objectives of the procedures are as follows:

- To enforce the tenancy agreement by acting to solve a complaint when someone accuses our tenant of being a nuisance.
- To ensure that all complaints are treated in confidence.
- To ensure that all tenants, staff and committee members understand fully their responsibilities as outlined in the tenancy agreement.
- Seek assistance from Social Services, Police Scotland or any other related agencies for families where members of the family have been responsible for incidents of anti – social behaviour.

## **15.0 GRAFFITI**

Graffiti increases a sense of fear of crime and detracts from the aesthetic appearance of our neighbourhood.

### **15.1 Monitoring Graffiti**

As part of the monthly inspection and if necessary on an ad hoc basis, graffiti will be photographed and reported where appropriate to Community Safety Glasgow (racial or sectarian) or if required a job line issued to remove it. Racial graffiti will be dealt with as a priority.

### **15.2 Multi Agency Approach**

Our intention is to identify who wrote the graffiti by liaising with the Schools, Police, Royston Youth Action and most importantly other residents. If we can identify those responsible, we aim to carry out a home visit with the tenant and offending person in attendance. The purpose of the visit is to get an assurance that the graffiti will stop and promote the values of community ownership and respect for the neighbourhood. If the person responsible does not live within our stock we will seek to organise a home visit through their respective landlord.

In the event that a person is persistently writing graffiti we may explore other legal remedies.

#### **15.2.1 Report**

Incidents of graffiti will be reported to Committee as part of the Estate Management Reports or be included within the Maintenance Reports.

## **16. NEEDLES AND SYRINGES**

Discarded needles and syringes are a danger to the public. Procedures will be agreed with the local authority as to the action to be taken when a report is received.

**17. CRIME PREVENTION AND SECURITY**

The Association shall, during the course of estate management duties, identify security measures aimed at reducing crime. The Association shall participate and assist in any review of security carried out by the Police or the local authority. Where the Association identifies security measures which would benefit its tenants, the implementation of these will be considered in the course of establishing investment strategies and seeking Secure by Design accreditation in future developments.

Consideration will be given to promoting and / or participating in Neighbourhood Watch initiatives.

**18. REVIEW**

This policy will be formally reviewed within three years. However, the policy will undergo continual review because we aim to work closely with our tenants and other agencies to improve the service. This system of co-operation and consultation may lead to new initiatives being introduced. These will be subject to Committee approval.

**March 2019**