

Paragon Housing Association Limited

POLICY:	ESTATE MANAGEMENT
POLICY AREA:	HOUSING MANAGEMENT
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We can produce this document in different formats such as in larger print or audio-format; we can also translate the document into various languages as appropriate.

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1. Introduction

Effective Estate Management is a vital part of the Association's Landlord role, the delivery of which, in conjunction with other agencies will assist greatly in promoting safe, secure, sustainable and desirable communities.

We recognise that estate management should go beyond looking after buildings and the physical environment. It is also about providing or arranging necessary information and advice to support tenants and other residents. It involves working with tenants and neighbouring residents and ensuring that the environment is safe for others who may visit, use or enter our land or property.

This policy is supported by detailed procedures and a range of related policies. The main policies are:

- Neighbour Disputes and Anti-social Behaviour Policy
- Allocations Policy
- Void Management Policy
- Racial Harassment Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Tenant Participation Policy
- Tenant Participation Strategy
- Abandoned House Policy

2. Aims and Objectives

Our Estate Management Strategy has 5 strategic objective:

Support the creation of vibrant, integrated and self-reliant communities rather than estates which simply provide accommodation. This is done by Creating and maintaining well managed estates where residents feel safe and proud to live. PHA will ensure that staff will be on site reviewing repairs, maintenance, graffiti, litter and general upkeep of the estates on a regular basis.

To ensure long term sustainability the Association will provide proactive maintenance support to residents and estates. This includes regular site inspections to note any structural or major items, the cyclical maintenance of existing stock, maintenance of communal areas ensuring that the focus is on peaceable enjoyment of homers on estates.

To ensure there is proper control, by the Association, of financial and other assets to cover current and regular estate maintenance and management costs as well as any future major items of expenditure.

To take a proactive approach to Health & Safety measures ensuring compliance with current legislation.

To provide a friendly accessible and efficient service to all residents with a view to best practice on all aspects of customer engagement. We will provide feedback on issues raised in a timely fashion and be open and forthcoming in our dealings with customers.

Following on from these we have the following operational aims:

- To ensure that residents understand their rights and responsibilities regarding common areas.
- To ensure that staff provide good quality information and advice to all residents living in areas managed by the Association.
- To ensure that resident satisfaction levels are monitored to reflect their perception of the area they live in
- To promote proactive approaches to Estate Management and to ensure that staff have the relevant skills to deal effectively with issues as they arise.
- To ensure that Health and Safety is at the heart of all aspects of Estate Management.
- To develop effective working relationships, within the Association, with our contractors and with other agencies.
- To ensure that all tenants are aware that breaches of the tenancy agreement are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- To design out any estate management problems in any programme work, regeneration or new housing scheme.

This policy sets out how we intend to meet these aims and objectives.

3. The Scottish Social Housing Charter (The Charter)

This policy is designed to comply with the Scottish Social Housing Charter (The Charter).

Charter Outcome No 1: Equalities

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

- 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.

Charter Outcome No 2 Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- 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 provided

Charter Outcome No 3: 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.

Charter Outcome No 4: Housing quality and maintenance

Social landlords manage their business so that:

- Tenant's homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair.

Charter Outcome 6 Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour 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.

Charter Outcome 11: Tenancy Sustainment

Social landlords ensure that:

- 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.

Charter Outcome No 13: Value for Money

Social landlords manage all aspects of their business so that:

- Tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide

The legislative background to the policy can be found in the Estate Management Strategy.

4. Main Principals

The Delivery of an effective Estate Management Policy is contingent on:

- Good quality design and layout of developments
- A Planned Maintenance Programme which includes modernisation and component replacement
- Proactive Management through early identification of issues and appropriate preventative or remedial action
- Effective communication channels to enable residents and other stakeholders to play a key role in helping us to monitor the provision of services such as open space maintenance.

5. Estate Management Commitments

1. Estate and Property Inspections

In the course of their regular duties the Association's staff will look for and report on any signs of deterioration to properties, common areas, open space areas, etc. Regular inspections will be carried out of the common areas such as stairs, entrances, bin stores, drying areas, common pathways, lock-up garages and parking areas. This will identify problems and appropriate action will be taken to maintain them to a reasonable standard.

2. Fire Safety

Our approach to Fire Safety is specifically one of life preservation and fire prevention through minimising risk. This includes a commitment to carry out Fire Risk Assessments of common areas within closes.

Our Tenancy Agreement states that no resident possessions should be stored in any of the common parts except in areas set aside for storage. We will take action to enforce this tenancy condition. We will also respond to any reported concerns of hoarding within our properties and work closely with other agencies to address any immediate health and safety issues.

The Association proactively encourages and refers residents for Fire Safety visits by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

3. Garden Areas

The Association's staff will carry out regular inspections of garden areas and where the tenant fails to maintain their garden to an acceptable level they will be contacted and reminded of the conditions of their tenancy and given reasonable time to achieve the necessary improvements. If the tenant fails to do the work the Association may carry out the work and charge the tenant. This is in addition to any other legal remedies the Association may have.

4. Open Space Maintenance

A number of estates have the provision of open space areas. These areas were provided for the benefit of an estate as a whole.

All tenants and residents will be encouraged to recognise their responsibility for and to take a pride in, the upkeep of the open space areas.

Play Areas and Equipment

Play areas will be regularly checked to monitor the safety of play equipment provided by the Association. Where play equipment is found to be damaged, prompt action will be taken to have it repaired, removed or made secure.

Trees

The Association recognises that Trees provide many benefits and should be considered to be a valuable asset.

Soft and Hard Landscape Maintenance

Soft landscape is defined as plants, shrubs, trees and grass areas. However, in the wrong place, we appreciate that trees can be a nuisance, and if they become diseased or decayed, they can sometimes pose a risk to safety. Where possible we will avoid pruning or felling trees, but we know sometimes it is unavoidable. A careful balance must be struck between maintaining enough trees in the right places to provide the benefits that trees offer, while minimising the risk of harm, and avoiding the damage or nuisance that they can pose. The Association has produced a guide on it's approach to tree management and this can be found on our website.

Hard landscape is defined as paths, parking areas, brick or block laid areas, play areas and play equipment.

In relation to the estate open spaces the Association has a general responsibility for the maintenance, repair and when necessary, the renewal of un-adopted roadways, footpaths, kerbs, laybys, pedestrian ways, parking areas, open spaces (including play areas and areas of hard and soft landscaping) situated within the estate, and boundary fencing communal to the estate.

Services undertaken may include

- Grass cutting
- Hedge, shrub and woodland maintenance
- Weed control
- Litter collection
- Sweeping, cleansing and lighting

- Communal boundary/other communal fencing to estate

There will be local variation depending on the division of responsibilities with the relevant local authority.

Stirling Council Area

The Association is responsible for arranging the maintenance open space areas within the estates in the Stirling area. The Association will arrange the works and the costs will be shared between the Association and property owners in accordance with title deed provisions.

Falkirk Council Area

Some elements of the maintenance of the open space areas within the estates in the Falkirk area are carried out by Falkirk Council on a permanent basis. This arrangement is governed by a legal agreement.

This Agreement does not cover all elements of open space maintenance. Property owners within the estate, including the Association are responsible for anything not covered. The Association will arrange the works and the costs will be shared between the Association and property owners in accordance with title deed provisions.

The main items **NOT** included in the agreement are

- Major replacement and removal of shrubs and trees
- Work to trees over 3 metres high
- Work to non-adopted footpaths, roads and play areas and open spaces
- Maintenance such as weed clearing of hard landscaping (e.g. slabbed or tarmac areas), fencing and play areas

Clackmannanshire Council Area

In the main, the soft landscaped areas within the estate in Clackmannanshire are maintained by the Council at no charge to the Association or owners. The Council is responsible for inspecting the work carried out by their staff.

Communal hard landscaping **NOT** adopted by the local authority is the responsibility of the Association to maintain and owners in these estates have a responsibility to pay an equal share.

Standards of the maintenance of these areas will be monitored regularly. Staff will liaise with the appropriate contractor or local authority representative to carry out remedial work if it does not meet the agreed contract specifications.

5. General Environment

The Association's staff will monitor the general environmental conditions of the estates and where necessary, liaise with other agencies to ensure that action is taken to resolve problems.

Residents will be discouraged from parking in areas other than within their own garden or in communal parking areas.

Written permission will be required for caravans, boats and trailers on Association land. It will only be granted if the item does not cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours and there are no complaints received about the lack of car parking in common parking areas. If there are parking problems identified the owners of these items will be asked to remove them.

6. Vandalism/Graffiti

Graffiti/vandalism to Association property will be removed or repaired urgently particularly if the graffiti is one of a racial or malicious nature. All such damage must be recorded and photographs taken as it may be useful in any court proceedings.

If the person who causes the graffiti/vandalism is identified, then further action will be taken by the Association. This could be deemed as either a criminal offence within the jurisdiction of the Police, or if there are no witnesses, a rechargeable repair to the tenant concerned.

7. Cars and Abandoned Vehicles

The Association aims to minimise the nuisance and danger to residents of unsafe or abandoned vehicles left on its property either by residents or outside parties.

If an abandoned vehicle is identified it will be reported to the relevant local authority to initiate their procedures for removal.

8. Void Properties

The Association's staff will endeavour to ensure that void properties are repaired and relet within our published targets thus minimising rent loss to the Association.

Front and rear door locks (where applicable) will be changed between each tenancy.

Gardens will be kept in a neat and tidy condition during the void period.

The tenant will be responsible for paying the cost of any work that may be required when moving out of a house to bring it up to an acceptable standard for a new tenant. This includes items such as:

- Cleaning out houses.
- Removing rubbish from rooms, attics and outhouses
- Removing rubbish from bin areas and communal areas (unless special uplift has been arranged with local authority).
- Lifting and removing floor coverings.
- Removing panelling, tiles, shelves and other fixtures which have been badly fitted and repairing or replacing plaster or plasterboard.
- Removing non approved alterations to the property

9. Abandoned Properties

The Association's staff will ensure abandoned properties are promptly identified. Action taken will be in accordance with the Association's Abandoned House Policy. Abandoned house notifications are served and a register of houses and property found in them is kept to reflect the requirements of the current legislation.

10. Repairs

The Association's staff will ensure that job orders for repair requests are placed timeously and will monitor their progress and liaise with our jobbing contractor to remedy any problems.

11. Garages

The Association's staff will ensure that anyone renting a Paragon owned lock up adheres to the responsibilities outlined in their agreement, namely keeping the garage clean and in good condition (reporting repairs to us where necessary) and using it only for the purposes outlined in the agreement.

12. Mobility Scooters – Use and Storage

We do not wish to restrict anyone's ability to benefit from the use of a mobility scooter, however, we must take into account the suitability of the development for such us.

The Association is currently developing procedures regarding the use, storage and charging of scooters in Paragon tenancies / communal areas and this policy will be updated to reflect those procedures.

13. Pets and Livestock

Whilst our tenancy agreement has implicit permission to keep pets we are aware of the nuisance and health risks associated with irresponsible pet ownership. We have produced a leaflet on keeping pets in a Paragon Tenancy and this can be found on our website.

We will not give permission for tenants to keep livestock and would not normally give permission to keep racing or homing pigeons.

14. Pest / Insect / Vermin Control

We aim to ensure all our homes are free from pest, insect and vermin infestation. Where an infestation is present in communal areas we will arrange and pay for necessary eradication work. If the infestation in a common area can be attributed to the behaviour and/or of an individual resident the costs of eradication may be recharged to that individual.

Where an infestation is present in / on an individual home, the responsibility for arranging removal rests with the individual tenant / resident. We can provide advice on how best to deal with the infestation and have produced a factsheet which can be found on our website.

15. Domestic CCTV / Ring Doorbells

We have produced a guidance note on the installation / use of domestic CCTV and ring doorbells etc. Although the Association have no remit to get involved with what is being monitored / recorded you should be aware of your responsibilities as a 'data controller'. We ask tenants to submit an alteration to property request for such devices so we can ensure that no damage is done to the property and that the integrity, of for example fire doors, is not compromised.

16. Household recycling and Refuse Disposal

Local Authorities have responsibility for refuse disposal and recycling, and we will work in conjunction with them, as far as is reasonable, to ensure appropriate facilities are provided within our developments.

Many of our schemes were built before the introduction of individual 'wheelie' bins and although we have endeavoured to provide solutions for the storage of these bins, in some cases this is not possible due to the design or size of the outside space. We continually try to work with the Local Authorities to agree the best possible alternatives.

Residents are responsible for ensuring that their household waste and recycling is presented for disposal appropriately, in a safe, tidy and timely manner. Tenants are advised of their responsibilities at the outset of their tenancy and reminded on a regular basis.

We will maintain communal bin stores where they are provided and will inspect them regularly. We will take appropriate action, where possible in conjunction with the local authority, in any cases of illegal or inappropriate dumping of rubbish or items on our land or premises, including recharging any costs to individuals where they can be identified as being responsible.

Tenants are responsible for the disposal of any unwanted items at the end of their tenancy. Any rubbish left in a property, garden or communal area at the end of a tenancy will be disposed of by us and the recharged to the former tenant.

17. Litter

As above, residents are responsible for ensuring that waste and recycling is presented for disposal appropriately. This includes littering. Tenants are reminded of their responsibilities at the start of their tenancy and will be reminded again should issues arising. This includes the inappropriate disposal of cigarette butts and single use vaping.

Where (wind-blown) litter is present on grassed areas these will be litter picked before cutting.

18. Hazardous Materials & Safe Collection and Disposal of Drug Related Litter

We will arrange for the safe cleaning and/or collection and disposal of any hazardous items (such as syringes and needle, or bodily fluids / excretions) in the communal areas of our properties or land.

Where the individual(s) responsible for those hazardous materials is known, we will take appropriate action (along side Police Scotland, NHS and the Local Authority) to resolve the issue.

19. Snow Clearance & Gritting

The Association does not provide a general snow clearing and gritting service. However, we have identified individual schemes which we regard as a high priority for snow clearing and gritting services and will take action to assist in these areas if required.

20. Signage

Street furniture (Road names for example) is generally the responsibility of the local authority.

We aim to limit the use of signage within our schemes, but where it is required will ensure that it is appropriate and of good quality.

21. Homeowners

The Association's staff will seek to involve homeowners in our efforts to achieve our estate management objectives.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct for Property Factors the Association will provide each owner with a written statement of service setting out, in a

simple and transparent way, the terms and service delivery standards of the arrangement in place between the Association and the homeowner.

22. Requests for Alterations / Adaptations

Residents must seek our permission for any external alterations or additions to Paragon homes and garden areas. This includes (but is not limited to) requests to erect sheds, fences, patios and to install satellite TV dishes or CCTV. This must be done in writing and provide sufficient detail (including measurements, materials etc) to allow us to carry out an assessment of the proposals.

Failure to seek permission for alterations will be considered to be a breach of tenancy and we will take appropriate action.

Permission will not normally be granted for additions or alterations to communal area. One exception being – for example – hand rails to communal entrances – adaptations which will enable a tenant to remain in their home and where granting permission would not give rise to any ongoing health and safety, maintenance or insurance obligations.

6. Resident Involvement

This policy operates in conjunction with the Tenant Participation Policy, Tenant Participation Strategy and Factoring Policy. The Association will seek to maximise opportunities for tenants and homeowners to influence and participate in the decision making processes relating our estate management services.

The Association encourages and supports Registered Tenants Organisations and promotes community involvement in estates.

To ensure the involvement of owners in the Association's decision making processes an Owners Group will be set up.

7. Information and Advice

The Association recognises that Estate Management is not solely about looking after buildings and the physical environment. It is also about providing and arranging necessary advice and support to tenants and residents.

Estate management covers a diverse range of issues such as:-

- Providing advice and assistance on tenancy matters.
- Enforcing tenancy conditions.
- Staff promoting Welfare Benefits to encourage maximum uptake.
- The Association's Tenant's Handbook includes advice for new and existing tenants.

New Tenants

Staff will work closely with all new tenants to ensure that they are fully aware of their responsibilities under their tenancy agreement and how they should comply with them.

New tenants will be provided with advice and assistance on a range of tenancy matters when they sign up for their new home e.g. welfare benefits, energy efficiency.

Staff will carry out new tenancy visits to all new tenants within 6 – 8 weeks of the start date of their tenancy. During the visit staff will ensure that the tenant is fully aware of their responsibilities under their tenancy agreement, including how much rent they should pay

Our policy is driven by the belief that tenants should not be forced to get transport to our office to access the services. Home visits are arranged and contact points are staffed by experienced officers.

8. Working with Other Agencies

In addressing issues, staff will work in partnership with other agencies, such as the local authority departments, police and other appropriate agencies.

Co-operation with those agencies, who have specialist knowledge or, particular powers, can bring many positive benefits to the Association and its tenants alike.

The Association will, where appropriate, take a multi-agency approach to solving problems.

9. Equal Opportunities

We are committed to being inclusive, free from discrimination and prejudice, recognising that each person has different circumstances and the need to allocate the resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. Wherever possible, we will remove barriers that prevent people from taking part. We will develop ways of encouraging everyone in our communities to become involved. We will take account of equal opportunities and good practice.

The Association aims to promote equal opportunities and will ensure that its staff act in a manner which will not discriminate against any individual, household or group on the grounds of any the nine protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

10. Complaints

The Association is committed to providing high-quality customer services. It accepts that despite the best efforts of staff, problems may arise from time to time. If its customers feel dissatisfied with its policies, the way these are implemented or the level and quality of service provided, they may wish to make a complaint.

- Should such a situation arise staff are committed to investigating the matter fully and ensuring a satisfactory solution is achieved as quickly as possible.
- The Association has adopted the SPSO's complaints handling procedure which sets out the standard approach to handling complaints which is to be used across the housing sector.
- A customer who is dissatisfied about the action taken or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by the Association or on its behalf can use the Association's complaints handling procedure.
- Details of the Association's Complaints Policy can be obtained from the office or from the website.

11. Training

The Association will ensure that staff dealing with estate management and associated policies will have the appropriate training and knowledge to perform their job effectively.

12. Monitoring

Estate management is monitored by the Housing Manager to ensure that standards are met and any problematic areas are identified at an early stage and brought to the attention of the Director and the Housing Management and Investment Sub Committee. Additionally Health and Safety matters are overseen by the Health & Safety (Stock) Sub Committee.

The Association will ensure that it complies with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) Regulatory Framework for social housing and guidance for monitoring the Association's performance in achieving the outcomes and standards in the Charter.

In addition, the Association participates in benchmarking processes with other registered housing associations and these statistics are presented to the Management Committee.

Monthly Reports are produced covering:

Close Gradings
Estate Inspections
Play Area Inspections
Peap (Balfour Court) Complex Health & Safety
Fire Door Inspections

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed no later than 5 years from the date of approval. However, if there are any changes in legislation, good practice or operational changes which may affect the content then the review may be undertaken earlier.

14. PHA Leaflets

Personal CCTV & Ring bells

[Information of use of personal CCTV and Ring door bells \(DPO checked\) 2023 04 03 19 02 18.pdf \(paragonha.org.uk\)](#)

Tree Guide

[Tree Guide V1 June 2022 2022 06 16 15 59 43.pdf \(paragonha.org.uk\)](#)

Pets

[Microsoft Word - Pets Factsheet June 2023 \(paragonha.org.uk\)](#)

Pests

[PHA Fact Sheet Pest Control June 2023 2023 06 15 18 11 31.pdf \(paragonha.org.uk\)](#)