

FORTH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 Equal Opportunities

- 1.1 The Association acknowledges that certain people are discriminated against by the housing system and are forced to remain in unsuitable housing. Consequently the Association is committed to equal access to housing and services in relation to the needs of all groups.
- 1.2 The Association recognises that discrimination can be direct or indirect and can take place at a personal or at an institutional level.
- 1.3 In its service provision activities the Association will ensure that there will be no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins, religion, social background, disability, marital status, responsibility for children or dependants, gender, age or sexual orientation.
- 1.4 Forth Housing Association will abide by the Race Relations Act 1976, the Commission For Racial Equality Code of Practice for Rented Housing, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and amended Act 1986 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Association recognises that Estate Management is a vital part of the housing management role of the landlord and a particularly important service from the tenants and residents viewpoint. In terms of the Association's Policy, it refers to property management and services which aim at enabling tenants and residents to have a quiet enjoyment of their homes and a decent, safe and secure environment.
- 2.2 However it is not just about looking after buildings and the physical environment, but also involves providing or arranging necessary advice and support to tenants and residents. It also involves working with other Agencies to achieve decent living conditions. Estate Management therefore encompasses a diverse range of issues such as:
 - * providing advice and assistance to tenants on tenancy matters and related issues;
 - * enforcing tenancy conditions and monitoring empty properties;
 - * providing advice and assistance to tenants and residents on services which enhance the local community, such as initiatives to reduce crime and environmental improvements;
 - * the management of communal areas and facilities in the Association's ownership such as play areas;
 - * the management and upkeep of the physical environment in the Association's ownership, and work with other agencies such as the local authority to ensure that areas under their ownership and responsibility are maintained to a satisfactory standard.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

3.1 The aim of the Association's Estate Management Policy is to ensure that policies and procedures are agreed which will ensure that:

- * tenants and residents are satisfied with the service provided by the Association, both within their home and within their local community;
- * good landlord/tenant relationships are developed to encourage tenant interest and involvement within their area for the mutual benefit of both the Association and the local community;
- * the upkeep of the housing stock and surrounding environment are managed and maintained to a standard which reduces the duration and level of void properties and makes best use of the Association's rental income.

4.0 Housing Stock

4.1 The Association will undertake regular Planned Maintenance surveys of the stock.

4.2 The Association's Housing Management and Maintenance staff will look for any obvious deterioration in the properties during normal day-to-day visits on their patch. Where alterations have been made staff will ensure that the work carried out complies with the necessary building and planning requirements and that the Association has given permission for the alteration/s to be carried out.

5.0 Common Areas

5.1 As part of its policy in respect of Common Areas, including Stairs and Entrances, Bin Stores, Drying Areas, Common Pathways, Lock Up Garages and Parking Areas, the Association will:

- * Carry out regular inspections to check on both the fabric and cleanliness.
- * Identify specific source of problems by either visiting individual tenants or holding group discussions with tenants, residents and local groups.
- * Confirm action required to remedy problems in writing to the tenants and residents concerned.
- * Generally, use local cleaning companies in flats with common access but will consider setting up cleaning rotas, if required.
- * Continue monitoring to ensure improved standards are maintained.
- * Arrange repairs promptly once identified and monitor to ensure satisfactory completion.

- * Liaise with the relevant Agencies to:
 - ensure that areas where parking is not permitted are clearly signed, e.g. fire access routes;
 - ensure that roads and parking areas which are used as play areas have prominently displayed signs warning drivers to look out for children;
 - take measures to discourage and/or prevent unauthorised parking.

6.0 Garden Areas

- 6.1 Regular inspections of garden areas will be undertaken.
- 6.2 Tenants who neglect their gardens will be identified and reasons for this investigated.
- 6.3 Tenancy conditions will be enforced if appropriate. Alternatively, practical advice and assistance will be arranged where appropriate. This might include providing gardening services or referring tenants to services run by other Agencies.

7.0 Communal Gardens and Landscape Maintenance

- 7.1 The Association will cultivate, maintain and keep tidy communal gardens and landscaped and planted areas in the Association's ownership.
- 7.2 Regular inspections of these areas will be undertaken. In instances where it appears that such areas are being neglected, the Association will arrange a meeting with tenants, residents and local groups.
- 7.3 Tenant and resident involvement will be encouraged where appropriate, as the Association recognises that this could help to reduce vandalism, such as damage to shrubs.

8.0 General Environment

- 8.1 The Association will regularly monitor general environmental matters such as litter, street cleaning, lighting, abandoned cars, caravan parking, pigeon lofts, abandoned properties, condition of footpaths etc. and notify or liaise with the other Agencies responsible.
- 8.2 Early action will be taken on identification and removal of graffiti.
- 8.3 The Association will investigate complaints received about excessive levels of noise and if required, will liaise with the other agencies. If appropriate tenancy conditions will be enforced.
- 8.4 If a tenant wishes to park a caravan, trailer, boat or similar item they must first request the permission of the Association. Permission would only be given for the item to be kept in a garage or behind the building line. If permission is granted, Forth Housing Association may also insist that the item is screened from public view if this is

considered to be appropriate. Permission will not be given to park such items in communal parking bays within a development.

9.0 Pets

- 9.1 The Association will investigate complaints received about nuisance caused by pets and if required, will liaise with the other agencies. Advice and assistance will be offered. If appropriate, tenancy conditions will be enforced.
- 9.2 Tenants who request permission to keep a pet will be required to adhere to the Association's Pets Policy.

10.0 Vermin and Pest Control

- 10.1 The Association will promptly investigate and respond to cases of vermin and pest infestation. Vermin and pest infestation will be tackled in a systematic and comprehensive manner by Contractors following Environmental Health guidelines.

11.0 Post Allocation Visits

- 11.1 Post allocation visits will be carried out within 4 weeks of a new tenancy, with follow-up visits programmed where potential problems have been identified.
- 11.2 Housing Association staff will be available to offer advice and assistance to tenants at any time during office hours either by visiting or telephoning the Association's office. Alternatively house calls can be arranged for a mutually agreed time, during or outwith office hours.

12.0 Support Services for Tenants with Special Needs

- 12.1 The Association will liaise with Social Services, the Health Board and other relevant community care agencies in the formulation of care plans for tenants in need.
- 12.2 Any special needs or vulnerabilities of tenants (such as visual handicap, language difficulties, frailty) will be identified and with agreement, the Association will record details on file so that staff can be made aware of these when appropriate.
- 12.3 Liaison and referral arrangements with Social Services, the Health Board and other relevant agencies will be set up to secure appropriate ongoing support or services for tenants with special needs.

13.0 Contact with Tenants and Residents

- 13.1 As part of its objectives of fostering good landlord/tenant relationships and involving tenants and residents in the upkeep of their community, the Association will encourage tenants and residents to take an active interest and participate in the wellbeing of their community and surrounding environment.
- 13.2 This is likely to be effected in the following ways by regular communications with individual tenants through newsletters, home visits, information days and meetings with

organised Tenant and Residents Groups.

13.3 The Association staff and Management Committee will assess each area to determine the frequency of Estate Management visits. The demand from different areas and the Estate Management problems which each present will vary according to the degree of management problems, e.g.:

- * High level of vandalism or graffiti
- * Poorly maintained environment (tenants' gardens, open spaces, play area, stairs, bin stores, back courts, etc)
- * Neighbour disputes
- * Parking problems
- * Dog nuisance
- * Abandoned properties

The required input by the Association staff will vary according to the level of need/demand as indicated by the foregoing factors.

14.0 Neighbour Disputes and Harassment Problems

14.1 The Association has separate Policies for dealing with Neighbour Disputes and Harassment Problems as the Association recognises that these complaints cannot be adequately responded to using the usual actions required for handling general complaints.

15.0 Staff and Service Delivery

15.1 The Director will ensure that staff have the appropriate training and knowledge to perform their job effectively, by employing people with relevant qualifications and/or experience and through providing suitable training opportunities.

15.2 When necessary all staff and Committee Members will receive training on the Association policies and procedures and about issues such as interviewing skills and dealing with difficult and violent situations.

16.0 Performance Monitoring

16.1 Monitoring the estate management service includes items such as:

- * Monitoring trends;
- * Checking that the service is effective and fair to all tenants;
- * Seeking tenants' views of the service;
- * Reporting monitoring results on a regular basis to Committee and any Tenants/Residents Association;
- * Reviewing policies, practice and performance at regular intervals.

16.2 The Committee has agreed that this policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the aims of the policy are being achieved.

17.0 Data Protection

- 17.1 When implementing the policies and procedures of Forth Housing Association all staff and committee members must adhere to and be aware of the requirements of the Association's approved Confidentiality Policy and the Data Protection Act 1998. In situations where there may be any doubt about the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 it is recommended that the Association seeks the views of its legal advisors.

3/96 Management Committee Approval

5/97 Review Approval

3/01 Review Approval