

## Organisational Policy

# Estate Management Policy

### Our Commitment

The Argyll Community Housing Association Group is committed to providing equal opportunities across all services and to avoid discrimination. This policy is intended to assist ACHA and AHFA in putting 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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#### 1. Section 1 - Context

**1.1** The Estate Management policy refers to the physical upkeep and use of the common parts of each development or estate and also to individual garden areas. An estate is defined as:

- A collection of properties usually with shared internal or external areas.

We believe that Estate Management is a vital part of our Housing Management function.

**1.2** This policy which is supported by a procedure manual seeks to ensure that we offer the highest standard possible in both the service we provide to our tenants and other residents, and the quality of living conditions and environment we offer.

**1.3** The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SHR) sets standards and outcomes that describe the results that our customers can expect. The relevant standard for Estate Management is Charter Outcome 6:

- Social Landlords working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure that tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

#### 2. Section 2 - The law and good practice

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

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- The Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011
- Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004
- Title Conditions (Scotland) Act 2003
- Bankruptcy and Debt Advice (Scotland) Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Equality Act 2010
- The Performance Standards for Registered Social Landlords in Scotland as detailed in the Scottish Housing Charter
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Allotments Scotland Act 1892 to 1950

When referring to this policy, there are links to a number of other ACHA policies which include, but are not limited to the following:

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- The terms of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement and any other lease or agreement in place
- Void Management Policy
- Allocation Policy (HOME Argyll)
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Tenant Installation of CCTV Policy
- Service Charge Policy
- Repairs Policy
- Factoring Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy
- Adult Support and Protection Policy
- Group Equalities and Human Rights Policy
- Schedule of Delegated Authority

#### 3. Section 3 - Our policy aims and objectives

- 3.1 The Association will ensure that our estates are managed and maintained in order to provide a safe, secure and pleasant environment for our customers and provide opportunities for our customers to participate in the management of our estates. We will make tenants and other residents living on our estates aware of their responsibilities in relation to estate management.

#### 4. Section 4 – Implementing our policy objectives

##### 4.1 Estate Inspections

We will undertake Estate Inspections of all our estates to identify potential issues and improvements and liaise with internal and external colleagues and organisations, tenants and residents to resolve issues and enforce tenancy conditions. Special attention will be paid to safety defects on our estates. We will keep clear auditable records of all inspections undertaken and report and record any repairs in terms of health and safety defects and follow these up to ensure that they are completed within target. All staff have a duty in the course of their day to day work to note and report any repairs and issues which pose a threat to health and safety.

##### 4.2 Estate Action Plans

We will provide an Estate Action Plan for each Area, which sets out annual targets for the area.

##### 4.3 Play Parks

We will inspect our play parks on a regular basis. Records will be kept of all inspections carried out and staff carrying out play park inspections will be appropriately trained. Any

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defects will be reported, recorded and followed up to ensure the repair is completed within timescale. The frequency of play park inspections will be reviewed annually taking into account any risks highlighted. The frequency of inspections will be increased if specific problems arise and increased inspections will remain in place until the identified issues have been addressed.

#### 4.4 Estate Walkabouts

We will provide tenants, residents, our Board members and the Your Voice Scrutiny Group the opportunity to be involved in Estate Inspections and walk-about. This will allow them to give their views and ideas for improving our estates, which ACHA will action where possible.

#### 4.5 Information and Advice

We will provide good quality information and advice on the Estate Management service. This will include:

- Providing information to our tenants when they sign their new tenancy.
- Undertaking visits to new tenants following the start of their tenancy.
- Publishing information, advice and feedback from tenants and residents regarding our Estate Management service on our website and social media platforms.
- Production of a newsletter with articles dedicated to local Estate Management issues including the dates of upcoming Estate Walkabouts which will be sent to our tenants either via email or in the post as well as being available on our website.
- Where tenants and residents reside in a property within a close, we will record the date the Estate Inspections are carried out on our close notice boards and any action being taken where relevant.

#### 4.6 Estate Improvements

We will improve our Estates by:

- Carrying out a grounds maintenance service throughout our areas during the grass cutting season
- Carrying out non seasonal ground maintenance work when required
- Estate improvements will be taken forward where possible following requests and ideas from residents or when highlighted to staff at estate walkabouts and also via local area staff from their estate inspections.
- Providing close cleaning and drying green cutting services where possible
- Exploring partnership working with other organisations.

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#### 4.7 Common Ownership

We recognise that there are significant areas of land within our geographical areas of operation which will be in common ownership. Every effort will be made to update and maintain accurate records of assets and information for those carrying out inspections regarding ACHA responsibilities. We will consult with co-owners on the maintenance of common areas of land and seek to promote our Factoring Scheme with the aim of engaging with the community, increasing choice and fairly apportioning costs.

#### 4.8 Allotments

When possible we will provide allotments sites within our communities with plots to lease for a reasonable charge, to benefit our local tenants, residents, community groups and schools. Allotments contribute to community development and health and wellbeing within our communities. Allotments provided by ACHA have clear rules that the allotment holders must comply with, which are in place to ensure the allotments are used in a way that benefits the environment and wildlife. This policy is supported by an allotment procedure which gives our staff guidance on the allocation and management of our allotments.

**4.8.1** Priority for the allocation of our allotments will firstly be given to ACHA tenants, followed by community groups and schools and then local residents. Thereafter priority will be given in order of the date applied for the allotment.

**4.8.2** Allotment rents are set annually and approved by our Board of Management.

#### 5. Section 5 - Roles and Responsibilities

**5.1** The roles and responsibilities of staff are as follows:

**5.2** The **Director of Customer Experience** is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed in accordance with the schedule for review of policies, or sooner if required.

**5.3** The **Regional Manager** is responsible for review of the policy, and for ensuring that relevant measures are put in place in order to implement its requirements.

**5.4** Operational Managers will be responsible for the effective implementation of this policy, and the Estate Management procedure and allotment procedure which supports it, within their area of responsibility. They must also ensure that each member of their staff, through induction and e-learning and training is made aware of this policy and participates in relevant training where applicable.

**5.5** All ACHA employees are required to familiarise themselves with this policy, and the associated procedures which support it, and comply with its provisions, as well as undertake any training implemented in association with this policy.

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#### 6. Section 6 - Performance management

- 6.1** We carry out a satisfaction survey which measures our tenants' levels of satisfaction with their neighbourhood and the way it is managed. Outcomes are reported to all our customers and to the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 6.2** The following indicators require to be collected, collated and reported in relation to Estate Management, in line with the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulators Technical Guidance For Landlords:
- Indicator 13 – percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in
  - Indicator 32 – percentage of gypsies/travellers satisfied with the landlord's management of the site
- 6.3** We will monitor annual targets detailed on the Estate Action Plans for each area.
- 6.4** We will closely monitor contractor performance regarding the grounds maintenance contract and where we provide a close cleaning service and drying green cutting service.

#### 7. Section 7 - Development and training

- 7.1** ACHA is committed to training and developing staff in order that they have a good knowledge of the procedures and systems in place for Estate management that meets the expectations of its stakeholders.
- 7.2** Awareness sessions are made available to Governing body members on request as part of their development plan.
- 7.3** All staff responsible for inspecting play parks will receive regular ROSPA training as required.

#### 8. Section 8 - Equality and Diversity

- 8.1** Tenants, owners and other customers will have their individual needs recognised, are treated fairly, with respect and receive fair access to our services, regardless of age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (collectively referred to as 'protected characteristics' in the Equality Act 2010). ACHA opposes, and shall adopt a zero tolerance stance towards, all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- 8.2** We will deliver accessible services that take account of the needs of individual tenants, owners and service users by making information available in plain language and/or other languages as appropriate; providing interpreting and signing services; and making reasonable adjustments to services, as appropriate

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#### 9. Section 9 - Dealing with complaints

- 9.1** We value complaints and endeavour to use information from them to help us improve our services. We will actively seek feedback by monitoring customer compliments, complaints and appeal outcomes relating to estate management to identify and respond to emerging trends.
- 9.2** Complaints relating to Estate Management are dealt with in line with our complaint handling procedure. Complaints can be made if we fail to apply this policy properly or do not meet our organisational standards

#### 10. Section 10 - Consultation and review

- 10.1** This policy will be reviewed every five years or earlier if required due to substantive changes in legislation or regulatory requirements.
- 10.2** The Policy will be reviewed in consultation with ACHA tenants and wider stakeholder partners.

#### 11. Section 11 - Confidentiality and data protection

- 11.1** All information provided by tenants and residents will only be used for the purpose provided. We will ensure that we meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2002 and the General Data Protection Regulation GDPR 2016. We will process and retain personal information in compliance with current data protection legislation and regulations.