

FORTH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Governance: Housing Management

Code: HM 07

Approval: August 2024

Review Date: August 2027

Cross Reference: Abandonment Policy HM 02
Anti-Social Behaviour Policy HM 04
Harassment Policy HM 09
Pets Policy HM 13
Rechargeable Repairs Policy M11
Tenant Participation GOV 07
Tenants Handbook HM24



This document can be made available in various formats such as in larger print, audio-format and Braille. It can also be made available in other languages, as appropriate.

Policy Summary

This policy has been developed to show how Forth Housing Association manages our estates to ensure that they remain a safe and desirable place to live.

Equalities

No equalities issues have been identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Questions therefore there is no requirement to do a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Privacy

As information related to estate management activities may be passed to a third-party contractor from the Association's approved list there is a requirement to note this in the Privacy Impact Assessment.

Passing of this information is confidential and in accordance with the GDPR statements signed by contractors upon acceptance of services. There is no change to the data collected or share therefore there is no requirement to do a full Privacy Impact Assessment.

Policy Owner

Name: Head of Tenant Services

Date of Next Review: August 2027

FORTH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Forth Housing Association recognises that Estate Management is a vital part of the Housing Management role of the landlord and a particularly important service from the tenants and resident's viewpoint. The purpose of the Estate Management Policy is to ensure a common and consistent approach to the management of Forth's estates to make sure that they remain a safe and desirable place to live.
- 1.2 This policy will outline different estate issues which will link to other policies in more detail such as the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (HM04).

2.0 Principles

The main principles of this policy are to:

- Provide advice and assistance to tenants on tenancy matters and related issues
- Enforce tenancy conditions and monitor empty properties
- Provide advice and assistance to tenants and residents on services which enhance the local community, such as initiatives to reduce crime and environmental improvements
- Manage communal areas and facilities in the Association's ownership
- Respond quickly to complaints received regarding the common areas
- Monitor the standard of contract maintenance to ensure a quality and efficient service and value for money to tenants and residents

- Manage and upkeep the physical environment in the Association's ownership, and work with other agencies such as Stirling Council, ensure that areas under their ownership and responsibility are maintained to a satisfactory standard

3.0 Aims and Objectives

3.1 Forth HA is committed to maintaining its homes and its estates to a high standard, which adds value to the home and surroundings. Maintaining high quality and secure homes can improve the lives of our tenants and achieve an elevated level of customer satisfaction. It is the aim of Forth to:

- Have safe, well maintained developments where people want to live
- Fulfil our legal obligations as a landlord and property factor and that all our people are clear about what our responsibilities are.
- Inform tenants of their responsibilities from the start of tenancy including issuing a tenant handbook and keep them updated on an ongoing basis through publications such as our newsletter
- Ensure tenants and residents are satisfied with the service provided by the Association, both within their home and within their local community
- Nurture good landlord/tenant relationships and ensure these are developed to encourage tenant interest and involvement within their area for the mutual benefit of both the Association and the local community
- Ensure the upkeep of the housing stock and guarantee that the surrounding environment are managed and maintained to a standard which reduces the duration and level of void properties and makes best use of the Association's rental income
- Be visible and reactive to our tenants/customers within our developments
- Log complaints regarding all issues in the appropriate way and provide customers with a response within the agreed timescales to help us improve our services

4.0 Policy Framework

4.1 Estate Management is a general term used to include Tenancy Management and Environmental Management. They are linked to but are separate from the Association's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. Tenancy Management aims to encourage and support a tenant to keep to the terms of their Tenancy Agreement. Where appropriate and necessary it will involve taking action to enforce compliance. Environmental Management aims to create a safe and secure environment for tenants.

4.2 Support our Owners/Shared Owners with issues identified in accordance with our factoring responsibilities .

Communal Areas and Landscape Maintenance

- 4.3 Forth will set out high standards in our contract specifications for the maintenance of the common areas. The type of services the Association will provide to tenants and residents are Landscape Maintenance and Close Cleaning. Housing Management staff will liaise with the relevant contractor and ensure a quality service to Forth's tenants and residents.
- 4.4 In respect of common areas, including stairs and entrances, bin stores, drying areas, common pathways and parking areas, the Association will:
- Carry out bi-monthly inspections in line with our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to check on both the fabric and cleanliness
 - Identify the specific source of problems and neglected areas by either visiting individual tenants or holding group discussions with tenants, residents and local groups
 - Confirm action required to remedy problems in writing to the tenants and residents concerned
 - Continue monitoring to ensure improved standards are maintained
 - Arrange for repairs or graffiti removal to be carried out promptly
 - Recharge tenants or residents if we have evidence that they have caused an Estate Management issue, including misuse of bins, if the Association is required to clear or clean the area.
- 4.5 The Association recognises that outdoor space is important for our health and wellbeing. Communal areas are for the use and enjoyment of everyone and if items within the communal areas are a nuisance to others e.g. trampolines then we will discuss options with all parties which may include requesting them to be removed. We will discuss this action with residents and appropriate notice will be given to residents to do this and if not complied by the Association will remove this and recharge any cost to the resident(s) responsible.

Garden Areas

- 4.6 The Association will maintain the front grassed areas of all properties and both the front and rear grassed areas to the common areas in all our developments.
- 4.7 Tenants will be responsible for maintaining the rear grassed areas of any individual properties.
- 4.8 The Association's contractors will not undertake landscape maintenance to properties where there are items in the garden area preventing them cutting the grass including dog fouling. In instances, where there are garden features, the

contractors will not move these and will cut around these items. We may ask that these items are moved to allow the grass cutting to take place.

- 4.9 Bi-Monthly inspections of garden areas will be undertaken but visits may be more often during the summer months.
- 4.10 We will contact Tenants who's gardens appear to be neglected and reasons for this investigated. This can help identify an abandoned property.
- 4.11 Tenancy conditions will be enforced if appropriate. Alternatively, practical advice and assistance may be arranged where appropriate. This can include referring tenants to services run by other agencies.
- 4.12 We will recognise where tenants make a positive example of their garden area via our annual Gardening Competition.

Close Cleaning

- 4.13 The Association will employ contractors who will clean the common areas and bin areas and ensure maintenance of these areas as instructed
- 4.14 Staff will monitor these areas, bi-monthly, on an ongoing basis to ensure they are maintained appropriately
- 4.15 We operate a zero tolerance approach to items stored within the common close areas for fire prevention and reduce the risk of injury. Where items in the close are seen to be a fire hazard, staff will notify residents to remove these items within two working days. Where items are not removed within the time period, items will be removed and they will be disposed of. The cost of the removal and disposal will be recharged where the residents responsible can be identified.

General Environment

- 4.16 The Association will regularly monitor general environmental matters such as litter, street cleaning, lighting, abandoned cars, caravan parking, pigeon lofts, abandoned properties, condition of footpaths, fly tipping, dog fouling, refuse dumping etc. and notify or liaise with the other agencies responsible (Stirling Council, Police Scotland etc).
- 4.17 The Association will investigate complaints received about excessive levels of noise and if required, will liaise with other agencies. Tenancy conditions will be enforced. This is outlined with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (HM04).
- 4.18 If a tenant wishes to park a caravan, trailer, boat or similar item on land owned by the Association they must first request written permission from the Association. Permission will not be given to park such items in communal parking bays within a development.

4.19 We will work with partner agencies including Stirling Council and Police Scotland to remedy issues we are unable to resolve independently.

Pets

4.20 Complaints or issues reported in relation to Pets will generally be dealt with via our Pets Policy (HM13) and potentially the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (HM04) where issues are not resolved or indeed escalate.

Car Parking

4.21 As per our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (HM04) we do not investigate car parking issues. We will only become involved where:

- There is an abandoned vehicle, to inform the appropriate authorities
- A tenant is requesting permission in relation to their own driveway
- Gated car parks managed by the Association with the provision of keeping these secure and allocating spaces within these as appropriate

Neighbour Disputes and Harassment Problems

4.22 The Association has separate Policies for dealing with Neighbour Disputes and Harassment Problems as the Association recognises that these complaints cannot be adequately responded to using the usual actions required for handling general complaints. These concerns are noted within the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (HM04), the Allocations Policy (HM03) and the Harassment Policy (HM09).

Contact with Tenants and Residents

4.23 As part of our objectives of fostering good landlord/tenant relationships and involving tenants and residents in the upkeep of their community, the Association will encourage tenants and residents to take an active interest and participate in the wellbeing of their community and surrounding environment.

4.24 We will do this by regular communications with individual tenants through newsletters, home visits, focus groups and meetings with organised Tenant and Residents Groups where they exist.

4.25 The Association staff will assess each area to determine if the frequency of Estate Management visits requires to increase. The demand from different areas and the Estate Management problems which each present will vary according to the degree of management problems, e.g.

- High level of vandalism or graffiti
- Poorly maintained environment (tenants' gardens, open spaces, play area, stairs, bin stores, back courts, etc)
- Neighbour disputes
- Parking problems
- Dog nuisance
- Abandoned properties

The required input by the Association staff will vary according to the level of need/demand as indicated by the foregoing factors.

5 Monitoring of the Policy

5.1 The Management Committee will review this policy at least every 3 years and staff are responsible for ensuring that it meets legal and good practice requirements.

5.2 The Head of Tenant Services will monitor and report the application of this policy through our quarterly performance reports.

6.0 Complaints and Appeals

6.1 Forth Housing Association welcomes complaints and positive feedback, both of which provide information which helps us to improve our services. We use a complaints procedure developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The complaints procedure allows for most complaints to be resolved by front line staff within a five day limit (first stage), or if the complaint is complex, a detailed investigation will be made by a manager within a 20 day limit (second stage). At the end of the second stage our response will be made by a director. If the customer remains dissatisfied, he/ she may then refer the matter to the SPSO.

At each stage we will advise the customer how the complaint should be taken forward and advise which agency would be most appropriate to consider the case.

7.0 Equalities

7.1 Equality and diversity underpin all our activities and services. When delivering our services, we never discriminate on the basis of sex or marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin, or of other personal

attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions. Full details of our Equalities Policy can be found on our website www.forthha.org.uk or can be obtained from our office.

8.0 Data Protection - Privacy

8.1 We recognise the importance of data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation, in protecting the rights of individuals in relation to personal information that we may handle, use and disclose about them, whether on computer or in paper format. We will ensure that our practices in the handling, use and disclosure of personal information as part of the processes and procedures outlined in this policy comply fully with data protection legislation. More information is available from our Data Protection Officer.

9.0 Availability

9.1 This policy is available on our website and can be made available in a number of other languages and other formats on request.

10.0 Review

10.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years by the Management Committee and staff are responsible for ensuring that it meets legal and good practice requirements.

Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment Screening Questions

Forth Housing Association Ltd Equality Impact Assessment Screening Questions

Estate Management

Will the implementation of this policy have an impact on any of the following protected characteristics?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Age | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Disability | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Gender reassignment | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Marriage and Civil Partnership | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Pregnancy and Maternity | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Race | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Religion or belief | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Sex | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Sexual orientation | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of these points, please complete a full Equality Impact Assessment. If you have answered 'No', you need take no further action in completing an Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment Screening Questions

Forth Housing Association - Privacy Impact Assessment

1. A substantial change to an existing policy, process or system that involves personal information
Yes No
2. A new collection of personal information
Yes No
- 3.. A new way of collecting personal information (for example collecting it online)
Yes No
4. A change in the way personal information is stored or secured
Yes No
5. A change to how sensitive information is managed
Yes No
6. Transferring personal information outside the EEA or using a third-party contractor
Yes No
7. A decision to keep personal information for longer than you have previously
Yes No
8. A new use or disclosure of personal information you already hold
Yes No
9. A change of policy that results in people having less access to information you hold about them
Yes No
10. Surveillance, tracking or monitoring of movements, behaviour or communications
Yes No
11. Changes to your premises involving private spaces where clients or customers may disclose their personal information (reception areas, for example)
Yes No

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of these points, please complete a full Privacy Impact Assessment. If you have answered 'No', you need take no further action in completing a Privacy Impact Assessment.