



ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Almond Housing Association Limited (AHA Ltd.) recognises that Estate Management is a vital part of our housing management role and a particularly important service for all our tenants and factored owners.

1.2 We define Estate Management as:

"Property management and services which aim to give tenants and residents quiet enjoyment of their homes in a safe and secure environment they can take pride in."

1.3 AHA Ltd. recognises that Estate Management is not solely about looking after buildings and the physical environment. It is also about:

- how we implement our Allocations policy and our other policies and procedures relating to tenancy matters;
- ensuring that we enforce tenancy conditions;
- monitoring empty properties, completing voids repairs and re-allocating properties as quickly as possible;
- providing advice and support to tenants and residents, either directly or through other agencies, on services that can enhance local communities such as initiatives to reduce crime;
- how we apply our Equality & Diversity policy to estate management issues;
- working with owner-occupiers and other owners, such as West Lothian Council, to ensure that buildings or ground near our properties under their ownership are maintained to a satisfactory standard.

1.4 This policy is supported by several procedures and related policies (see Appendix 1).

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Board of Management

- To ensure that there is in place an Estate Management policy which complies with current regulations, guidance and good practice.

2.2 Management

- Heads of Housing and Asset Management: To manage the implementation of the policy and procedures on a day-to-day basis, advising the Board, other Heads of Section and all employees as required on specific matters.

2.3 Employees

- To ensure they have read and understood the policy and procedures, and to implement them as required in the course of their work.

3.0 PROPERTY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Housing stock

3.1 To maintain our properties to a high standard AHA Ltd. will:

- seek to ensure that we meet our targets for all emergency, urgent and routine repairs, and that repairs are carried out to a high standard;
- carry out regular surveys on property condition;
- ensure that the annual planned and cyclical maintenance programmes are achieved;
- as part of the routine visits by Housing and Asset Management staff, note any repair work required and ensure that this is followed up;
- where applications for tenant alterations or improvements are approved, require that the works are carried out to a high standard and in full compliance with current building and planning requirements;
- where applications for special aids or adaptations are approved, ensure that the works are carried out to a high standard;
- issue satisfaction survey forms for all reactive repairs and planned maintenance projects, and ensure that any matters raised that require attention are followed up and actioned as required.

Common areas

3.2 To maintain high standards in common areas, such as stairs, entrances, bin stores, refuse storage areas, drying areas etc. AHA Ltd. will:

- carry out regular inspections and follow up any relevant matters;
- in specified areas, provide contract stair cleaning and bin store cleaning services under a service charge, and follow up opportunities for expanding such services in other areas as required;
- act promptly on any reports from the cleaning contractor regarding items requiring action;
- where contract services are not provided, seek to ensure that local residents agree to and maintain the required cleaning etc. rotas, but where agreement cannot be reached arrange for the work to be carried out and the costs recovered;
- where problem areas are identified, seek to reach agreement on solutions with the residents involved;
- ensure that where action is to be taken, that we communicate clearly with all residents what we plan to do and why.

Individual gardens

- 3.3 To ensure that high standards are maintained in individual garden areas AHA Ltd. will:
- carry out regular inspections, especially during the main growing season;
 - where tenants fail to maintain their gardens to an acceptable level, ensure they are reminded of their responsibilities and their tenancy conditions are enforced;
 - ensure that the Garden Scheme policy is implemented for all tenants who qualify.

Communal gardens and landscape maintenance

- 3.4 To ensure high standards in communal garden areas AHA Ltd. will ensure that, where residents are responsible for maintenance, they fulfil their responsibilities as in para. 3.3 above. Where AHA Ltd. landscape contractors maintain the garden areas we will monitor their work to ensure the required standards are achieved.
- 3.5 AHA Ltd. will appoint appropriately qualified contractors to maintain general landscape areas and will monitor performance to ensure that they achieve the required standards.

General environment

- 3.6 When visiting properties AHA staff will monitor the appearance of each area and, where necessary, ensure that we take any action required where this is our responsibility, or that we liaise with other authorities or agencies to ensure that appropriate action is taken, to maintain an acceptable level of environmental amenity.
- 3.7 Such action will cover matters such as general litter, street cleaning, lighting, abandoned vehicles, graffiti, parking of caravans or other large vehicles, conditions of footpaths, or problems caused by particular species of insects, birds or animals, etc.

Pets

- 3.8 Where a pet is causing a nuisance, e.g. excessive noise, or fouling public areas etc. the tenant will be reminded of their responsibilities under the Tenancy Agreement.
- 3.9 Where the pet is the subject of a formal complaint and/or where damage to people or property is caused by a pet AHA Ltd. will enforce the tenancy conditions and where required we will inform other relevant agencies.

Vermin and pest control

- 3.10 AHA Ltd. will encourage tenants to report incidents of vermin and/or pest infestation to relevant agencies and, where necessary, take action to deal with any property or environmental issues that are our responsibility.

4.0 TENANCY MATTERS

Tenant visits & general advice

- 4.1 Housing Officers will carry out settling-in visits within 6 to 8 weeks of signing up a new tenant, and a further visit approx. 1 year later. If additional advice or support is required one or more follow up visits may be arranged.
- 4.2 Advice and assistance in respect of all tenancy matters will be available during office hours. Alternatively, a home visit by the relevant Housing Officer can be arranged.

Support for tenants

- 4.3 AHA Ltd. will liaise with any agencies currently providing support to tenants, or who can provide specialist support when required, with the aim of ensuring that such tenancies are sustainable and meeting the needs identified.

Contact with tenants and residents

- 4.4 As part of the arrangements for fostering good tenant/landlord relationships AHA Ltd. will encourage tenants and residents to take an active interest in and participate in maintaining an acceptable local environment.
- 4.5 AHA Ltd. will seek to achieve this through:
- regular communication through newsletters, visits, information leaflets and our website;
 - meetings with any tenant or resident groups that may be set up;
 - examining specific issues through focus groups;
 - the involvement of tenants and residents at a local level to improve their community through specific events, competitions, participation in estate 'walkabouts' etc.

Estate management visits

- 4.6 Housing Officers will carry out regular estate visits to monitor standards, in particular looking out for:
- vandalism or graffiti;
 - poorly maintained environments, e.g. gardens, open spaces, stairs, bin stores, drying greens etc.;
 - parking problems or abandoned vehicles;
 - pet nuisance.
- 4.7 The results of each visit will be recorded and follow-up action taken as required.

Anti-social behaviour and harassment

- 4.8 AHA Ltd. will respond promptly to and deal sensitively with reports of anti-social behaviour or harassment, in accordance with our policies covering these issues. The assistance of specialist staff, e.g. experienced mediators, will be obtained when required.

Owner-occupiers

- 4.9 AHA Ltd. will seek the support and involvement of owner occupiers in our efforts to achieve our estate management objectives. This will mainly involve 'Right to Buy' owners in blocks of flats, but may also involve other owners.
- 4.10 AHA Ltd. will ensure that any sale agreements and information for owners clearly state their responsibilities with regard to common maintenance. We will also ensure that, where required by the Factoring policy, we consult with owners over proposed planned maintenance or major repairs projects.

5.0 COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 Complaints about the way AHA Ltd. deals with (or does not deal with) estate management issues will be dealt with in accordance with our Complaints policy.

6.0 REVIEW

- 6.1 The Head of Housing Management will ensure that this policy is reviewed by the Senior Management Team at least every five years.

FIRST APPROVED IN	NOVEMBER 2008
CURRENT VERSION 2.0 APPROVED IN	NOVEMBER 2013
NEXT REVIEW DUE BY	NOVEMBER 2018

APPENDIX 1**ESTATE MANAGEMENT - RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES****Policies**

Aids & Adaptations
Allocations
Anti-Social Behaviour
Complaints
Customer Service & Communication
Equality & Diversity
Factoring
Garden Scheme
Harassment of Minorities
Reactive Repairs, Cyclical & Planned Maintenance
Service Charges
Tenant Alterations & Improvements
Tenant Consultation & Participation
Void Properties

Procedures

Absconds
Aids & Adaptations
Anti-Social Behaviour
Assignment
Change of Tenancy
Complaints
Estate Management
Factoring
Garden Scheme
Lettings
Mutual Exchange
Planned Maintenance, Improvements & Major Repairs
Reactive Repairs
Removal of Trees
Service Charges
Settling In, Annual & Targeted Visits
Sub-letting
Succession
Tenant Alterations & Improvements
Void Properties