Cassiltoun
Housing Association

Estate Management Policy

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Chair Person/Office Bearers Signature:	

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Cassiltoun Housing Association is a recognised Scottish Charity SC035544

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CONTENTS

1 **Introduction**
2 **Equality**
3 **Legal & Regulatory requirements**
4 **Aims & Objectives**
5 **Estate Management Standards & Guidelines**
6 **Performance Monitoring**
7 **Complaints**
8 **Processing Information – General Data Protection Regulations**
9 **Policy Review**

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to outline the way in which we propose to manage the environment in and around our properties so that they are pleasant and well maintained. Estate Management is a vital part of a Housing Association's business and a particularly important service from the customers perspective. Cassiltoun Housing Association promises to provide all our service users with a high-quality estate management service which is consistent in its approach, responsive to the needs of our customers and within agreed target timescales.

Estate Management covers a diverse range of services including:

• Maintenance of communal areas such as hard and soft landscaped areas, parking areas (within our ownership) roads and footpaths (within our ownership) common stairs, backcourts and landings;

• Inspecting the condition of common areas (as above);

• Ensuring that tenants comply with tenancy conditions related to the maintenance of their garden and disposal of refuse;

• Monitoring empty properties;

• Providing advice and assistance to tenants and residents on services which enhance the local community;

• Supporting initiatives to reduce crime;

• Environmental improvements;

This policy recognises that there are aspects of managing the estate that the Association does not have full control over and will involve working with external partners and agencies in a co-ordinated approach for the benefit of the community.

2 Equality

We recognise our pro-active role in valuing and promoting diversity, fairness, social justice and equality of opportunity by adopting and promoting fair policies and procedures.
We are committed to providing fairness and equality of opportunity in order to prevent discrimination. We will try to ensure that no person is discriminated on the grounds outlined in the Equality Act 2010. This includes the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

3 Legal & Regulatory requirements

This policy is based on the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 legislation in relation to the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement which tenants have signed and aims to meet the Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 6, 11 and 13:-

Outcome 1 – Equalities - 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.

Outcome 2 – Communication - tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

Outcome 3 – Participation - tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

Outcome 6 - Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes - tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

Outcome 11: Tenancy Sustainment - "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".

Outcome 13 – Value for Money - tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

4 Aims & Objectives

4.1 This policy aims to ensure that:

- Tenants, sharing owners and owners live in well managed and maintained housing, providing a decent, secure, safe, clean and tidy environment.
- Tenants, sharing owners and owners are made aware of and accept their responsibilities in relation to the upkeep of their property and surrounding environment.
- Tenants, sharing owners and owners are aware of the Association's responsibilities in relation to Estate Management.
- The Association fosters good relationships with the community and to encourage resident involvement within the estate for the mutual benefit of the Association and the wider community.
- Standards of maintenance are agreed and met for the management of the physical environment including communal areas and facilities in the Association's ownership.
- Estate Management services are planned, adequately resourced and effectively budgeted and controlled.
- The Association provides advice and assistance to residents on services which enhance the local community, such as initiatives to reduce vandalism and crime, which in turn improves the physical environment.
- We work closely with other agencies, including statutory authorities, to ensure that Estate Management standards are achieved.
- High levels of tenant and resident satisfaction with the Estate Management Service is achieved.

4.2 To achieve the above aims and objectives the Association will:

- Work closely with tenants, sharing owners, owners and service providers, through the Groups and other forums set up, regarding the quality of estate management services provided.
- Closely monitor the performance of the Association's contractors through regular inspections, joint inspections and noted performance meetings.
- Carry out regular resident satisfaction surveys on the quality of all estate management services.
- Take every opportunity to encourage tenants, sharing owners and owners to contribute to estate management by participating in a quarterly estate inspection.
- Involve tenants, sharing owners and owners in developing initiatives for the improvement of their local environment and amenities.
- Keep tenants, sharing owners and owners informed about activities affecting their community.
- Provide good quality information and advice on estate management services, including at the tenancy sign-up stage, new tenant visits, information leaflets and regular newsletter articles and other appropriate media (social media).
- Make the most effective use of internal recording systems including IT systems, email and standard pro-formas.
- Ensure staff maintain a visible presence throughout the Association's housing stock.
- Be proactive and take appropriate and early action to enforce tenancy conditions where applicable.
- Work closely with other agencies and statutory bodies with the aim of ensuring that the Association's housing stock and surrounding environment are well looked after.
- Encourage feedback on services and publish the findings from surveys and visits in the quarterly newsletter.

5 ESTATE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The Association's Estate Management Policy will operate in compliance with the following standards:-

5.1 Housing Stock

The Association will undertake a Stock Condition Survey at least every 4 years, which will inform the major and planned investment programmes. The Association has a comprehensive reactive repairs service which is detailed within the Repairs Policy. Staff will regularly look for any deterioration in properties during routine estate visits.

5.2 Common Areas

Common areas include external entrance paths and stairs, internal closes, stairs and landings, drying areas, back courts, bin stores, lanes, footpaths and parking areas. The Association will as part of this policy:-

- Carry out as a minimum monthly inspections to check for cleanliness and to ensure that contractors are meeting their contractual obligations.
- Provide a stair cleaning service for all blocks except where factored owners have the majority share and have opted out of this service.
- Encourage residents to dispose of their bulky waste appropriately, however, where this becomes an issue in back courts this will be dealt with through the landscape maintenance contract and where deemed necessary tenants/factored owners may be recharged for this service.
- Arrange repairs promptly once identified and monitor progress to ensure satisfactory completion.
- Identify specific sources of problems by either visiting individual tenants or holding group discussions/meetings. Confirm in writing to the tenant(s) concerned the action required to resolve the issue and continue to monitor to ensure compliance.

5.3 Communal Gardens and Landscape Maintenance

- The Association will cultivate, maintain and keep tidy communal gardens and landscaped/planted areas under their ownership.
- The Association will engage an Estate Maintenance Contractor for this purpose and will ensure that standards are maintained by regular inspections and noted performance meetings.
- The basic standard for a communal garden and landscape area is that it is clean and tidy and free from litter, moss and weeds.
- Resident involvement will be encouraged as this can significantly assist the Association through the reduction of litter, vandalism and graffiti.
- We will work with partners, statutory agencies and residents for the benefit of the community.
- Tenant's can with the permission of the Association erect sheds or greenhouses provided that no other resident sharing the communal garden objects.

5.4 Private Gardens

Tenant's who have exclusive use of a garden are solely responsible for the maintenance of that garden. The tenant must ensure that it is kept in a clean and tidy manner, free from weeds and litter and it must be used only for the purpose of a garden as per their Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement.

It is not the Association's intention that the scheme should be available to all tenants only those who are unable to maintain their gardens due to age, physical or mental impairment. Where a tenant is unable to maintain their garden, the Association will provide when requested assistance under the Garden Care Scheme. Tenants must apply in writing for inclusion in the scheme and must meet the following criteria:-

- Produce evidence of means tested benefit identifying age and/or medical condition likely to limit tenant's responsibility to maintain garden.Produce evidence of any medication currently being prescribed.There should be no other household member aged 16 years or over as listed in Tenancy Agreement who have no physical or mental impairment and therefore able to carry out garden maintenance..

Further information can be found in The Association's Garden Care Policy.

Tenants must receive permission from the Association before erecting huts, greenhouses or garages in their garden. More information is contained within the Association's Tenants' Alterations, Improvements and Compensation Policy.

The Association will inspect all private gardens front (and rear gardens where these are accessible) on a regular basis to ensure that basic standards are maintained.

5.5 Pets

The Association aims to minimise any nuisance or health risk associated with the keeping of pets. The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement determines the tenant's responsibility in relation to keeping pets.

The tenant is responsible for ensuring that domestic pets are kept under control and supervision in order that they do not cause nuisance to neighbours or deterioration in the condition of the property or common areas.

Dog fouling is not acceptable whether in common areas or self-contained gardens and will be dealt with in accordance with the Neighbour Relations Policy.

Further information can be found in the Association's Pet Policy.

5.6 Car Parking Areas

The Association is responsible for the maintenance of communal parking areas including repairs and weed removal. Tenants' who have their own parking space are responsible for maintaining it in a clean and tidy condition.

Parking areas and spaces and gardens and or communal areas should not be used for extensive car maintenance or repairs. The Association will only allow the keeping of commercial vehicles, trailers, caravans or boats in parking spaces, areas or gardens if prior permission has been sought and granted.

Any abandoned or untaxed vehicles on Association property will be reported to the appropriate authority and removed where appropriate.

5.7 Refuse Disposal and Litter

Glasgow City Council are responsible for refuse collection however, they no longer provide a service to the Association where they dispose of bulky waste items which have been pulled kerbside by the Association's contractor. Instead they have introduced a charge for all residents whether in main door or tenemental properties who must contact the Council direct to request a bulk uplift. Items should only be put out on the day that the Council have advised that the uplift will take place.

The Association will ensure an adequate supply of bins are provided in each common back court bin area and this will be included annually in the budget. The Council are still responsible for providing recycling bins and we will work in conjunction with the Council to ensure that the appropriate number of bins are provided. The Association will maintain the communal refuse disposal facilities that it has provided e.g. bin stores and is also responsible for the disposal of refuse (not bulk/fly tipping) on land in its ownership.

Tenants will be advised of the arrangements and appropriate days for the uplift of rubbish at the start of their tenancy and periodically as or when the Council change arrangements through the Association's quarterly newsletter. Tenants are responsible for ensuring that their rubbish is disposed of safely, tidily and securely wrapped.

The Association will liaise with the Council to take immediate action on the illegal and unsightly dumping of rubbish and litter. Fly tipping is a blight on the estate and all measures will be taken to find and deal with the culprits.

5.8 Satellite Dishes

The Association provides communal aerials which satellite television companies can tap into. Therefore, the erection of satellite dishes on any of the Association's properties is strictly forbidden.

5.9 Vandalism and Squatting

The Association aims to minimise the incidence of vandalism within the estate and will respond promptly when incidences are noted or reported. The Association will make good any damaged caused to property or areas within its ownership except where the damage is the responsibility of a tenant or resident and this can be proven.

A tenant, sharing owner or owner is responsible for making good or paying for the damage caused by deliberate acts of vandalism caused by deliberate acts by themselves, any member of their household or visitors to their property. The Association will assess the extent of the malicious damage and take the required action within agreed timescales. Further information can be found in the Association's Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

Offensive graffiti for example of an obscene, racist or sectarian nature will be removed within 24 hours. Police Scotland will be informed and photographs will be taken and kept as a record of graffiti of this nature.

The Association will ensure that vandalism is covered in the buildings insurance policy and any serious acts of vandalism will be reported to Police Scotland.

The Association will ensure that all vacant properties within its ownership are adequately secured in order to prevent incidences of squatting. In the event of squatting within an Association property immediate legal action will commence to regain possession of the property.

5.10 Vermin and Pest Control

It is an aim of the Association to keep all property and land within its ownership free from vermin and pest infestation, therefore the Association will work in partnership with our residents and service providers to ensure that all properties and surrounding areas are kept in a good, clean and tidy condition.

The Association will respond promptly to any incidences or reports of vermin and pest infestation, and will offer advice and assistance to eradicate the problem. This will include:-

- Pigeons: balconies will be cleaned at void stage prior to tenant moving in. It is then the tenant's responsibility to ensure that the veranda is kept in a clean and tidy manner and pigeon free.
- Rodents, rats and mice: signpost tenants to Environmental Health Department of Glasgow City Council and give advice regarding keeping areas clean, tidy and food free (and if required we will arrange with our contractor to have access points sealed).
- Squirrels: If squirrels are found to be within a property we will arrange with our contractor to have them removed and the access point sealed.
- Wasps nests: if these are within communal areas we will remove free of charge, if however, they are within a tenant's own private area they will have to arrange for this to be removed and pay any costs incurred.
- Infestations of pests, cockroaches, fleas, bedbugs are the tenants' responsibility and advice only will be given, however if the infestation threatens other properties within the block the Association will treat and recharge the tenant in order to safeguard our other tenants and property.

- In the case of nesting birds, the Association will take due cognisance of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Licence No. SEGEN/10 Licence to Kill Certain Birds etc) which allows for the removal of birds' nests and/or destruction of birds and/or eggs if they constitute a danger to public health and safety or air safety.

  This list is not exhaustive and individual issues will be considered in line with this policy.

5.11Resident Involvement

Key to this policy is resident involvement, support and co-operation. It is therefore vital that:-

- we continue to encourage resident to be involvedin the management of the estate, meeting with service providers and participating in estate inspections.
- That we remind residents of their obligations with regard not only to tenancies but the common environment internal and external.
- That we educate residents on the correct way to dispose of rubbish through regular newsletter articles and social media.

- Consult with residents prior to changes in policy and procedure and take their views on board.
- Regular information through newsletters on activities that have been happening throughout the estate. (e.g. litter picks, back court bulk clearance).

5.12 Staffing Resources

The Association will ensure that its' staff have appropriate skills and knowledge to perform their jobs effectively, by employing people with relevant qualifications and/or experience and through providing suitable training opportunities.

The Association's Handyperson Team will be given appropriate training and guidance to enable them to take responsibility for dealing with minor estate management issues.

All Operations staff will receive training on the Association's policies and procedures and in customer care, interviewing skills, dealing with difficult and violent situations and harassment, equality and diversity, etc.

6 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Systematic monitoring of performance will be carried out for all aspects of the estate management service. This will include items such as:

- Regular Estate Inspections including photographs to produce monitoring reports.
- Monitoring trends
- Regular Reporting to staff team and Board of Management
- Ensure that service is effective and fair to all
- Seek residents' to join and give views on the service (Estate Action Group, Community Advisory Panel).
- Review policy, practice and performance at regular intervals
- Monthly monitoring visits by the Director of Operations.
- The Association through its Communities Team is committed to creating community events in the areas where it has housing stock. This will help to provide additional feedback on problems which require to be addressed.

7COMPLAINTS

If tenants, residents or any other service user are dissatisfied with the service that they receive either from Association staff or the Association's Contractors then recourse can be sought through the Association's Complaints Handling Procedure.

8PROCESSING INFORMATION – GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

Cassiltoun Housing Association will process information and data contained within the Housing Applications in accordance with its Policies and Procedures relating to the General Data Protection Regulations and all applicants will be issued with a Fair Processing Notice.

All staff members will be made aware of their responsibilities in relation to the General Data Protection Regulations and will be trained in the process that the Association has introduced to ensure compliance with GDPR.

9POLICY REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis or earlier if legislation changes to ensure that its aims are being met.