



Organisational Policy

Allotment Policy

Our Commitment

Argyll Community Housing Association is committed to provide equal opportunities across all services and to avoid discrimination. This policy is intended to assist ACHA to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

This policy can be made available in other formats, for example in large print, audio-format or Braille: the document may also be available in other languages, in full or summary form, as appropriate.

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Section 1 – Context

Argyll Community Housing Association recognises that its remit reaches out into the wider community beyond its tenants and estates and also beyond just housing and into community development and promoting health and well-being. The provision and management of allotments will contribute to promoting health and well-being within the community, improving the environment, supporting wildlife and help to build a stronger sustainable community. This is a new venture for Argyll Community Housing Association and as such the success of the first leased allotments will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

A Separate Allotment Procedure is in place for staff to follow for the management of Allotments. The Local manager, Housing & Neighbourhood Services has overall responsibility for the co-ordination of the Allotment Procedure.

Section 2 – The Law, Good Practice and links to other ACHA Policies and Strategies

In order to effectively deliver the aims and obligations of this policy, ACHA will meet the requirements of:-

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 1988, 2001
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Allotments Scotland Act 1892, 1922 and 1950 amended
- Performance Standards for Registered Social Landlords in Scotland as detailed within the Scottish Housing Charter
- The terms of the Allotment Lease and Allotment rules.

ACHA Policy and strategy links

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- Estate Management Policy
- Tenant Participation Strategy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management Strategy
- Customer Care Charter
- Complaints Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Section 3 – Our Policy Aims and Objectives

Argyll Community Housing Association aims to provide well kept, secure, environmentally friendly and well managed allotment sites for the use of local residents, community groups and local schools. We will do this by:

- Making all plot holders aware of the rules and their obligations with regards to use of the allotment.
- Inspecting the allotments on a regular basis and taking immediate action to remedy any problems.
- Providing advice and information to plot holders in the form of a leaflet
- Ensuring that the allotment is used in an environmentally friendly manner through the rules for the allotment and the advice and information provided to plot holders.
- Support and benefit community groups, ACHA tenants and local schools by giving them priority for allocation of plots.
- Water will be provided to the allotments by the Association by means of one communal water tap, and water butts.
- Support the setting up of an allotment committee, made up of the plot holders of the allotment.

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Section 4 – Implementing our policy objectives

Allocations

Priority for allocation of an allotment plot will go to tenants of Argyll Community Housing Association and local community groups and schools. Priority amongst Association tenants will first go to those living closest to the allotment site and then in order of date applied. The same priority will apply to non Association tenants wishing to lease an allotment. Allotment plots will only be leased to non Association tenants once there are no Association tenants waiting to lease one.

All allotment plot holders must sign a lease. The Annual rent charge for leasing an allotment is exempt from VAT for ACHA tenants and community groups, however for all other allotment holders VAT will apply.. This will be invoiced by the Finance department and must be paid by the plot holder within 21 days from the date of the invoice.

We may increase the amount of rent, but we will consult with plot holders about any proposed increase in rent and have regard to their opinions before we make our decision. We will provide them with at least 4 weeks notice in writing before any rent increase takes effect

Plots must be cultivated and plot holders must adhere to the rules for allotment plot holders, which are attached to the lease agreement. If plots are not maintained appropriately and the rules followed, the Association will take action to terminate the lease.

Section 5 – Performance management

Performance will be measured against defined targets. These targets will be set annually by:

- Reviewing the performance of the previous year
- Benchmarking the performance of other RSL's.

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It is the responsibility of the Regional Managers to monitor Key Performance Information (KPI), and to submit regular reports to the Board and Area Committees highlighting performance.

The following KPI's will be reported annually:

- Demand for Allotments
 - Turnover of Allotments
 - Number of Allotments
 - Annual Rent Charge
 - Annual Repair & Vandalism Costs
 - Service User Satisfaction Levels
-
- **Charter Ref.1 – Equalities**
Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:
 - 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.
 - **Charter Ref.2- Communication**
Communication should be clear and easily accessible
 - **Charter Ref.3 – Participation**
Social landlords manage their businesses so that:
 - Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.
 - **Charter Ref.6 – Estate Management**
Anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance, tenancy disputes, enforcement of tenancy conditions, resolution and support.
 - **Charter Ref. 13 – Value for Money**
Management of services to provide better value for money.

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Section 6 – Development and training

ACHA is committed to training and developing staff, Board and Area Committee Members in order that they have a good knowledge of the procedures and systems in place for managing Allotments that meets the expectations of its stakeholders.

Section 7 – Dealing with complaints

We value complaints and endeavour to use information from them to help us improve our services . Complaints relating to Allotments are dealt with in line with our complaint handling procedure. Complaints can be made if we fail to apply this policy properly or don't meet our organisational standards.

Section 8 – Review procedures

The Allotment Policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless amendment is prompted by a change in legislation, operational requirements or customer feedback.

The policy will be reviewed in consultation with stakeholders and staff.

Feedback will be obtained from service users and used to improve service delivery by:

- Obtaining feedback from plot holders on an annual basis
- Monitoring comments and complaints from plot holders

Section 9 – Confidentiality and data protection

All information provided by tenants and applicants will only be used for the purpose provided.

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We will ensure that we meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2002.

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