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CLYDEBANK HOUSING ASSOCIATION ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

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Why have a Neighbourhood and Estate and Management Policy ?

As landlord we take our role in Estate Management seriously. We recognise that our tenants have the right to live in a clean, safe and tidy environment and that the health and wellbeing of residents can be positively influenced by this.

Clydebank HA owns and manages over 1,100 tenanted and shared ownership properties and also factors over 600 owner occupied properties. Managing our tenancies is our core business. The majority of our services to customers are delivered within the landlord/tenant relationship and we recognise that they should be of a good standard and in line with good practice.

The management of housing is also central to a number of government policy initiatives such as developing sustainability, tackling anti-social behaviour, raising service standards and dealing with equality and diversity issues.

We recognise that we work in wider local communities and our Neighbourhood and Estate and Management policy reflects this approach, not just concerning itself with individual matters of tenancy management, but going beyond this to address broader issues which impact on the quality of life of our residents and tenants and which Clydebank HA can influence to positive effect.

Clydebank HA knows that if we manage our tenancies well it will increase our tenant satisfaction and enable us to minimize the time taken to re-let empty homes, reduce arrears levels, the incidences of neighbour problems and our management costs. If we do not manage our tenancies well then we will struggle to attract new tenants, our customers will be dissatisfied and partners with whom we work will have a poor impression of us.

Neighbourhood management will therefore see Clydebank HA acting in partnership with a variety of local and national government and voluntary agencies, and is concerned with using resources that are already available more effectively to achieve lasting change.

A neighbourhood management approach acknowledges that “one solution” is unlikely to suit all neighbourhoods, so that services need to be flexible enough to meet the needs of local residents and local operating conditions.

We will comply with the most up to date SFHA/Scottish Housing Regulator/COSLA Performance Standards. We will manage the environment around our properties and any common areas effectively, to ensure that the neighbourhood is an attractive, well maintained and safe place to live.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC)

This policy links directly to Indicator 17 of the SSHC

Equal Opportunities

We will not unfairly discriminate against any individual, household or group on the grounds of the ten groups as laid out in the 2010 Equal opportunities Act

Tenancy Obligations

Tenants have several estate management responsibilities and these are defined in their tenancy agreement. At sign up for the tenancy we will highlight these responsibilities to tenants in relation to:

- Common area maintenance (including stair cleaning)
- Common area window cleaning
- Common garden maintenance
- Property specific garden maintenance
- Waste collection days and obligations to take bins out & in
- Caretaking service in the multi storey properties
- Tenant's responsibility re other clauses in missive about anti-social behaviour / respect for others.

During sign up, staff will refer to the following documents:

- Checklist for sign up
- Tenancy Agreement clauses
- Caretaker leaflet (multistorey flats)
- Tenants Handbook

All new tenants will be issued with a tenant's handbook that details tenancy obligations.

Keeping Common Area's Clear

As well as the above, all tenants are directly responsible for ensuring that no items are left or placed in common close areas, e.g. furniture (decorative or otherwise), bicycles, children's toys etc. Items left in common areas represent a significant fire and health & safety risk. This is a directive from the Fire Brigade and any items found must be removed on request. Clydebank Housing Association reserves the right to remove and dispose of items should residents fail to co-operate in voluntary removal. All associated costs will be re-charged to the resident(s) or tenant(s) responsible and warnings issued for breach of tenancy where applicable.

Placement of bulk items for uplift or collection

If tenants or residents have bulk items requiring uplift by the Council or similar, these must be stored in a safe place prior to uplift. Where no external safe place exists tenants or residents are required to keep said items at an alternative safe location until such times as the uplift takes place. Items must not be stored inside the close, against the building, near the common door entry or similar. Clydebank Housing Association reserves the right to remove and dispose of items should residents fail to co-operate. All associated costs will be re-charged to the resident(s) or tenant(s) responsible and warnings issued for breach of tenancy where applicable.

Disputes over common area maintenance/cleaning

Any disputes about common areas will preferably be resolved through management actions without the necessity to take legal proceedings; for example agreeing or imposing, if necessary, a cleaning rota or pursuing mediation.

Clydebank Housing Associations Estate Management Service

The following resources are devoted to providing our estate management service:

Housing Assistants:

These members of staff are responsible for carrying out quarterly and reactive estate management inspections and are the first point of call for customers wishing to report any estate management issues.

Caretakers (Radnor Park only):

These members of staff carry out daily inspections at the Radnor park multistorey flats. Radnor Park residents can report estate management issues directly to their caretaker if they wish.

General Clydebank HA staff:

All our staff who's jobs involve them being out in our estates are trained to look for and recognise estate management issues. To this end any estate management issues noted during unrelated visits/inspections will be actioned.

West Dunbartonshire Council:

We work in close partnership with the Council and they provide a refuse collection service for all tenants (payable through council tax) and a bulk uplift service (charges apply). Tenants should contact the Council directly regarding any issues regarding refuse collection or uplifts.

Specialist contractors:

The Association uses specialist contractors to ensure noted estate management issues which are our responsibility are dealt with timeously and resolved to a high standard.

Police Scotland:

Often noted estate management issues can be directly linked to criminal activity, e.g. broken windows, graffiti, illegal dumping etc. Both tenants and the Association have access to the Police Scotland service and residents should report any criminal related issues to the Police as well as the Association.

Specialist projects:

Through our involvement in projects such as action for children we have the ability to undertake projects on behalf of our tenants. We have used these to improve common close and garden areas which benefits the communities involved.

Anti-Social Behaviour:

We will also react within the timescales outlined in our anti-social behaviour policy to complaints regarding tenants breaching their tenancy conditions in relation to common area obligations.

Services in detail

Pro Active Inspections

We will regularly inspect common areas and take appropriate action when areas are not in a satisfactory condition. We commit to inspecting every common or garden area at least once every 3 months. Supplemental visits take place on a daily basis when we are in an

area for another matter such as investigating a neighbour complaint or assessing a repair. Our staff multitask these visits to combine estate management. We commit to training all our staff in working this way.

Reactive Inspections

If we receive a report of an estate management issue, we will endeavour to visit, inspect and action this no later than five working days from the date it is reported to us.

Breach of tenancy conditions (tenants)

Where an estate management inspection or similar identifies a breach of tenancy agreement and the tenant fails to address the matter as required, action will be taken against them for breaching their tenancy agreement. Action can be escalated as far as court action and eviction stage if necessary, however this will only be last resort. All tenants will be afforded ample opportunities to resolve matters and avoid this action. A report to any appropriate agency such as the Police, Fire Brigade or Environmental Health will also be made and charges pressed where necessary.

Re-charge of costs

In situations where tenants or residents are identified and fail to address the situation, Clydebank Housing Association may re-charge those responsible for the costs of rectifying the situation, including contractor's fees, legal fees or fees required to any other agencies. These will be treated as rechargeables and actioned in accordance with our rechargeable repairs policy.

Common area maintenance

We will maintain our common backcourt areas and our common open spaces in relation to grass cutting, shrub pruning, gritting and repairs. A service charge will be included in the rent that will cover the cost of common grounds maintenance. Owners will be invoiced for their share of the costs.

Planned and cyclical maintenance play a substantial part in keeping properties in good condition. The plan includes the repair and renewal of both common and landscape elements such as roof work, door entry equipment, gutters, gates and fencing, clothes poles, bin stores, planted areas, trees etc.

Programmed Property Inspections

Programmed property inspections take place on a number of levels. Day to day inspections involving routine repairs gather information and condition notes which are input into longer term maintenance plans.

Condition surveys are carried out on a regular basis either for the purposes of updating our Life Cycle Costing exercises every 3-5 years or as more specific inspections involving single elements such as our annual inspection of roof condition etc which likewise inform future maintenance plans.

Estate management inspections are carried out by Caretaking staff on a daily basis at our multistorey flats at Radnor Park. Other estate management inspections are carried out by maintenance and housing management staff on a quarterly basis as well as a reactive

basis as outlined on page 5. This dual approach ensures management and response for estate management issues.

Car Parking

No car parking spaces within our management have been allocated to individuals unless the tenancy agreement or occupancy agreement states otherwise. Residents and their visitors are expected to park with consideration to others. Disabled parking spaces are marked for use by any disabled person's vehicle.

Abandoned Vehicles

We will take steps to ensure that abandoned vehicles' owners are traced and given an opportunity to remove the vehicle. If the vehicle is not removed we will work with the Council and the Police to have the vehicle removed. We will access the DVLA website to ascertain if a vehicle has appropriate road tax. Staff should refer to HM Proc 33 for the full procedure.

Controlled Entry Doors

We will install controlled entry doors on all flatted properties. It is the responsibility of all tenants to ensure that doors are locked at all times to protect the security of all tenants within the property.

Pets

No dogs are permitted in multi storey flats except for canine helpers. In other properties tenants must apply for permission to keep a dog and may require permission to keep other pets. Where permission has been given to keep a pet, the tenant must agree to supervise and control the pet so that no nuisance is caused to other tenants or owners. If a pet causes nuisance or annoyance and the owner fails to control their pets behaviour we have the right to ask the tenant to rehome the animal concerned in order to avoid further incidents.

Dog Fouling

Dog owners are directly responsible for ensuring that they clean up after their own pets. As a matter of course, no exercising of dogs shall be permitted in common areas belonging to Clydebank Housing Association. Where dog fouling is evident Clydebank Housing Association will treat this as antisocial behaviour and do everything in our power to ascertain who is responsible. Appropriate action will be taken for breach of tenancy and/or the appropriate agencies notified, e.g. the Council's dog warden, litter control or environmental health departments. Those responsible will also be re-charged for any associated clean-up costs as outlined on page 5.

Graffiti Removal

Offensive or racist graffiti is removed as an emergency response repair i.e. within 4 hours of the report. Other graffiti is removed within 10 working days. Clydebank Housing Association will treat this as antisocial behaviour and do everything in our power to ascertain who is responsible. Appropriate action will be taken for breach of tenancy and/or the appropriate agencies notified, e.g. Police Scotland and tenants will be re-charged for any associated removal costs as outlined on page 5.

Vandalism

Repairs due to vandalism are closely monitored and any trends noted to Housing Management staff. Clydebank Housing Association will treat this as antisocial behaviour and do everything in our power to ascertain who is responsible. Appropriate action will be taken for breach of tenancy and/or the appropriate agencies notified, e.g. Police Scotland and tenants will be re-charged for any associated removal costs as outlined on page 5.

Close Cleaning

All new tenants are advised at sign up of their close cleaning responsibilities. Where it becomes evident that one or more tenants are not taking their turn in cleaning the close and common areas, CHA will initially write to all residents in the close. If no improvement is noted or no one is found to be solely responsible CHA can impose a close cleaning rota to enable accurate monitoring and identify those not cleaning the close. CHA reserves the right to clean the close and re-charge tenants in cases where non-compliance is ongoing. Action for breach of tenancy will also be taken in these rare cases.

Void Property Management

Where it is suspected that a property has been abandoned, Housing Management staff will visit within 2 working days and serve notices if appropriate. The abandonment will be reported to the Maintenance Section who will take the decision on whether to board the property for security reasons.

At present security is seldom needed however if the Housing Assistant or Officer know of particular circumstances relating to the property they should e-mail the Maintenance staff member dealing with voids to highlight concerns.

The Housing Manager will regularly consider whether we have low demand properties that need an alternative letting strategy put in place. The Maintenance department will be emailed as soon as an abandonment is served.

Void properties are always let as soon as possible to minimise the risk of vandalism.

Complaints about Other Service Providers

When a complaint is received at the Association relating to services provided by another agency, the tenant should be encouraged to take the complaint up with the relevant authorities. Advice can be offered with regard to the most effective channels.

Where the complaint affects a number of tenants or recurs despite previous complaints, the Association will take up the complaint by writing to the relevant authority, specifying the complaint and requesting comments. Copies of correspondence may be sent to local councillors or M.S.P.s. If appropriate, an inter agency meeting may be convened to attempt to resolve problems. The matter will be taken to the West Dunbartonshire Forum if other landlords are experiencing similar problems and it is perceived that a co-ordinated approach would be effective.

Links to other agencies

We work with West Dunbartonshire Council in relation to the following:

Noise monitoring

Anti-social behaviour / neighbour nuisance

Commercial premises
Waste disposal
Abandoned cars

We also work with the Police and several other groups e.g. Y Sort it, Social Work.

We have an anti social policy and procedures to deal effectively with anti social behaviour and neighbour nuisance. Further information is in HMPOL 16.

For Office Use Only – Actions

Customer Consultation Required/Arranged	Yes
Intranet Update	Yes
F Drive Update	Yes
Website Update	Yes
Leaflet change required?	No
Newsletter Promotion?	Yes
Other information updated, e.g. posters, automatic email responses, post cards, answering machine messages, etc.	No