



The Langstane Group

Estate Management Policy

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Version	V4

Version	Date approved	Changes
V1	August 2011	First issue
V2	May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 4 – reference to reducing complaints added • Page 4 on – clearer outcomes and expectations added to document by category • Page 7 – staff responsibilities added • Page 7 – estate walkabouts section added
V3	February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 1 – changed to a Langstane Group Policy • Page 4 – details of legislation impacting on this policy added • Page 4 – other relevant strategic documents policies added to the list • Page 5 – information on Fire Safety and Communal Areas Policy added • Page 6 – information on fly tipping expanded • Page 8 – information on close CCTV added • Page 8 – information on grit bins added • Page 8 – information on the maintenance of play parks expanded • Page 8 – information on communal lighting expanded
V4	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 3 – including all visiting employees to report defects • Page 7 – additional paragraph regarding the feeding of birds / wild animals • Page 8 – clarification of CCTV usage • Page 9 – clarification of roles and responsibilities

1. Introduction

Langstane Housing Association is a Co-operative and Community Benefit Society, and a registered social landlord with charitable status.

The Langstane Group consists of Langstane Housing Association Limited and its wholly owned subsidiaries.

This policy applies to Langstane Housing Association and Langstane Property Limited

Estate Management is concerned with maintaining the physical condition, cleanliness and safety of the overall housing environment to ensure that neighbourhoods are places in which people want to live.

In relation to this policy investing in our communities will assist in delivering the Association's vision detailed in the Business Plan of 'Being the Best we Can Be'. In particular that:

- Our estates and communal areas are well maintained and
- Our neighbourhoods are areas where people feel safe and secure and are proud to live in '

In terms of legal requirements the Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) places a number of obligations on tenants in relation to estates management including taking reasonable care of common parts.

The SST identifies common parts as,

"Any part of the structure and exterior of the building in which the accommodation is located (such as the roof, guttering and outside walls as well as any common facilities in that building (such as the common close, common stairway, entrance steps , entrance doors and doorways, passages, bin chute accesses, yard, gardens, outhouses, bin cellar, back green and back court)."

In addition under the Occupiers Liability (Scotland) Act 1960 the association is also obliged to take reasonable care of communal areas to ensure that visitors to properties are not injured due to the condition of the premises. As such, any reports that are made regarding defects that are not immediately rectifiable will be made safe initially until repairs can be undertaken. This may include warning signs or other precautions to highlight potential danger to visitors.

While the onus is with tenants on estates to report these issues in a timely manner and there are mechanisms and procedures in place for tenants to do this, regular inspections are carried out by the Estates Assistants and Housing Officers to mitigate risk. However it is the responsibility of all employees visiting estates to identify any obvious defect and ensure that they are reported as soon as reasonably possible for remedial action.

Other legislation impacting on this policy includes the Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011 and Code of Practice, the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004, the Civic Government (Scotland) 1982 Act and the Anti Social Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2014

2. Aims and Objectives

The Estate Management Policy supports employees in addressing estate management issues consistently across all areas:

- To ensure tenants and their households can live in well managed and maintained neighbourhoods.
- To ensure tenants and their households can live in a secure, clean and safe environment.
- To ensure tenants and their households are made aware of and accept their obligations and responsibilities in relation to their property and the surrounding area.
- To work collaboratively with voluntary and statutory agencies, and contractors to provide decent, safe, and secure communities.
- To work proactively with the aim of reducing the numbers of complaints relating to estate management issues.

3. Links to Strategic documents and policies

The Group's Estate Management Policy is linked to a number of strategic documents and policies in particular but not solely:

- Motor Vehicle Parking Policy
- Pet Policy
- Recharge Repairs Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Rent Management Policy
- Anti Social Behaviour Policy
- Former Tenant Debt Recovery Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety in Communal Areas Policy
- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment Strategy
- Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Policy

4. Policy

Estate Management

Multi landlord/tenure estates

The Association recognises that there are often situations where there is more than one social landlord in a single area mixed in with private home owners and private sector rented properties. In these schemes, the Association strives to engage in partnership working in order to deliver the best outcomes for all those living in the neighbourhood.

The Association provides limited factoring services to other landlords and property owners. On these schemes the Association will comply at all times with the Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011 and Code of Practice.

On schemes where there is flatted accommodation the Association will have due regard to the terms of the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004.

Common parts

The cleanliness and maintenance of common areas is of considerable importance to the Association, given that a large proportion of Association housing stock is flatted developments.

The majority of the Association's schemes are maintained by contractors. Where there is no contract in place, it is the responsibility of each tenant to ensure that all communal areas i.e. stairs, landing, bin store, front/back close and door etc. are cleaned on a regular basis in accordance with their tenancy agreement and any stair cleaning/bin store cleaning rota. Residents are expected to make their own arrangements in conjunction with their neighbours to take turns cleaning the common areas within the tenement.

Housing Services employees will monitor the cleanliness of common areas, (whether carried out by contractors or tenants) by:

- carrying out regular inspections
- responding to complaints regarding the performance of contractors or individual tenants
- facilitating the creation of cleaning rotas, where no cleaning contract is in place

Where there is no cleaning contract in place and the tenants cannot agree on the arrangements for cleaning or fail to do the work, the Association is entitled to decide exactly what tenants should do and when. Before making a decision consultation with tenants will take place. The decision of the Association will be binding and if duties are not carried out then a contractor will be instructed and charged to all tenants. This is in addition to any other legal remedies open to the Association.

Any potentially dangerous or hazardous materials (i.e. bodily fluids or discarded needles) must be reported to the Association so that they can be removed by suitably trained individuals and the area made safe.

Communal entrances should not be jammed open or interfered with in any way as this is a safety and security risk. Where there is strong evidence that a tenant has wilfully caused damage to a communal entranceway, the repair is considered a rechargeable repair, and dealt with under the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

The Association also has a Fire Safety in Communal Areas Policy which sets down clear and consistent guidelines for managing the storage of belongings in communal areas and also sets out the Association's wider approach to fire safety including undertaking fire risk assessments, maintaining fire equipment and ensuring tenants are fire aware.

In line with the provisions of sections 93 (2) (b) of the Civic Government (Scotland) 1982 Act no items will be left in communal areas that could prevent access to or from a property in the event of an emergency situation. Under Part VIII Section 93 of the Civic Government Act 1982 any failure to remove items that are preventing access is fineable. Where necessary this will be pursued in conjunction with the local fire service.

Gardens

Well kept and tidy gardens are a good reflection of the area. Unkempt, litter-strewn gardens reflect badly on the Association and are a disincentive to neighbouring and prospective tenants.

The tenant is responsible for the upkeep of areas allocated to their single property for their exclusive use. Estates Assistants and Housing Officers will monitor the standard of gardens by carrying out regular inspections.

There is a procedure in place that employees will follow where tenants are failing to meet their responsibility with regards to the up keep of gardens.

In cases where tenants are unable to maintain their garden area due to infirmity, frailty, old age or poor health, advice and assistance will be given about relevant agencies that may help with this work. However, this does not alter the fact that maintenance of a private garden area is the tenant's responsibility.

On the majority of developments, the Association has a contract in place for the maintenance and upkeep of any communal grounds. Information about the details of the work provided under contract is available to tenants upon request.

Under Section 2.9 of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement tenants have a responsibility to *"take reasonable care to keep it [garden] from becoming overgrown, untidy or causing a nuisance."* In extreme circumstances any failure to maintain garden areas may be seen as a breach of the tenancy agreement and the tenancy may be at risk.

Fly tipping

The Association takes a proactive approach to dealing with instances of fly tipping. Items left on Association developments are uplifted as soon as possible in order to discourage further any fly tipping.

Where there are regular issues, the Association will work in conjunction with the relevant local authority to try and identify the household responsible and take steps to deal with their anti social behaviour.

Where the culprit is identified a re-charge for the cost of the uplift will be made directly to that tenant. Where there are persistent issues and on a case by case basis the Association may re-charge the cost of uplift to tenants living in a block or a scheme.

Graffiti & vandalism

Damage to Association property or land caused by acts of vandalism will be repaired as quickly as possible.

Offensive, racially abusive or obscene graffiti will be removed from Association property or land under Association control within emergency repair timescales. Other graffiti will be removed within agreed timescales.

The Association takes a positive approach to working with other agencies to discourage acts of vandalism. This includes taking necessary steps to identify and take action against those responsible. The Association will investigate all acts of vandalism and graffiti to property and common areas. Appropriate enforcement action will be taken against all known perpetrators of vandalism to property, and where possible the Association will recover the costs of any work necessary to make good the damage.

Pest control

Infestations or pests in tenants' homes are the responsibility of the tenant and treatment should be arranged and paid for by the tenant. Advice is made available to tenants on dealing with pest infestations, including the contact details for local authority departments with responsibility for pest control, normally the Environmental Health Department.

The Association will treat infestations or pests found in communal areas in order to prevent the spread of the infestation to neighbouring properties.

Feeding of Birds/Wild Animals

The feeding of birds, particularly larger birds such as Pigeons and Seagulls or wild animals such as Foxes and Squirrels is not encouraged. Any urban site is attractive to birds and animals providing easy access to food and water as well as potentially safe breeding sites that encourage other pests such as mice and rats. The best way to control any potential nuisance is for tenants not to feed birds or animals and ensure that any food and other waste is deposited in bins with closely fitted lids.

Birds or other animals, especially in large numbers can cause problems and their faeces can carry pest or diseases that may affect humans or other animals. Bird droppings are unsightly, can become slippery when wet posing a hazard to pedestrians. The acid in droppings can corrode stonework with nest material and dead birds also potentially blocking gutters and drains causing water damage to buildings.

Wild birds and other animals are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Under this it is an offence to disturb, harass, kill or capture animals, including birds or disturb their breeding sites or resting places.

Leaving food out for birds or wild animals may be considered littering and action taken under the tenancy agreement. The exception to this is feeding birds via a bird feeder. The cost of cleaning up any rotting food or other debris may also be re-charged.

'Langstane Aware' stickers

When an employee has identified an issue on an estate but is unable to immediately rectify it, they will mark it with a 'Langstane Aware' sticker. This lets tenants know that there has been an employee on site and that the issue will be addressed soon. These have the name and contact details of the officer addressing the situation.

These will be used for highlighting Estate Management issues but will not be used for suspected abandoned vehicles.

Abandoned vehicles

Abandoned vehicles and others issues relating to the management of Association car parking schemes are handled in line with the Motor Vehicle Parking Policy.

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

Where available the Association will use mobile CCTV Cameras to monitor schemes where there are issues with fly tipping, graffiti or vandalism, parking, dog fouling, criminality or other anti-social behaviour and where other less intrusive steps to resolve the issue have proved unsuccessful. The Association will also install permanent CCTV solutions where there has been persistent and recurring issues with anti social behaviour. The footage is not monitored live but is recorded and can be accessed by the Association or the Police where required. The CCTV is used as a deterrent and where mobile CCTV cameras are used is time limited. Tenants will be informed of any CCTV installation and appropriate signage will be applied to the areas covered by the cameras. Authorisation forms will also be completed for each CCTV installation.

Grit Bins

Where appropriate in some schemes bins will be provided containing grit or salt for use on roads and pathways during the winter. In winter grit bins will be replenished as and when required and subject to the ability to safely reach schemes during periods of severe weather conditions. The grit bins are for the use of residents and their provision does not impose any responsibility on the Association to clear any communal areas of snow or ice.

Play Parks

The Association has a small number of play parks within schemes. In some instances an adjacent play park may be owned by the local council. Where a play park is owned by the Association, they will be insured, maintained and inspected on a regular basis by a Qualified Inspector.

Lighting

In the majority of schemes communal lighting will be provided by the Association. Where the Association is responsible for the lighting and it becomes defective or dangerous then it will be repaired or made safe within the repairs categories and timescales set down in the Association's Response Repairs Policy. Where street lighting is defective or dangerous and it has been adopted by the local council it will be reported directly to the appropriate authority. Emergency lighting will be inspected in accordance with the Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Policy.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities.

Estates Assistants (Aberdeen)/Housing Officers (Elgin) will

- provide a polite, efficient and quality on-site service to tenants within designated schemes
- promptly and effectively progress scheme environmental issues
- regularly liaise with Housing Services and Property Services employees with regard to designated schemes
- be the on-scheme point of contact for tenants and customers
- carry out regular inspections of designated schemes, taking action to resolve problems
- respond to and investigate any customer complaints about the service
- take meter readings in communal areas and pass these to Finance to ensure service charges are proportioned accurately
- monitor the quality of estate cleaning and gardening services (Aberdeen)

General Assistants will

- Collect fly tipping as per work orders
- Report or where instructed carry out any repairs for communal areas as appropriate
- Where appropriate carry out cleaning of open areas and litter picking
- Identify and uplift items stored in the communal areas per the uplift from Common Areas Procedure.

Housing Officers will

- conduct tenancy visits and inspections of tenants' homes and the Association's schemes
- monitor the quality of estate cleaning and gardening services (Elgin)
- proactively deal with all aspects of estate management where particular issues are identified in a scheme (i.e. fly tipping), involve tenants in estate visits or walkabouts, or other interested parties where appropriate All employees will
- Report back any issues or concerns that arise throughout the course of their duties when out visiting tenants in their homes or on estates. Any issues with belongings in communal areas will be dealt with reference to the Uplift from Common Areas Procedure

5. Monitoring and Review

The estate management process is monitored both weekly and monthly and includes reports on the following:

- anti-social behaviour complaints
- service complaints, including the performance of contractors carrying out estate cleaning and grounds maintenance
- the relationship between void turnaround and estate management

Right to Complain

In the event you are not satisfied with the service you have received, please contact the Association for a copy of the Complaints Policy, which can also be viewed on the Association's website – www.langstane-ha.co.uk

Equality and Diversity

The Association is committed to promoting equality and diversity across all areas of its work, and discrimination or harassment of any kind is not tolerated.

If you would like this document sent to you in large print, please contact Support Services on 01224 423000