



Estate Management Policy

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1. Introduction

Dumfries & Galloway Housing Partnership (DGHP) operates within a legislative framework to meet both legal and regulatory requirements. We will ensure that estate management issues are dealt with in accordance with current legislation, performance standards and other guidance. The contractual terms are contained within the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement.

We recognise that estate management is not solely about looking after buildings and the physical environment. It is also providing or arranging necessary advice and support to tenants and residents and it involves working with other agencies on services which enhance the local community particularly on mixed tenure developments.

This policy is supported by detailed procedures and a range of related policies.

2. Definition of Estate Management

We define estate management in accordance with the performance standard set by the Scottish Housing Regulator i.e. AS1.10 which states that:

‘We 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’.

In addition to this the Scottish Social Housing Charter has introduced an outcome that states:

‘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’.

In other words we will be in control as far as possible, of the condition of our stock and the environment around it. Proactive estate management is crucial in ensuring clean, attractive and safe estates, and can have a marked impact on the quality of life of tenants and residents.

3. Policy Aim

We will make every effort to ensure our tenants comply with their tenancy conditions and can enjoy living in their homes and communities.

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4. DGHP Objectives

To provide a safe and secure environment in which each resident can enjoy their home and surroundings in peace and without undue disturbance from others.

To build effective relationships with tenants, residents and other interested agencies both internal and external.

Try to ensure tenants are able to live in a decent, secure, clean and tidy environment.

To ensure comprehensive procedures are in place to enable DGHP to provide an efficient Estate Management service to tenants and residents.

To assist tenants to sustain their tenancies, by providing information on initiatives in relation to tenancy sustainment and financial inclusion throughout a tenancy.

5. Legal Framework

In formulating and implementing this policy we will ensure we comply with our statutory obligations detailed within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement is the formal document that stipulates DGHP and tenants responsibilities and obligations in relation to the upkeep of their property and surrounding area.

6. Reporting Estate Management Issues

Estate Management issues can be reported to any member of DGHP staff, DGHP's Customer Service Centre on 0800 011 3447, to a Customer Advisor at one of the local offices or via our web site at www.dghp.org.uk.

All issues will be recorded and where possible we will deal with them at the first point of contact by offering advice and assistance. If it is not possible to resolve the issue at this point, the details will be passed to a designated Neighbourhood Manager to deal with it. The issue will be responded to within 5 working days.

Community participation is crucial in preventing and tackling estate management issues. The prevention of estate management problems is one of the most effective ways of ensuring residents can enjoy living in a well cared for environment. Preventative measures include identifying areas of concern early to minimise problems. We will take every opportunity to advise tenants that we would welcome

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comments and suggestions about estate management and service delivery issues. This will be done through publicity material produced for tenants e.g. newsletters.

7. Estate Management Service

We will ensure all relevant staff are fully trained and up to date with current legislation and best practice.

We will thoroughly investigate Estate Management issues in accordance with our procedures. The following areas are covered by this policy:

- **Abandoned property/illegal occupant(s)** – where staff suspect a property has been abandoned or is now being occupied by a person(s) who is not the tenant, action will be taken in accordance with the Housing Scotland Act (2001).
- **Common areas and bin stores** – to maintain good standards in common areas, staff will carry out inspections in the course of their regular duties of the fabric and cleanliness, and deal with any problems identified in accordance with procedures.
- **Common stair cleaning** – the tenancy agreement states that all occupiers must take their turn in keeping them clean and tidy. During normal visits within the area, staff will look for signs of deterioration. Staff will follow procedures to action areas of concern. We may introduce a stair cleaning service for a service charge if we believe that it is necessary.
- **Conduct a business** – permission is required from us before a tenant may conduct a business from the property. Each case will be considered on an individual basis. If permission is withheld the tenant will be informed in writing giving the reasons for the decision.
- **Estate Inspections** – Regular estate inspections will take place during normal visits within the area, and staff will report any areas of concern such as vandalism, flytipping etc. The frequency of inspections will reflect individual estates profiles and hot spots.
- **Factoring Services/Leaseholders** – we will seek continued involvement of owners/leaseholders who have bought their homes under right to buy legislation.
- **Fly tipping/Bulk rubbish** – we will remove any fly tipping/bulk rubbish on land that is our responsibility, and report to other landowners, where they are known, as appropriate.
- **Garages/garage sites** – tenants are responsible for ensuring that they fully comply with the tenancy agreement/missive of let. Staff will inspect the garages/garage site in the course of their normal duties and report any repairs or grounds maintenance issues to the tenant or contractor as appropriate.

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- **Garden maintenance** – tenants must maintain the garden/shared garden to prevent it becoming overgrown or untidy. During normal visits within the area staff will identify tenants who fail to do this, will investigate the reason for the neglect and enforce tenancy conditions if appropriate.
- **Internal condition of property** – In cases where the tenant lives in unacceptable conditions, we will investigate the reasons for this and if they will not accept help we will enforce tenancy conditions if necessary.
- **Landscape maintenance** – where communal areas and open spaces are maintained by a contractor, the NM will report any failure of standards of maintenance to the Contracts Manager.
- **Neighbour disputes** – we will fully investigate neighbour disputes and enforce tenancy conditions where appropriate to solve them. We will follow procedures and depending on the nature of the complaint we may seek assistance from other agencies such as Social Services/Housing Support Services.
- **Parking issues** – the tenancy agreement stipulates that no vehicle, caravan or trailer may be parked on our land unless it is set aside for parking, we have given the tenant written permission or it is a public road. Any reports of unauthorised parking or parking nuisance will be investigated by staff in accordance with procedures.
- **Pets** – under the terms of the tenancy agreement tenants must seek permission to keep any domestic pet. Permission will not be unreasonably withheld. Any reports of pet nuisance will be investigated by staff following the pet's procedure, and other agencies may be notified if appropriate.
- **Settling in visits** – new tenants will be visited within 4 weeks of their tenancy starting. Advice and assistance will be provided in respect of all tenancy matters, and follow up visits arranged as deemed necessary following the initial visit.
- **Unwanted/abandoned cars** – where staff are notified of or find unwanted/abandoned cars, removal will be arranged through Dumfries & Galloway Council's Environmental Services Department.
- **Vandalism/Graffiti** – will be repaired/ removed in accordance with agreed repair timescales. Where perpetrators are identified we will work with partners to take action and reduce problems.
- **Vermin and Pest Control** – We will ensure that tenants are given advice on how to report this to Dumfries & Galloway Council.

8. Equality and Diversity

We aim to treat all customers with respect and professionalism and we will ensure that our service is fair and accessible to all. We publish information that is easy to

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read and understand in a range of appropriate languages and formats. Where tenants have any particular needs or requirements we will do all we can to ensure our services are tailored to their needs.

9. Complaints Process

Our aim is to get it right first time, however DGHP has published its own Complaints Procedure.

Concerns can be raised informally with the member of staff dealing with the case.

If the customer is still dissatisfied with the level of service they have received, then a complaint can be made through DGHP's complaints procedure. Information about how to make a complaint is available from DGHP offices, on our web-site or through the Customer Service Centre.

10. Performance Monitoring and Reporting

We operate within a performance monitoring framework:

We will produce quarterly monitoring reports for the Customer Service Committee.

We will ask tenants for feedback through regular satisfaction surveys and other methods. We will analyse the information gathered to see if there are any ways of improving our service delivery.

We will consider and where possible implement any requirements and recommendations made by internal auditors or inspectors.

We will publish information regularly through our annual report, tenant's newsletter and web pages.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure that any changes in government legislation and best practice are taken into account. When reviewing this policy we will consult tenants, staff and stakeholders.

More regular reviews will be considered where, for example there is a need to respond to new legislation.

Glossary of Terms used

Customer Service Committee

Oversees all the services delivered to our tenants

Financial Inclusion

Ensuring people are able to access basic financial services such as bank accounts

Mixed Tenure Developments

A group of properties where some properties are rented and some are owned

Multi-Agency Approach

Several different organisations working together to resolve an issue

Notice of Proceedings

Is a legal document which starts the legal process which could end in eviction

Performance Monitoring Framework

Is a quarterly performance monitoring tool produced for DGHP board, management and committees. It collates a selection of key performance information aligned to our business objectives and includes previous and current outcomes

Short Secure Scottish Tenancy (SSST)

Is a short term contract between landlord and tenant which sets out what is expected of each party and what rights each has

Stakeholder

Any person or organisation using a landlord's service, affected by a landlord's actions or having an interest in the landlord's activities – an interested party

Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (SST)

A signed contract between landlord and tenant which sets out what is expected of each party and what rights each has

Tenancy Sustainment

Having policies and procedures in place to help tenants to manage their tenancy successfully and avoid tenancy failure

Legislation & Associated Documents

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

There are a number of documents that closely link to this policy, examples are:

- Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement
- Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement
- Allocations Policy
- Antisocial Behaviour Policy
- Void Property Policy
- Scottish Social Housing Charter

Useful Telephone Numbers

DGHP	0800 011 3447
Police	0845 600 5701
Citizens Advice Dumfries Annan Castle Douglas Stranraer	01387 252456 01461 201012 01556 502190 01776 706355
Community Wardens Dumfries Annan Stranraer	0800 169 6525 0800 023 2642 0800 169 3834
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Dumfries & Galloway Council Environmental Enforcement Officers	0303 333 3000