



## **ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY 2025**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION**

- 1.1 Estate Management is a general term used to include Tenancy Management and Environmental Management.
- 1.2 Tenancy Management and Environmental Management are linked to, but separate from, the management of Anti-Social behaviour. The Association's Policy on Anti-Social Behaviour sets out how we deal with Anti-Social Behaviour.
- 1.3 Tenancy Management aims to support a tenant to uphold the terms of their Tenancy Agreement. Where appropriate and necessary it will involve taking action to enforce compliance with the terms of that Agreement.
- 1.4 Environmental Management aims to create a well-maintained neighbourhood in which tenants and other customers feel is a safe place to live.
- 1.5 The word Estate is used as an agreed definition and is described in the Scottish Social Housing Charter Technical Guidance, indicator 13 as "the area that the landlord has defined as having some responsibility for". Estate Management therefore covers a diverse range of services including:
  - Inspecting and the maintenance of communal areas such as hard and soft landscaped areas, parking areas (within our ownership) roads and footpaths (within our ownership) common stairs, backcourts, and landings;
  - Ensuring that tenants comply with tenancy conditions related to the maintenance of their garden and disposal of refuse;
  - Providing advice and assistance to tenants and residents on services which enhance the local community;
  - Supporting initiatives to reduce crime including vandalism and Graffiti;
  - Environmental improvements;
  - Enforcing certain tenancy conditions;
  - Co-operation with other agencies delivering services in the community.
- 1.6 The following aspects of Tenancy Management are covered under other policies and Procedures such as;
  - Anti-Social Behaviour
  - Void Management
  - Abandoned Properties
  - Domestic Pets
  - Tenancy Changes (Succession, Mutual Exchanges, Assignment etc.)
  - Tenant External Viewing Video Equipment Installation Procedure

## **2.0 AIMS AND PRINCIPLES**

- 2.1 It is the aim of Ochil View Housing Association to provide a comprehensive estate management service, which is effective in ensuring that areas in which the Association operates are attractive, well-maintained and a safe place to live. This Policy outlines what the Association's position is and how we deal with certain estate or tenancy management related issues.
- 2.2 The Policy covers the physical upkeep and use of common areas, management and resolution of matters which create a nuisance arising from a breach of a condition of tenancy.
- 2.3 It is recognised that Estate Management is an important part of our service for all residents, and as such, the aims of this policy are to ensure that:
- The housing stock and communal areas are managed and maintained to a high standard which increases the stability of the community.
  - Residents are satisfied with the service provided and with the estate in General.
  - Tenancy Information and Advice is provided in a routine yet consistent manner.
  - We meet our legal duties, obligations and responsibilities whilst ensuring that tenants also fulfil their tenancy obligations.
  - We co-operate and liaise with other partner agencies and contractors to ensure that services are provided to a high standard and to the satisfaction of both the residents and the Association.
  - Through effective partnership working and use of established protocols, we will make appropriate referrals to partner agencies and organisations where we encounter potentially vulnerable people who may need advice, assistance and support.
  - We are focussed on prevention and early intervention where appropriate;
  - We will take a multi-agency approach to resolving issues that we cannot resolve independently.
  - We will take positive steps to inform, engage with and listen to tenants/residents about continuous improvements to our Estate Management service.
  - We will carry out frequent inspections of our areas of management and review, monitor and intervene as appropriate.

## **3.0 LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

- 3.1 The main foundation to Estate Management lies mainly in the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. The key legislation behind the tenancy agreement is the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- 3.2 The following Social Housing Charter Outcomes are relevant to the Estate Management Policy:

- **Social Housing Charter Outcome 1** relates to the promotion of equalities and requires that social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that every tenant and other customer has their individual needs and rights recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.
- **Social Housing Charter Outcome 2** relates to communication and requires social landlords to manage their businesses so that 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.
- **Social Housing Charter Outcome 3** relates to participation and requires that social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.
- **Social Housing Charter Outcome 6** refers to estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes and requires that 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.
- **Social Housing Charter Outcome 11** relates to Tenancy Sustainment and requires 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.
- **Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcome 13** relates to Value for money

#### **4.0 STRATEGIC AND DEPARTMENTAL OBJECTIVES:**

The Association has set out a number of Strategic and Departmental Objectives. The Strategic Objectives which are relevant to Estate Management are as follows:

##### **Strategic Objective 1: Asset Management**

To invest in its existing housing stock to ensure that the Association provides the highest standard of accommodation possible.

##### **Strategic Objective 2: Customer Service**

To provide a comprehensive and responsive customer service to tenants, sharing and factored owners which supports sustainable tenancies and delivers customer satisfaction.

##### **Strategic Objective 3: Resident Participation**

To actively promote and support resident engagement in the management, maintenance, and development of their homes.

##### **Strategic Objective 6: Human Resources and Health & Safety**

To ensure that the Association recruits and retains sufficiently trained and experienced Committee members and suitably qualified staff and satisfies all health, safety and environmental requirements and legislation.

The Association's Housing Services and Property Services Departmental Management Plans set out several Departmental Objectives to support the implementation of the Corporate Management Plan which are relevant to our Estate Management Service.

## **5.0 INFORMATION TO TENANTS**

- 5.1 It is important that all tenants are clear about their responsibilities and obligations. The details of the Tenancy Agreement and the obligations imposed on tenants will be explained in detail at the time of signing the agreement.
- 5.2 All existing tenants were issued with a revised Tenants Handbook in 2025 and all new tenants are issued with a copy of the Tenants Handbook when they sign their Tenancy Agreement. The Handbook provides an explanation of the key terms of the Tenancy Agreement and the Associations expectations. A copy of the handbook is always available on the Associations website and on a tenants My Home account.
- 5.3 Housing Services Officers will carry out a New Tenant Visit within six weeks of the beginning of a new tenancy. Follow up visits will be programmed as necessary following that initial visit, where it is apparent that the tenant may require support to keep to the conditions of tenancy. We will prioritise New Tenant Visits where tenants are considered to present a high risk of an un-sustained tenancy. Indicators of high risk may include:
- Under 25 years old
  - First Tenancy
  - Receiving support or vulnerable
  - Previously homeless
  - History of rent arrears in former tenancy
  - History of anti-social behaviour in a former tenancy

We will liaise with external support agencies where any tenant requires support to sustain their tenancy, and the support is of a type or extent that cannot be provided by our in-house Tenancy Sustainment Officer.

- 5.4 Housing Management staff will also carry out a Biennial home visit to all tenants which, will highlight tenants who may require support to keep to the conditions of tenancy. This visit will also enable tenants to raise any concerns/issues about their tenancy or neighbourhood.
- 5.5 We will set out high standards in our specifications for the maintenance of common areas. We will provide information to tenants on the specification of our landscape maintenance service, frequency of visits and other information in our newsletters.
- 5.6 The Association will inspect each development on a regular and frequent basis. The Association will review the frequency of inspections at least annually. The primary purpose of visits will be to ensure the landscape maintenance contractor has completed their contractual requirements.

The Association will publish its Estate Inspection Programme and information on the outcomes of estate inspections and the assessed condition of each area at inspection in newsletters, on social media and our website..

We will publicise, through our social media pages and text messages, advice to each tenant and factored owner that a programmed visit is to take place and that they may meet us on site to show any issues of concern.

One Estate Visit each year will be carried out without notice to residents.

- 5.7 We will provide information within communal stairways to tenants who receive stair and/or window cleaning services of the specification of our stair cleaning service and the programme of visits set out by our stair cleaning contractor.
- 5.8 Where English is not someone's first language, we will ensure we will provide written information and advice in clear and easy to understand plain language and where appropriate, we will translate information into other languages or offer access to translation services.

## **6.0 LIAISON WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

- 6.1 The Association will work in partnership with other agencies if necessary to deal with issues of Estate Management, these may include:

- Police Scotland
- Social Work
- NHS
- Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
- Local Authority Environmental Health Department
- STRIVE Multi Agency Group – Safeguarding Through Rapid Intervention
- Voluntary Organisations

The Association will create links with all relevant agencies and agree terms of joint working. Throughout, the Association will be aware of the need for sensitivity and confidentiality in dealing with people's circumstances. Where appropriate, contact with other agencies will be undertaken with the co-operation of the person concerned.

## **7.0 ACTION AND PREVENTION**

### **7.1 Definition of Estate Management**

The areas which, can be considered as Estate Management are numerous and varied, although Ochil View have different Policies and Procedures in place to deal with other specific areas as mentioned in paragraph 1.6. The following areas are covered in this policy and regarded as Estate Management issues:

- Common Areas
- Individual Gardens

- Common Stairways/Close Cleaning
- Vermin and Pest Control in Common Areas
- Abandoned Vehicles & Car Parking
- Fly Tipping/Refuse Disposal/Litter

## 7.2 Common Areas

The Association will use the outcomes of recorded estate inspections, along with other information, to identify priorities for action to improve the condition of estates.

The Association will employ contractors who will be responsible for communal area grass cutting and maintenance. This will include litter collection and maintenance of communal gardens, void properties and open spaces within the Association's area of responsibility.

The issues that are regularly monitored, as part of its programme of Estate Management Inspections include general environmental matters such as litter, street cleaning, refuse dumping, lighting, abandoned cars, caravan parking, condition of footpaths etc.

The Association will include, as part of their annual planned maintenance programme, a sum for investment to address necessary scheme enhancements, where these are agreed as necessary for the benefit of tenants or other service users.

In the course of their general duties all members of our staff will look for and report any signs of deterioration to our properties or common areas.

When we carry out an inspection, we will complete an Estate Inspection Record. Where we identify matters requiring remedial action we will, as appropriate:

- Establish and maintain contact with tenants and residents who may be affected by, or responsible for, the issue;
- Inform affected tenants and residents of action which we propose to take to remedy any problems identified;
- Enforce contractual arrangements to ensure that gardens and common areas are maintained to the standards that the Association requires and that are commensurate with resident satisfaction;
- Monitor on a continuing basis to ensure that required standards are achieved and maintained;
- Arrange for repairs or graffiti removal to be carried out promptly once the need has been identified or reported. Graffiti which is considered to be a "Hate Crime" in that it refers to disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender identity will be removed within 24 hours;
- Put in place arrangements by which residents may inform us of their views on the maintenance of common areas.

It is the responsibility of each tenant to ensure that all common areas are kept clean and tidy. Tenants should comply with arrangements for the use of drying areas. In the case of any dispute the Association will decide the arrangements and rotas for the use of, and the sharing of common areas. Before making this

decision, we will consult with tenants. We will also display any rota on a tenants My Home portal for information.

## 7.2 Individual Gardens

Tenants with their own individual gardens must ensure that these are kept tidy and not used for storage of bulk items or dog fouling.

Tenants will be informed where the condition of their garden is unsatisfactory. They will be reminded that it is a condition of their tenancy that gardens should be maintained to a satisfactory standard. Alternatively, practical advice and assistance will be arranged where appropriate, including referral to garden assistance schemes run by external agencies. In extreme cases, appropriate legal action will be taken to enforce the conditions of tenancy or seek recovery of possession.

Gardens will be inspected during wider estate walk rounds (where accessible) and following any comment or complaint from other residents.

The Association, as well as responding to poorly maintained gardens, will recognise and encourage residents who have taken the time and effort to maintain their garden. During the summer months the Association may run a gardening competition, this initiative is intended to foster good tenant relations and will act as an incentive to encourage all the Association's residents to improve their environment.

## 7.3 Common Stairways/Close Cleaning

We will provide common stair entry doors that are robust and secure, which are a strong barrier to unauthorised entry.

The Association will offer a stair cleaning service where the majority of residents agree and promote take-up. Where residents do not clean the stairs to a satisfactory standard, after due notice and opportunity to improve, the Association will impose the stair cleaning service.

A close window cleaning service is also provided for the cleaning of common windows.

For owners, the costs will be recovered through an addition to the management charge where possible. Tenants will have the opportunity to enhance the stair cleaning service where they are willing to meet any increased costs associated with enhancements in specification.

The Association will carry out regular, documented inspections of common stairwells. The frequency of these inspections will be determined based on the condition and upkeep of the areas.

The condition of common stairs will be assessed with relation to:

- Presence of any material in the close or stair that would present a fire hazard or obstruction to clear exit route in the event of a fire;
- Presence of any refuse or dumping in the stair or close;
- Presence of graffiti or evidence of vandalism in the stair;

- Presence of any tripping hazard in the stair and close and the physical condition of the stair and close floor, walls and ceilings;
- Cleanliness of the stair and close, walls and windows.

Where items are found within the stair which are considered a fire hazard or obstruction, the Association will try to identify the person(s) responsible and require that the item be removed within two working days. The Association will remove the items if the owner cannot be identified or if the owner does not remove the items as required within the period of notice. The recovery of any costs incurred will be in accordance with our Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

#### 7.4 Vermin and Pest Control in Common Areas

Where evidence of vermin or pests occurs, the Association will ensure a prompt response by qualified operatives to deal with the problem in accordance with environmental health guidelines. Staff will be trained to be aware of evidence of vermin.

The Association will not be responsible for dealing with infestations caused by a tenant's own negligence (i.e. if they have left food out or have not disposed of rubbish correctly). In certain cases where the infestation is caused by tenants own negligence, the tenant may be held liable for the cost of treatment and will be recharged the cost incurred by the Association in doing so.

We ask that residents notify the Association if communal areas are infested with vermin/pests immediately.

Prevention is always better than cure and useful advice on prevention is provided to tenants in the Tenants Handbook.

In communal areas one of the Associations biggest issues comes from the result of residents feeding birds. We will provide information to residents and discourage them not to feed birds in common areas as this can lead to a problem with vermin, primarily rats and mice, due to spilled food attracting these pests. This can create unsanitary conditions, spread diseases and potentially lead to property damage. Excessive bird feeding can also attract larger birds like pigeons and gulls, which may discourage smaller birds and cause noise and fouling issues. We understand that residents may wish to feed birds during winter and breeding season when natural food sources are scarce, therefore, if this is the case we would ask residents to:

- Choose foods that are less likely to be spilled or scattered, and use feeders designed to minimize waste
- Place feeders in a location that is less accessible to vermin and where spilled food can be easily cleaned up
- Regularly clean up spilled birdseed and droppings to deter vermin
- Reduce or temporarily stop bird feeding particularly during the summer months when more natural food sources are available

#### 7.5 Abandoned Vehicles/Car Parking

Where an abandoned vehicle is identified the Assistant Housing Services Officer or Housing Services Officer will make initial enquiries with residents to identify the owner and arrange for its removal. If the owner of the vehicle is not identified the



Assistant Housing Services Officer or Housing Services Officer will liaise with the Local Authority who may serve an Abandoned Vehicle Notice and arrange for its removal.

Section 2.17 of the Association's Tenancy Agreement is clear and states:

- No vehicle, caravan or trailer belonging to you or anyone living with you or anyone visiting you may be parked on our land unless:
  - That land is set aside for parking; or
  - We have given you written permission; or
  - It is a public road;
- AND, in every case,
  - It does not cause a nuisance or annoyance to your neighbours.

#### 7.6 Fly Tipping/Refuse Disposal/Litter

The Association will ensure that guidance is given to residents concerning the disposal of household refuse and bulk items including subsidising Local Authority bulk uplifts for tenants. The Association may also provide skips in areas where there are high instances of fly tipping.

Where items of refuse or fly tipping are found within individual gardens or communal areas, we will work to identify the person(s) responsible and require that the items be removed within an agreed period. The Association may remove the items if the owner cannot be identified, if the owner does not remove the items as required within the period of notice or if they are causing a Health Safety issue i.e., risk of attracting vermin. The recovery of any costs incurred will be in accordance with our Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

### 8.0 ENFORCING CONDITIONS OF TENANCY

The Association's general approach to dealing with breaches of conditions of tenancy will be as follows:

- Contact will be made with the affected residents and, where appropriate, their neighbours to clarify the issues, and explain the tenants' responsibilities. The objective at this stage will be to reach mutual agreement between those concerned on the action which should be taken. However, if mediation is inappropriate or ineffective, enforcing conditions of tenancy may involve contact with other agencies, as set out above.
- Agreements on action will be confirmed in writing to the individual(s) concerned.
- Where the tenant's action presents a risk to health or safety, we will take immediate, appropriate remedial action. If this incurs costs, we will consider recovery from the responsible tenant in accordance with the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

If there is persistent or serious breach of the conditions of tenancy, the Association will consider legal action including:

- Anti-social Behaviour Order, where the behaviour is defined as Anti-social behaviour
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
- Legal action to enforce a person to do something, this is called an action for specific implement
- Repossession action may be taken in the most extreme circumstances and where the breach of tenancy is very serious.

The procedure on how the Association will seek to repossess a property is detailed in the Repossession Policy.

## **9.0 TENANT ENGAGEMENT**

- 9.1 Effective Estate Management is a result of having a good relationship with the community, other agencies and other service providers. The Association's Tenant Engagement & Communication Strategy outlines how we will work with tenants to improve areas of service, provide information, listen to feedback and deliver what has been agreed.
- 9.2 Tenants are invited to engage through various means including:
- Tenant Focus Group Meetings
  - Register of Interested Tenant Group
  - Garden Competitions
  - Newsletters Articles
  - Social Media
- 9.3 The Association aims to ensure that its services are responsive to the needs of our tenants, and we will:
- Take account of tenants' and resident's views when making decisions regarding the nature and type of services that are delivered;
  - Consult with tenants when monitoring the quality of services;
  - Respond positively to deal with individual complaints;
  - Collate all complaints and identify any trends or areas where the Association must make service improvements;
  - Encourage any attempt to raise issues collectively by organising close meetings or public meetings if any demand is expressed;
  - The Association will liaise with tenants (i.e., elderly tenants, disabled tenants, etc.) with specific needs to establish any support which the Association could provide to comply with specific expectations set out in this policy (i.e., garden maintenance, cleaning of communal closes, etc.). This may lead to the Association putting in place relevant support, sign-posting tenants to support services, or relieving tenants of certain obligations amongst other measures.

## **10.0 OWNER OCCUPIERS AND OTHER RESIDENTS**

Estate Management may involve tenants and/or owners. All issues are given the same degree of priority regardless of tenure however, the action that is relevant to owners is more limited.

The Association has set out a Property Factoring Policy (including LSM) and associated procedures that set out our relationship with owner-occupiers and other residents.

## **11.0 RESPONSE TIMES**

We understand that some complaints concerning estate management may have a serious effect on complainants and therefore, we aim to respond as quickly as our resources allow. We acknowledge that complaints not addressed promptly may then lead to escalation. We will aim to advise complainants of our timescale in responding to their complaint however, we have set the following target as a guide:

**Initial Response/Acknowledgement: 5 Working Days**  
**Resolution to the Complaint: 28 Working Days**

It is important to mention that in terms of resolution this is when we have dealt with the complaint, and the outcome has been advised to the complainant. It may take longer to have a satisfactory outcome to the complaint however, the Association will continue to monitor situations until a satisfactory conclusion for all.

## **12.0 ESCALATION OF COMPLAINTS**

The Association recognises that certain estate management complaints may require further action beyond initial investigation. Where such complaints have a direct impact on individuals or fall within the scope of the Association's Anti-social Behaviour Policy, they may be formally recorded and escalated as anti-social behaviour complaints. This ensures the appropriate procedures and support mechanisms are applied in line with our commitment to maintaining safe and well-managed communities.

Examples of estate management complaints that may be escalated include:

- Repeated noise disturbances affecting neighbouring properties
- Persistent vandalism or damage to communal areas
- Intimidating or threatening behaviour within shared spaces
- Misuse of shared facilities, such as bin stores or drying areas
- Obstruction of access routes or emergency exits

Each case will be assessed individually, and appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures.

## **13.0 COMPLAINTS**

Any tenant who feels aggrieved by their treatment under this Policy can ask for a copy of the Association's Complaints Handling Procedure, which is available on the

Association's website or at our office. This policy details the way in which you can complain and the timescales for responding.

#### **14.0 REVIEW OF THIS POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years.

Consultation with Tenant Scrutiny Group and Staff	July/August 2025
Policy Approved by Senior Management Team	8 <sup>th</sup> August 2025
Policy Considered by the Customer Services Committee	14 <sup>th</sup> August 2025
<b>Policy Approved by the Board of Management</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> August 2025</b>
Date of Next Review	August 2028