



REIDVALE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Estate Service Policy

Policy Approved	Nov 20
Due for Review	2023
Author	

POLICY SUMMARY

Purpose:	To set out Reidvale Housing Association's approach to deliver Estate Services.
Guidance:	Statutory Guidance The Scottish Social Housing Charter Requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator
Regulatory Compliance	<p>Standard 1: The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.</p> <p>Standard 2: The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.</p> <p>Standard 3: The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay.</p> <p>Standard 4: The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.</p>
Financial Impact	Medium
Risk Assessment	Low
Date Reviewed:	November 2020
Date approved by Management Committee:	25 November 2020

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.	POLICY BACKGROUND	2
3.	POLICY AIMS.....	2
4.	ESTATE SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION	4
5.	MANAGING MIXED TENURE COMMUNITY.....	5
6.	ESTATE SERVICES	5
7.	PERFORMANCE MONITORING	9
8.	EQUALITY & DIVERSITY	9
9.	COMPLAINTS.....	9
10.	GDPR	9
11.	POLICY REVISION.....	10

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy outlines the way in which Reidvale Housing Association will deliver Estate Services and how we will work in partnership with residents and other agencies to achieve sustainable communities. We recognise that good quality housing needs to be coupled with a decent quality neighbourhood, to make our areas desirable and sustainable in the long term.
- 1.2 Reidvale Housing Association clearly understands that the efficient and effective management of this policy is crucial to maintaining the good appearance of the properties that we own and determines how our properties are valued and perceived both by our tenants, our residents and by the wider neighbouring communities.
- 1.3 By taking prompt action, the Association will minimise occasions where the appearance of our properties and the surrounding environment deteriorates. Such deterioration can have a detrimental effect on the neighbourhood and subsequently the ability to re-let houses, which in turn can affect the sustainability of the Association and the wider community.
- 1.4 Estate Services can be defined as the term which refers to services which aim to allow residents to have a quiet enjoyment of their homes and a decent, safe and secure environment to live in. It can therefore cover a wide range of activities which focus both upon the people living in an area and on the physical environment of the areas itself.
- 1.5 The overall aim of this policy and the associated procedures is to provide guidelines that set out clear lines of responsibility, is transparent, understandable and easily accessible to staff, tenants and members of the public on all issues related to the management of the Association's properties and estates.
- 1.6 We recognise that a decent quality neighbourhood is not solely dependent on the quality of our Estate Services, and relies on a broad range of organisations to work together, including: the local community; other service providers such as Glasgow City Council; Glasgow Community Relations Services and Police Scotland.

2. POLICY BACKGROUND

2.1 The Scottish Social Housing Charter aims most relevant to this policy is:

- Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonably possible that;
- tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

2.2 The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement details the responsibilities of both Reidvale as the landlord and of the tenant in relation to Estate Services.

Under Section 2 – Use of the House and Common Parts, Reidvale will:

- a) Ensure that it provides (either directly or indirectly) the Estate Services for which it is responsible as a landlord.
- b) Ensure that all tenants accept their Estate Services responsibilities as identified in the Tenancy Agreement.
- c) Ensure that appropriate action is taken against any tenant failing to accept their responsibilities.

3. POLICY AIMS

The following are the main aims identified as necessary to ensure the successful and efficient management of this policy:

- To enable our residents to have quiet enjoyment of their home with decent, safe and secure surroundings.
- To have a transparent and easily accessible Policy which meets good practice and encourages effective coordination between all those responsible for estate delivery in our neighbourhoods.
- Be proactive in our approach for dealing with Estate Services issues in order to have a positive effect on customer satisfaction and minimise any safety issues by taking strong, affirmative action.
- To minimise the turnover of stock and reduce any Estate Services issues.

- To ensure effective communication between the Association and our residents by highlighting Estate Services issues and procedures in our publications including newsletters, posters, open days and social media platforms.
- To ensure that relevant staff make regular inspections and maintain a high visible presence in our area.
- Provide a range of genuine opportunities for resident involvement to motivate our residents in taking control over any issues that affect their general environment.
- To liaise with appropriate agencies such as Glasgow City Council, Police Scotland, GCC Health and Social Care Partnership The Scottish Fire Service and local community groups with the aim of achieving a good, safe physical environment in all of the Association's geographical areas.
- To ensure that communal cleaning standards and responsibilities are made clear and maintained by residents and enforced by the Association.
- To ensure that Estate Services are planned, adequately resourced and effectively budgeted for to protect our investment in our stock and environment to the highest possible standard whilst also representing Value for Money.
- To ensure that all repairs to door entry systems, lighting, removal of graffiti etc. are carried out quickly and efficiently.
- Build and design estates that contribute to the overall aims and objective of Reidvale Housing Association.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate all aspects of the Estate Services including customer satisfaction with our services and the physical environment.
- To provide, manage and maintain quality affordable housing.
- To improve service delivery to residents' satisfaction and expectations.
- To build and maintain properties to residents' satisfaction and expectations.
- To enhance and maintain the quality of environment, security and health of our residents.
- To ensure sustainability in provision, management and maintenance of our housing stock.

- To promote inclusion and equality for our residents and the community.

4. ESTATE SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 The Association will ensure that the provision of the Estate Services service is appropriate and responsive to local needs. When signing up for their new home, new tenants will be provided with information, advice and assistance about Estate Services matters including:

- A copy of the Tenant's Handbook.
- An explanation of the terms of their Scottish Secure tenancy (SST) or Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST), and in particular matters relating to Estate Services issues.
- All matters relating to anti-social behaviour and harassment, racial harassment, including reports of graffiti and deliberate damage and issues concerning substance misuse are referred to in our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

4.2 Reidvale's Estate Services will include:

- A responsive approach to complaints from residents about the physical environment (complaints about neighbours are covered in our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy).
- The management and maintenance of communal areas and open spaces.
- Removing the risk of items causing an obstruction to access or exit routes in the event of an emergency.
- Controlling/restricting the use of combustible materials to remove any associate risk in our communal areas.
- The day-to-day management and maintenance of the external fabric of the properties.
- The monitoring of services provided by other contractors.
- The monitoring of tenants' obligations in respect of Estate Services and proactive early action to deal with any issues arising.

- Arranging estate walkabouts between Association staff and other service providers such as Council Departments; Glasgow Community Relations Services and Police Scotland on an agreed cycle.
- Provide clear guidance on the routes available to staff to ensure policy aims and objectives are effectively carried out.

5. MANAGING MIXED TENURE COMMUNITY

5.1 We provide a factoring service to owners who live in the community where the Association manages rented property.

Complementing these services are the associated Estate Services services which benefit the whole neighbourhood and also help to maintain property values within the community. In providing such services we will ensure that:

- There is clear information provided for owners in respect of RHA and individual owners' responsibilities in relation to areas of common ownership.
- We put in place quality contracted common maintenance services which offer value for money.
- There is effective collection of common charges for common maintenance services to ensure that owner occupiers contribute their fair share towards the costs of providing services as outlined in our Factoring Policy and Procedures.

6. ESTATE SERVICES

6.1 Garden Maintenance

It is a condition of the Scottish Secure Tenancy agreement that all tenants who have access to a garden within the boundaries of the property allocated to them, must keep their garden tidy and free from rubbish. All new tenants who are allocated a property where there is either a private or shared garden area, will have their responsibilities in maintaining a garden to a reasonable standard explained to them in full. Gardens will be subject to regular inspections.

In situations where a resident fails to maintain their garden/hedges, whether shared or private, the Association is entitled to decide exactly what work needs to be done to bring the garden/hedges up to standard. This will be done in consultation with the resident concerned and the decision taken will be binding. If the identified work is not completed the Association may do the work itself and recharge the resident for

the work. This may include the complete removal of overgrown hedges to the removal of unsafe items left within their garden areas. All costs incurred may be recharged where a resident consistently fails to undertake their responsibilities.

Advice and practical assistance will be offered to residents who fail to maintain their gardens because of mobility problems or ill-health.

6.2 Void Property Gardens

During the growing season normally, March to October, any void properties which have an individual garden will be undertaken in conjunction with the void letting standard.

6.3 Common Area Landscaping

The Association will maintain common areas to a clean and tidy standard. This will be managed by regular inspections of the common ground. The Association will ensure that paths and pedestrian walkways in our ownership are well maintained. Where incidents of graffiti, faulty/damaged communal lighting or fencing are reported, the Association will remove such graffiti or repair reported faults/damage within the 7 working days. Offensive graffiti will be treated as an emergency and removed immediately.

6.4 Communal Cleaning/Areas

The Association recognises that it is necessary to ensure that the flatted properties we own are kept clean and tidy so that the condition of the properties and surrounding areas do not deteriorate, and remain in a condition suitable for reletting.

6.4.1 In line with their tenancy agreement, or, if an owner, with their title deeds, RHA will provide a weekly close cleaning service and a monthly close window cleaning service which will be charged to tenants through their service charge and to owners through their factoring agreement.

6.4.2 The Association will monitor the cleanliness of all flatted communal areas on a regular basis.

6.4.3 The Association appreciate that people want to make and keep their surroundings nice. However the health and safety of our residents is paramount and the Association want to minimise all fire safety hazards that create risks. As such, the Association have adopted a zero tolerance approach in the keeping of any items within a close or communal area which create risks, which include, but are not restricted to:

- Pushchairs / Buggies / children's car seats/footwear
- Shopping Trolleys
- Refuse bags
- Children's toys and play furniture
- Bicycles
- Washing Machines / tumble dryers and other white goods waiting to be disposed of
- Wooden furniture / upholstered seating.
- Plastic decorations/rugs/window coverings/cleaning materials/mops
- Seasonal items
- Plants, pots, ladders,
- No personal belongings in communal cupboards
- No keeping of mobility scooters within close/common areas.

In some of the above cases, the Association staff will consider/identify where possible alternative methods of storage.

The Association staff will arrange removal of any items posing a danger immediately and may consider recharging full costs back to residents concerned.

Guidelines on other common facilities such as laundries and drying areas are given to those tenants where appropriate.

6.5 **Door Entry Systems**

Most of the Association's flatted properties have a shared entrance door. In such properties the entrance door may be fitted with a door entry system to prevent unauthorised access to the building. These systems are designed with the safety and security of tenants in mind and are also a useful deterrent against any damage that may occur within the communal areas of building. Where damage or faults occur, the Association will repair door entry systems within 7 working days. Any deliberate damage, deliberate disabling of the door entry system causing nuisance or disturbance, or vandalism caused to door entry systems will be re-charged (where relevant) to the tenant concerned.

6.6 Refuse Disposal/Fly Tipping

The Association recognises the importance of the removal of refuse in the correct manner to prevent unsanitary conditions arising. Residents are expected to put all household refuse for timetabled Council collection in the place allocated, and that such refuse be properly placed in the bins provided. Glasgow City Council is responsible for, and has its own policy for the uplift of large and heavy items for disposal. In circumstances where fly tipping occurs on land owned by the Association, the identified objects will be reported to Glasgow City Council, or an approved Contractor for removal. Where evidence is gathered that establishes the ownership of the waste, costs for removal will be recharged / invoiced.

6.7 Dog Fouling

People who fail to clean up after their dog on public land act could receive a fixed fine under the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003. The Association will inform our tenants and residents of the health and safety implications of dog fouling. Tenants who allow their pets to foul the garden ground within the boundaries of their property they live in, and who consistently fail to clean up the mess, may have their permission to keep a pet withdrawn. The Association may also consider eviction proceedings for persistent offenders and deem that tenants allowing dogs to foul in public areas is a serious breach of tenancy. Residents who allow their pets to foul areas of public ground, parks, pathways etc. will also be reported to the section dealing with health and environmental issues within Glasgow City Council and/or the local Dog Warden. In addition to these measures, authorised staff of Glasgow City Council, and Police Officers are able to issue on-the-spot fines against people who do not clean up after their dogs. A resident's permission to keep a pet may be withdrawn in circumstances where the pet is known to generally cause a nuisance or disturbance to other resident's or members of the public.

6.8 Drying Areas/Balconies

Drying facilities are provided where possible. However the Association does not encourage the use of balconies as drying areas, if a tenant uses the balcony as a drying area action may be taken by the Association against the tenant.

7. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 7.1 It is necessary to collect and analyse good quality information about Estate Services. In conjunction with service users we will set targets and monitor trends.
- 7.2 We will report as required to the Committee, tenants' and residents' associations/groups and relevant contractors. We will also investigate the reasons for failure to meet standards or targets, as indicated by the performance review process and take action where required.
- 7.3 We will evaluate the costs of providing the Estate Services to ensure the service provides value for money.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Reidvale Housing Association is an equal opportunities organisation. We are committed to providing an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination. No person or group of persons applying for housing and housing services will be treated less favourably than any other persons or groups of persons because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

9. COMPLAINTS

Although we are committed to providing high levels of service, we accept that there may be occasions where a service user may not be satisfied with the service received from the Association. We value all complaints and use this information to help us improve our service. Any service user, complying with the procedure, but remaining dissatisfied with any aspect of the service they have received have the right to submit a complaint to the Association in accordance with the Complaints Handling Procedure.

10. GDPR

Reidvale Housing Association will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current General Data Protection Regulation and our Privacy Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in our Fair Processing Notice.

11. POLICY REVISION

The Association undertakes to carry out a comprehensive review of all aspects of this policy at least every three years. The review will take account of legislative changes, new policy guidance, best practice advice and the views of service users.