

# Estate Management Policy

<b>Policy</b>	Estate Management Policy
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Great Homes  
Great People  
Great Services  
Great Results



CREATING GREAT PLACES TO LIVE

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## 1. Purpose of Policy

- 1.1 To set out Loreburn H A's approach to estate management to enable customers and their households to live in well managed and well maintained housing with an environment that is attractive, safe and secure that is free from nuisance, intimidation and harassment.
- 1.2 To set out the responsibilities of the landlord and the customer and ensure enforcement is legal and in line with the requirements of the tenancy agreement.
- 1.3 Loreburn H A will promote good practice and partnership working in relation to safety relating to asbestos and the associated risks.
- 1.4 Contribute to creating sustainable communities where people want to live.
- 1.5 We recognise that the environmental management and maintenance of our developments are integral parts of both the Housing Management and the Asset Management functions. We have adopted this policy to ensure a common and consistent approach to these key activities. We realise due to the mixed tenure of some of our developments or where some are factored and some are non-factored that there may from time to time be limitations on our management. We will try to liaise with all residents and parties to maintain high standards of estate management

## 2. Legislative Background and Guidance

- 2.1 In preparing this policy **Loreburn HA** have taken account of:
  - Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.
  - Scottish Social Housing Charter 2012. – this sets out the standards that Scottish landlords must achieve when conducting their housing activities.
  - The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement – this is the formal document that outlines the customer's responsibilities and obligations in relation to the upkeep of their property and surrounding area.

## 3. Aims of this Policy

- 3.1 Estate Management crosses a number of areas covered by other policies and covers issues which may not be solely within our control. In many instances we have to work with other agencies such as the police, environmental health and social work to provide effective estate management services. We have identified the main aims of the policy to be:
  - To maintain and sustain our properties and the developments in which they are located to an appropriate standard in line with our legal obligations and those obligations contained within our tenancy agreement.
  - To respond to complaints within a reasonable timescale.
  - To monitor the quality of services provided by our contracts including grounds maintenance and contract cleaning to ensure they represent good value for money for our customers.

- To ensure those residents who are not our tenants but for whom we act as factor get good value for money.
- To provide services that our residents want and need; maintain a high standard in the upkeep and cleanliness of communal areas on our estates giving customers a peaceful, clean and tidy environment.
- To ensure that our customers are aware of their role in the upkeep of their neighbourhood and comply with the conditions of their tenancy agreement.
- To create and maintain stable, safe and socially inclusive communities where people want to live.
- To ensure that estate services represent value for money and are delivered in a way which meet the service standards that have been agreed with customers.

#### **4. Associated Policies**

- 4.1 Income Maximisation Policy
- 4.2 Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- 4.3 Tenancy Management Policy
- 4.4 Complaints Policy
- 4.5 Health & Safety Policy Statement
- 4.6 Control of Waste Policy
- 4.7 Hazardous Substances Policy

#### **5. Scottish Social Housing Charter – Performance Monitoring**

- 5.1 The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that all Scottish landlords should achieve when conducting their housing activities. These are used to monitor performance and to ensure customers are receiving a high standard of service.
- 5.2 There are five relevant charter outcomes, these are described below:

##### Equalities

Social landlords should ensure 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.

We can achieve this by prompt resolution of estate management complaints, and by offering solutions to meet the needs of our customers.

##### Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

Loreburn H A can achieve this outcome by using a variety of methods of communication from face to face conversations to social media. Customers

should be able to have queries about the management of their neighbourhood answered promptly.

### 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.

Loreburn H A will use the communication methods outlined above and also look to our Customer Engagement Strategy to engender a culture where customers can influence the management of their own neighbourhood.

### Estate Management, Anti-Social Behavior, Neighbours Nuisance and Tenancy Disputes

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.

Where appropriate Loreburn will work with other agencies such as Police Scotland DG Council Community Safety Team, and social work to tackle issues which are of concern to our residents.

### 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.

We will offer advice and assistance to residents to help them maintain their tenancy by referring them to appropriate agencies or by organising support by us or other support services.

5.3 All Loreburn H A's policies adhere to VFM principles.

## **6. How will we achieve our aims and objectives**

- 6.1. We will provide advice and assistance on tenancy matters to help residents maintain their tenancies and environment to the best of their abilities.
- 6.2 Enforce tenancy conditions, using legal action where appropriate.
- 6.3 Monitor empty properties, gardens and surrounding areas so that our developments remain attractive and secure.
- 6.4 Provide advice and assistance to both our tenants and owner occupiers in developments including signposting them to services which help them look after their property.
- 6.5 This policy is supported by detailed procedures outlining our day to day practice which will enable us to meet the aims and objectives the policy.
- 6.6 We will aim to be consistent but we also aim to be flexible and proactive, meeting local needs and expectations when providing an estate management service.

## 7. Housing Stock

- 7.1 Loreburn have a planned maintenance programme which ensures the structural features of properties are regularly surveyed and become part of a programme of works to keep them in good condition and are compliant with the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) as well as a programme of energy efficiency upgrade works in a bid to comply with the Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing (EESH) by 2020.
- 7.2 Loreburn work with Police Scotland to ensure where possible our properties and the surrounding communal space meet 'secure by design' standards.
- 7.3 Loreburn H A properties are built to high quality standards to minimise risk of estate management issues.
- 7.4 Properties that have self-contained gardens should be maintained to an acceptable standard in line with the tenancy agreements.

## 8. Estate Management Service

- 8.1 Loreburn H A will make every effort to provide a safe and pleasant environment for our customers. We will ensure that customers are fully aware of the part they play as detailed in their tenancy agreement including definitions of breach of tenancy.
- 8.2 Loreburn will provide a consistent approach to estate management but also aim to be flexible and proactive and work with customers to improve the service.

## 9. Estate Inspections

- 9.1 All Loreburn H A staff have a duty in the course of their day to day work to note any repairs and issues which pose a threat to health and safety or good Estate Management and report them to the relevant department. A copy of the Estate Inspection Form is available here: <G:\Policies and Procedures\Estate Management\Letters and Documents\Estate Management Inspection\Full EMI Form.docx>
- 9.2 Responsibility for the condition and maintenance of our developments is held by the Asset Management Team however all staff have responsibility to protect the stock. Developments are visited / inspected at least monthly by the relevant housing team / individual H&CE staff.
- 9.3 Repairs issues to common areas noted during inspections i.e. fences and walls will be reported in line with policies and procedures.
- 9.4 Loreburn will provide the following services to ensure neighbourhoods are correctly managed:
  - **Estate Inspections** – Loreburn H A has a commitment to H&CE staff being present in the communities they serve the majority of the time and

regular estate inspections take place during visits within the area. Any items of concern for example fly-tipping, vandalism or defective fencing will be noted. Monthly H&S inspections are carried out in properties with communal areas however the frequency of visits may increase as required.

- **Risk Assessments** – annual risks assessments are carried out on properties with communal areas to ensure H&S compliance.
- **Cleaning of Common areas** – a contracted cleaning service is in place for some corridors and stairwells in flatted developments. Customers are responsible for keeping common areas free from clutter to ensuring H&S compliance is not breached.
- **Common landscaping/grounds maintenance** – Loreburn have employed the services of a grounds maintenance contractor to ensure common landscaping in our developments meets an acceptable standard. The terms of the works will vary in each development according to the service procured.
- **Grit Bins** – Where appropriate in a development Loreburn H A will provide a grit bin containing salt and grit for use in the winter. The exception is when the road is adopted and the service is provided by the local authority. In the winter grit bins will be replenished as required subject to the contractors' availability and the weather. Clearing the snow in mainstream developments is the responsibility of residents apart from those schemes where the customers have vulnerability or a special need.
- **Private Gardens** – Many of our homes have their own garden. We expect customers to maintain their garden in accordance with their tenancy agreement. Housing and Community Engagement staff are responsible for ensuring customers meet the requirements of their tenancy agreement. Where a customer fails to maintain their garden to an acceptable standard every effort should be made to ensure the garden is brought up to acceptable standard. Where customers fail to comply with their tenancy agreement Loreburn H A may engage the services of a gardener and recharge the customer. If the customer is physically unable to maintain their garden due to ill health a referral will be made to the councils gardening scheme or other agencies who can assist. All associated letters can be found here: [G:\Policies and Procedures\Estate Management\Letters and Documents\Garden Letters and Documents](#)
- **Car Parks, Paved Areas and Lighting** – Housing and Community Engagement staff will monitor these areas as part of their estate inspections and note any issues such as defective lighting, abandoned cars or parking of caravans without permission. The condition of footpaths will be assessed to ensure they are stable and weed free. Car parking at developments is available on a first come first served basis. Staff will not normally become involved in parking disputes unless someone is in breach of their tenancy agreement due to the way they are using the parking facilities, the way they are acting towards other residents or if they have multiple vehicles. Loreburn will seek legal action to remove abandoned or untaxed cars from our developments. On adopted roads Housing and Community Engagement staff report any repairs identified to the Local Authority as appropriate.

- **Neighbour Disputes** - we will fully investigate any neighbour disputes and enforce tenancy conditions where appropriate. Where relevant the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy will be applied. Depending on the nature of the complaint we may seek assistance from other agencies such as Social Services/Housing Support Services/Community Safety Team/Police Scotland.
- **Play Parks** - Within our developments we have a number of play parks which are owned by Loreburn H A and in some instances they may be adopted by the local council. In cases where Loreburn H A owns the playpark we insure and maintain it ensuring regular inspections take place. Where the play parks are owned by us, any issues identified as regards the condition or repair of such areas should be reported to our H&CE Team, where the play park is not owned by us, any issues should be reported to the Local Authority.
- **Conducting a business** – Permission is required from Loreburn before a customer can run a business from their property. Each case will be dealt with individually. The nature of the business must not change the use of the property or impact on neighbours. If permission to run a business is withheld the customer will receive a full and clear explanation as to why permission was refused.
- **Abandoned Properties** – Where Housing and Community Engagement staff suspect that a property has been abandoned or is not being occupied by the tenant action will be taken in accordance with LHA's Abandonment Procedure (as detailed within the Tenancy Changes Policy) and the Housing (Scotland) Act.

## 10. Tenancy Matters

- 10.1 When a tenancy is allocated, Housing and Community Engagement staff will ensure that the incoming customer has an understanding of their rights and obligations in relation to their tenancy agreement. The H&CE Officer will visit the new tenant within 3 – 4 weeks of the tenancy start date to provide any advice and assistance required in respect of tenancy matters. A follow up visit can be arranged if required.
- 10.2 Loreburn H A staff will develop professional relationships with support and care agencies including our own Supported Housing team with the aim of helping our tenants with vulnerability or specific needs to sustain their tenancy.

## 11. Pets

- 11.1 Permission for keeping domestic pets in a property and the rules concerning it are set out in the terms of the tenancy agreement. The terms of the tenancy agreement state that permission should be sought from Loreburn H A to keep a domestic pet however permission will not be unreasonably withheld.
- 11.2 Loreburn H A has an expectation of responsible pet ownership and follows the guidance set out in the 'Guidance on Pet Management for Social Housing Providers' published by the Pet Advisory Committee and endorsed by the British Veterinary Association.
- 11.3 Loreburn H A recognise that pets can help social isolation, depression and other health issues therefore aid tenancy sustainment. However, irresponsible ownership can cause nuisance and affect the quality of life for other customers in the area and will not be tolerated. Reports of pet nuisance or complaints are taken seriously and will be investigated by the Housing and Community Engagement



Team involving other agencies where required. Tenancy conditions will be enforced as a means of addressing the problem.

- 11.4 Loreburn H A will be unable to grant permission when a tenant does not have adequate space in their home or garden to accommodate the type of pet they are applying to keep. This is particularly important when considering an application to keep a dog as they need space to exercise. If a number of other pets already exist in the property, permission will not be given where a new pet may affect their welfare.
- 11.5 Where damage is caused to property by a customer's pet, or where cleaning is required due to a pet fouling within common areas, the owner responsible for the animal will be held liable for any costs incurred by Loreburn H A for any repair or cleaning required.
- 11.6 Any reports of pet nuisance will be investigated by the H&CE Team under the ASB Policy. Permission will not be given in any circumstances to keep a dog listed as dangerous as defined by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. This includes Pit Bull Terriers, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino and Fila Brasileiro.
- 11.7 Other agencies such as the RSPCA, Dogs Trust and/or animal welfare agencies will be notified and involved if H&CE staff has any concerns about the animals' welfare.
- 11.8 Where permission is granted tenants have a responsibility for the health and wellbeing of their pets under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, this is called a duty of care. This requires proper day-to-day management and care of the pet. If tenants have any questions about the care of their pets they should contact their vet or a suitable accredited animal welfare organisation. Routine healthcare must include regular control of parasites (fleas and worms), vaccinations and neutering where appropriate. Owners of cats must ensure they are spayed or neutered. No pet should be left in the property when the tenant is away unless clear arrangements have been made to provide adequate care. In general, this will require the pet to be boarded elsewhere but close supervision by a neighbour may be adequate for some animals.

## **12. Vermin and Pest Control**

- 12.1 Where cases of vermin and pest infestation in customer's homes are reported to Loreburn HA, staff will respond to those by sign posting customers to the relevant environmental health services.

## **13. Hazards**

- 13.1 Where hazards are noted i.e. syringes, faeces, blood or other bodily fluids Loreburn H A apply health and safety procedures to minimise risk and when necessary issues will be reported to the local authority.
- 13.2 The same approach will be adopted where hazardous materials or noxious chemicals are found within our developments.
- 13.3 Refer to the Control of Waste Policy and Hazardous Substances Policy.

## **14. Customer Involvement**

- 14.1 Excellent customer service is at the heart of what Loreburn H A does so we involve and foster good relationships with our customers and shape services which meet their needs. It is especially important in regard to Estate Management issues therefore Loreburn H A actively seeks to encourage customers to take an active interest in estate management and issues which affect their local area.

## 15. Staff training and development

- 15.1 The successful implementation of the policy and supporting procedures depend on the knowledge and skills of staff implementing it. Training will be provided to relevant staff to ensure a consistent approach and ensure they can carry out the roles and duties linked to the application of this policy.

## 16. Complaints

- 16.1 Loreburn H A operates a Complaints Procedure that is available to any customer who is not satisfied with the way their case has been dealt with.
- 16.2. Details of the complaints procedure are detailed in Loreburn H A's Complaints Handling Procedure leaflet that is available from the website or any office.
- 16.3. Loreburn H A takes the learning from complaints to ensure where possible service improvements are made. Any complaints will be used to monitor and improve the service.
- 16.4 If the customer is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint and have exhausted the complaints process above, they have the right to refer the matter to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

## 17. Measuring performance

- 17.1 Performance is monitored through Loreburn H A's Performance Management Framework using the Scottish Housing Regulator Annual Return Indicators and Loreburn H A's Strategic Performance Indicators and operational performance indicators for Estate Management i.e. ASB completion rates and timescales. Annual targets for collection are set based on the Scottish Housing Regulators' ARC national performance data, HouseMark peer benchmarking and internal results.
- 17.2 Loreburn H A will consult customers, stakeholders and other agencies in order to continually measure good practice.
- 17.3 This policy will adhere to Loreburn H A's commitment to Continuous Improvement and Value for Money.

## 18. Policy review

- 18.1 The policy champion is the Regional Housing Manager (East).
- 18.2 This policy will be reviewed **every three years** or as required due to legislative or regulatory change. The review will be completed by the Policy Champion and circulated to the Executive Management Team for approval.

## 19. Equality and Diversity

- 19.1 There are many reasons why people may have difficulties accessing our services. These may include dyslexia, illiteracy and mental illness. It is the duty of all staff to ensure these issues are taken into account to ensure that information is appropriately communicated in ways those individuals can understand.

19.2 Loreburn H A is committed to equality of opportunity and will ensure that policy and procedures will not unfairly discriminate against people on grounds of sex or marital status, racial grounds, disability, age sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

19.3 Loreburn H A can provide:

- Translation service for those for who English is not their first language.
- Large text or audio tapes for people who are visually impaired.
- Assistance for people who are profoundly deaf.
- Assistance for people who have challenges around literacy and / or numeracy

## 20. Risk Management

20.1 Given the importance of this policy it is recognised that it must be effectively managed. This will be achieved through the cyclical review of policies and procedures to ensure compliance with all legislative requirements and regulatory and best practice guidance.

## 21. Responsibilities Chart

21.1 The chart below illustrates the responsibilities of all staff in relation to this policy.

Responsibilities	Board/ CEO	EMT	RHM (West)	Team Leader	All Staff
To set the policy and direction with regards to Estate Management	✓				
Ensure Loreburn H A staff have a robust understanding of Estate Management and the associated risks		✓			
Manage service, reporting and update EMT quarterly			✓		
Take lead on applications, make day to day decisions				✓	
Policy Champion			✓		
Ensure effective and clear communication with key stakeholders including customers			✓		
Reporting any concerns to Line Manager				✓	✓
Participate in meetings and provide evidence for investigations as required			✓	✓	
Ensure feedback is used to improve service			✓		
Working with Head of OD & HR ensure staff have appropriate training			✓		
Ensure policy is reviewed as			✓		

necessary					
Ensure E&D guidance is adhered to		✓			