

Southside

HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Estate Management Policy

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SOUTHSIDE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Estate Management Policy

Policy Owner: Housing Manager

First Approved: September 1991

Reviewed and Amended: March 2009

Reviewed and Amended June 2014

Next Review Due: June 2017

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 **Background:**

Southside Housing Association registered as social landlord (RSL) in 1971 has charitable status. The Association operates in the south west of Glasgow and currently owns 2015 houses.

The Association also provides a factoring service to 796 owner occupiers, 82 commercial owners and 40 sharing owners through its registered subsidiary, Southside Factoring and Related Services Ltd. This incorporates 309 homes where Southside took over the factoring services from GHA.

1.2 **Stock Profile:**

At the end of March 2011, Southside acquired a total of 1,033 homes; this included 534 homes in Cardonald and 499 homes in Pollokshields from Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) through second stage transfer (SST). It also acquired a further 441 homes from GHA in Halfway on 27 June 2011. The Association's housing current stock by neighbourhood is outlined below:

- Cardonald - 534 units
- Pollokshields – 499 units
- Halfway – 441 units
- Southside Traditional Stock – 619

(NB: The total stock figures vary over time due to 'right to buy' sales, 'buy backs' and new build development.)

Following the Second Stage Transfer (SST) of housing stock from GHA, the Association has become a significantly larger organisation and now owns a diverse mixture of property types including multi-storey; deck access; traditional four storey tenements; new build and sheltered housing stock.

1.3 Purpose:

The purpose of this Estate Management Policy is to effectively manage the environment around the Association's properties and any common areas, to ensure that the neighbourhood is an attractive, well-maintained and safe and secure place to live. The Association aims to provide a responsive service to tenants and owners, which will ensure the efficient and effective management of all estates. Estate Management is not solely about looking after buildings and the physical environment. It is also about working with other agencies to maintain and develop safe strong and attractive communities.

The Association has a **Maintenance Policy** and a **Void Management Policy** that cover issues related to the upkeep of our properties and environment. These are available from our office and cover the Cardonald, Halfway, Pollokshields and Southside's traditional stock areas.

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The following Policy statement encompasses the Association's commitment to a high quality estate management service for all residents.

Southside Housing Association is committed to providing a high quality, professional estate management service to all residents where a management service is given. The main principle behind this service will be to ensure that:

- *All residents are entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of their homes surrounded by a clean, tidy and safe environment.*
- *Tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods, where they feel safe.*

2.2 Scottish Social Housing Charter:

The Scottish Social Housing Charter replaces the performance standards set out in previous guidance produced by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and outlines how the Charter will help to improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords provide. The Charter supports the Scottish Governments long-term aim of creating a safer and stronger Scotland. It contains a total of 16 Outcomes and standards that social landlords should aim to achieve.

2.3 Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter (ARC):

From April 2013 SHR require all social landlords to collect and provide key information on their performance in attaining the outcomes and standards in the Charter.

SHR will use the landlord's Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to report publicly on progress against outcomes and standards and use this to inform SHR regulatory assessments.

The Association aims to meet the Scottish Government Social Housing Charter outcomes 1,2,3,6,11 and 13 which state:

Outcome 1: Equalities – Every tenant and 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 customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords decision at a level they feel comfortable with

Outcome 6: Estate management – tenants and 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

The **main** Charter outcomes and associated indicators which will influence this policy fall under the section on '**Neighbourhood and Community**.'

Social landlords are responsible for meeting the standards and outcomes set out in the Charter which will be used to monitor the performance of all 'social landlords'. (See details of performance indicators at Appendix 1)

3.0 OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 3.1 Outcome No 6 of the Scottish Social Housing Charter covers actions to enforce tenancy conditions on estate management and neighbour nuisance, to resolve neighbour disputes, and to arrange or provide tenancy support where this is needed. It also covers the role of landlords in working with others to tackle anti-social behaviour.

As per Section 7 of the Housing Scotland Act 2004, 'anti-social behaviour' is defined as 'behaviour likely to cause alarm, harassment or distress to members of the public not of the same household as the perpetrator'.

To achieve these aims, it is necessary to ensure that residents are clear on the Association's responsibilities and their own responsibilities. All residents will be made aware of their respective responsibilities when they sign their tenancy agreement.

This will be reinforced through the following actions:

- Tenancy Agreement
- Tenants Handbook
- The Good Neighbour Agreement
- Newsletter

- Settling in visits
- Tenant Participation
- Equal Opportunities
- Estate Visits
- Working with Others
- Annual Programmed Visits

3.2 **Tenancy Agreement:**

This will clearly define what is expected of the tenant and the Association, and ensuring that in the signing up procedures, time is taken by staff to explain the Agreement. Reinforcing responsibilities of both the Association and tenants through articles in the newsletter and where necessary issuing letters as specific issues arise.

3.3 **Tenants Handbook:**

A clear, concise Tenant's Handbook will be provided for all tenants, which will give more detailed information about the tenancy, what the tenant can expect from the Association and what the Association expects of the tenant.

3.4 **Good Neighbour Agreement:**

The Association is committed to ensuring that everyone can enjoy their home without disruption from others. Tenants are requested to sign up to the 'Good Neighbour Agreement' which details the responsibilities of the Association to the tenant and the tenant's responsibilities as a resident and neighbour.

3.5 **Quarterly Newsletter:**

This provides information on a range of topics including residents meetings; tenant consultation; ground maintenance and elevator safety.

3.6 **Settling in Visits:**

A member of the Association's staff will carry out a 'settling in' visit to all new tenants within 6 weeks of the household moving into the property, to reinforce the terms of the Tenancy Agreement and outline the household's responsibilities as neighbours and members of the community in a positive manner.

A key aim of the visit will be to establish a good landlord/tenant relationship and to promote the Association as an approachable, sympathetic and supportive landlord.

3.7 **Tenant Participation:**

Advising tenants through newsletters and information leaflets of the Association's Tenant Participation Policy and their ability to become more involved in the running of the Association, from attending a tenants meeting on an annual basis through to becoming a member of the Neighbourhood Sub-Committee.

3.8 Equalities:

Advising tenants through information leaflets and newsletters of the Association's Equalities policy, to increase awareness of the Association's commitment to fairness in the provision of services.

3.9 Estate Visits:

Visiting neighbourhoods on a regular basis to ensure they are clean & tidy and free from graffiti. This includes the cleaning of common areas, carrying out ground maintenance by the Association's contractors which is included in service charges.

3.10 Working with Others:

Build up good contacts and relationships with local Community Police, Environmental Health and Cleansing Departments, and local community groups.

3.11 Annual Programmed Visits:

This allows the Association to carry out regular checks on family composition and assists with tenancy sustainment.

The obligations and responsibilities of the tenant and the landlord are contained within the tenancy agreement. The Estate Management policy is concerned with ensuring that tenants and staff are fully aware of their obligations and that these are adhered to.

There are two main categories of the Tenancy Agreement that apply; Use of the Property and Common Parts and respect for others. The list below provides examples of estate management obligations and responsibilities.

Section of Tenancy Agreement	Obligation	Responsibility
2.6	In properties where pets are permitted to keep pets under supervision and control. Ensuring that tenants in multi-storey flats comply with tenancy condition regarding ' no dogs '.	Tenant
2.7	Not to allow the house to be used for illegal or immoral purposes	Tenant
2.9	To keep common parts in a clean and tidy condition	Tenant and Landlord through Estate Management
2.10	Take reasonable care to keep gardens from becoming overgrown and untidy	Tenant and Landlord where services are provided

Section of Tenancy Agreement	Obligation	Responsibility
2.11	No property to be stored in common parts, except in areas set aside for storage	Tenant and Landlord to enforce through Estate Management Inspections
3.1	Not to harass or act in an anti-social manner against any person in the neighbourhood.	Tenant
3.3, Point 8	Not to harass or assault any person in the house, or neighbourhood, including staff and consultants and contractors This includes a person's race, colour or ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexuality, disability, age, religion or other belief or other status	Tenant
5.9	Not to cause damage wilfully or negligently by you or by anyone living with you or an invited visitor to your house.	Tenant
5.15	Must report any damage to the house, the common parts	Tenant and Landlord through Estate Management Inspections
5.20	Take reasonable care of the house, carrying out minor repairs and internal decoration and keeping the house in a reasonable state of cleanliness	Tenant and Landlord through Void Inspections

In addition, as the Association works in multi-cultural areas, particularly Southside Traditional Stock, this means additional resources are required to ensure all tenants understand both their own and the Association's obligations and responsibilities.

4.0 MANAGING THE ESTATE:

4.1 Introduction:

The quality of the environment and the wishes of tenants to lead a peaceful and secure life are priorities to tenants. Failure to deal with estate management issues could lead to a lack of confidence from tenants and applicants to the area leading to:

- Properties becoming difficult to let.
- The area getting a reputation for being a poor area to live in.
- A rise in crime, as residents lose interest in their surroundings believing the Association no longer care.
- A lack of confidence in the Association as a good landlord.

These issues could also have an impact on the financial viability of the Association, as well as its reputation.

Maintaining high standards within our neighbourhoods, preventing decline and importantly protecting the Association's Investment are high priorities. To ensure that tenants live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe, staff will engage in a range of actions to enforce tenancy conditions on estate management and neighbourhood nuisance. These actions will include assisting with resolving neighbour disputes and arranging or providing tenancy support where this is needed.

As outlined below we will ensure that:

- Regular Estate Inspections are conducted within each of the four neighbourhoods and that any resultant problems are addressed directly.
- Regular meetings are held with relevant agencies and partners to highlight and discuss any issues and ensure that corrective action is taken.
- The Association recognises that successful estate management can only be obtained by taking a multi agency approach with particular liaison being required with police and Glasgow Community Safety Services.
- We monitor the number and reasons for tenancy offers being refused during the year.
- We monitor the number and reasons for anti-social cases being reported and the manner of resolution, in line with locally agreed targets.
- We monitor the number and reasons for evictions within the year.
- We monitor the number and reasons for abandonments within the year.
- Tenant Satisfaction Surveys are carried out across the organisation's different functions.

5.0 COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION:

5.1 Communication:

Southside Housing Association recognises the value of engaging with residents in respect of estate management issues and priorities.

Communication and Participation form Outcomes 2 and 3 of the Scottish Social Housing Charter respectively.

Outcome 2 ‘Communication’ covers all aspects of a landlords’ communication with tenants and other customers. It is not just about how clearly and effectively a landlord gives information to those who want it. It also covers making it easy for tenants and other customers to make complaints and provide feedback on services, using that information to improve services and performance, and letting people know what they have done in response to complaints and feedback.

Southside Housing Association currently uses a variety of methods to communicate with tenants and service users to publicise our services and to consult, inform and communicate in respect of estate management.

The range of methods is outlined below;

Tenancy sign up	Quarterly Newsletters	Local Walkabouts
Tenants handbook	Special Issue Bulletins	Scheme Meetings
Website	Annual report	Public meetings
Settling in visit	Policy Review	Satisfaction surveys
Estate Management Questionnaires	Open days /Coffee Mornings	Committee Meetings
Annual Visits		

5.2 Tenant Participation:

Southside Housing Association is committed to providing a high quality service to our tenants and customers. New legislation from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Housing Regulator requires social landlords to involve tenants and other service users in decision making and to seek their views. To help achieve this, the Association is committed to providing maximum opportunity and support to our tenants and other service users to participate in shaping future policy and practice.

The Association’s Governing Body has consistently had a majority of its membership drawn from tenants and service users. In addition, the Association’s Management Committee delegates local decision making to Neighbourhood Committees that are dominated by local tenants. Furthermore in 2014, the Association commissioned the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) to train tenants in Tenant Scrutiny and the Association plans to inform its Neighbourhood Committees through this process. The Association will also use focus groups and working parties, as well as local tenant meetings to ensure that tenants and service users are involved in decision making.

Tenants’ opinions on estate management services will be regularly sought through the Neighbourhood Committees, tenants meetings, forums, the use of satisfaction surveys, newsletters and information leaflets. These will be used to raise resident’s awareness of the Association’s policies and objectives.

Tenants have a legal right to be consulted on issues which affect them and to participate in the Association's decision-making process. In line with the Housing Scotland Act 2001 regarding Tenant Participation, Southside Housing Association gives equal opportunity to all tenants to be involved in shaping the services they receive and are consulted on changes which affect their homes.

Tenant involvement is actively encouraged and welcomed in line with the Association's Tenants Participation Policy.

If necessary, information will be translated into appropriate formats when required. The Association provides translated material, interpreters, information in audio form and bi-lingual staff.

Outcome 3 of the Scottish Social Housing Charter covers 'Participation' and describes what landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory duties on tenant participation. It covers how social landlords gather and take account of the views and priorities of their tenants; how they shape their services to reflect these views; and how they help tenants and other customers to become more capable of involvement.

6.0 FINANCIAL PLANNING AND VALUE FOR MONEY

- 6.1 On an annual basis, and based on customer feedback, we will identify the services required to maintain our stock to the highest possible standard. These services will be tendered in line with the Associations tendering policy. This method ensures we obtain the best value from our contracts.
- 6.2 In line with the Scottish Social Housing Charter, we will plan, control and monitor estate management spend in relation to budgets.

The Scottish Housing Regulator outlines the importance of "*Getting good value from rents and service charges*" within Charter under the Standard No.13 'Value for Money' and Outcomes 14 and 15 which cover 'Rents and Service Charges. Social Landlords are expected to manage all aspects of their business so that:

'...tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for money for the rent and other charges they pay'.

7.0 MONITORING, COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING

- 7.1 The Association's Neighbourhood Sub-Committees now covers two distinct areas including Cardonald/Halfway and Pollokshields which will receive bi-monthly estate management monitoring reports detailing:
- Visits and problems encountered for the previous three months
 - Number and category of complaints reported in the previous three months
 - Details and recommendations on serious cases where legal action is being considered or is going on.
 - Details of any racial harassment incidents in the previous three months

In addition, the Housing Manager will report on any estate management issues where decisions require to be made between the quarterly reports.

- 7.2 Computer records will be maintained up to date to show details of our inspections, findings, outcomes and all other associated estate management work.
- 7.3 Wherever possible we will deal with estate management complaints “on the spot”. Where this can’t be achieved we aim to deal with any non urgent complaints within 5 working days. Where matters are likely to take longer to resolve, we will keep the complainant informed of the reasons for this and the anticipated timescales involved.
- 7.4 The full Estate Management Policy will be reviewed at least every three years. However, elements of the policy may be referred for review within that timescale if required.

8.0 TRAINING REVIEW AND DISTRIBUTION OF ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY:

- 8.1 The Association is committed to training and developing staff and committee members to their full potential in order to deliver a high quality of service in all areas.
- 8.2 This Policy will be approved by the two Neighbourhood Sub Committees and the main governing body of the Association. It will be reviewed on a 3 yearly cycle. This Policy will therefore be fully reviewed in June 2017. The review will incorporate changes in legislation, complaints, comments and feedback from customers.
- 8.3 Staff procedures and guidance for policy implementation will continued to be revised by the Housing Manager to take account of practical experience in their implementation, provided the aims and objectives of the Policy are not compromised
- 8.4 This policy will be made available to every employee and committee member and will be made freely available to any tenant or interested party.
- 8.5 In line with the Association’s commitment to equal opportunities, this policy can be made available free of charge in a variety of formats, including large print, translated into another language or on audio tape and brail.

Appendix 1:

**Estate Management Policy
Charter Outcomes and Performance Indicators**

Charter: Neighbourhood and Community: 	Outcome: No 6 <i>Estate Management, anti social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes.</i>	Indicator 17: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in.
	<i>'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.'</i>	Includes: (i) No. of tenants who were asked. (ii) No. who responded: (a) very satisfied (b) fairly satisfied (c) neither satisfied or dissatisfied (d) fairly dissatisfied (e) very dissatisfied
Charter: Neighbourhood and Community:	Outcome No: 6 <i>Anti-social behaviour (ASB)</i>	Indicator 19: Percentage of anti social behaviour cases reported in the last year, resolved within locally agreed targets.
		(i) No. of cases of anti-social behaviour reported in the last year. (ii) No. of cases resolved in the last year. (iii) No. of cases resolved within locally agreed targets in the last year.
Charter: Access to Housing and Support:	Outcome No 11 <i>Tenancy Sustainment</i>	Indicator 18: Percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year.
	<i>'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.'</i>	(i) Number of tenancy offers made during the reporting year (ii) Number of tenancy offers that were refused.

Appendix 1 – continued

**Estate Management Policy
Charter Outcomes and Performance Indicators**

Charter Section:	Outcome	Indicator
Customer/landlord relationship	Outcome No.1: Equalities	Indicator 2: Ethnic origins and disability of service users, staff and governing body members
	Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that: <i>'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.'</i>	(A) For all landlords the ethnic origins of: (i) staff (ii) existing tenants (iii) applicants on housing lists (iv) new tenants (v) governing body members
Customer/landlord relationship	Outcome No.2: Communication	Indicator 3: Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions.
	<i>Social landlords manage their businesses so that:</i> <i>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.'</i>	(i) No. of tenants who responded: (ii) No. who responded: (a) very good (b) fairly good (c) neither good nor poor (d) fairly poor (e) very poor
Customer/landlord relationship	Outcome No.2: Communication	Indicators 4 4. Percentage of 1st and 2nd stage complaints, including those relating to equalities issues, responded to in full in the last year, that were resolved by the landlord and also the percentage upheld. 5. The percentage of 1st and 2nd stage complaints responded to in full in the last year, within the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO)

		<p>Model (CHP) timescales.</p> <p>Number of:</p> <p>(i) 1st and (ii) 2nd stage complaints received in the reporting year – split: 'equalities issues' and 'other issues'.</p> <p>(iii) No. of complaints at (i) and (ii) responded to in full by the landlord in the reporting year.</p> <p>(iv) No. of complaints at (i) & (ii) upheld by the landlord in the reporting year.</p> <p>(v) Of the number of complaints at (i) & (ii) the number responded to in full within the SPSO model complaint Handling Procedure (CHP) timescales.</p>
Customer/landlord relationship	<p>Outcome No.3: Participation</p> <p>Social landlords manage their business so that:</p> <p><i>'Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.'</i></p>	<p>Indicator No.6:</p> <p>Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making process.</p>
		<p>(i) No. of tenants who responded:</p> <p>(ii) No.who responded</p> <p>(a) very satisfied</p> <p>(b) fairly satisfied.</p> <p>(c) neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.</p> <p>(c) fairly dissatisfied.</p> <p>(d) very dissatisfied.</p>
Getting Good Value From Rents And Service Charges	<p>Outcome No: 13 Value for Money</p> <p><i>Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that:</i></p> <p><i>Tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.</i></p>	<p>Indicator No.29:</p> <p>Percentage of tenants who feel that their rent represents good value for money:</p> <p>(i) No. of tenants who responded.</p> <p>(ii) No.who responded</p> <p>(a) Very good</p> <p>(b) Fairly good</p> <p>(c) Neither good nor poor</p> <p>(d) Fairly poor</p> <p>(e) Very poor</p>