

# *Neighbourhood Management Policy*

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Next Review: 2021*



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## **NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT POLICY**

### **1. Introduction/Purpose**

- 1.1 We fully recognise that the provision of good quality housing, which is well maintained, on its own is not sufficient to create desirable and attractive neighbourhoods. The appearance of the local environment can have an impact, both positive and negative, on the neighbourhood as a whole.
- 1.2 Therefore the purpose of this Policy is to set out our approach to neighbourhood management to ensure we create well maintained and managed neighbourhoods where people feel safe and want to live.
- 1.3 This policy does not operate in isolation of other areas of our work. To ensure good neighbourhood management the policy interlinks with a number of other policies which govern key areas of our work including Allocations, Abandonments, Anti-Social Behaviour, Racial and Other Harassment and Void Management.

### **2. Legal and Regulatory Framework**

- 2.1 The legal basis to Neighbourhood Management lies mainly in the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement which tenants sign up to when joining Rosehill. The key legislation behind the tenancy agreement is the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

#### **2.2 The Scottish Social Housing Charter**

- 2.2.1 The Social Housing Charter came into effect in April 2012 and this sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities. The Charter replaces the Performance Standards and the outcomes relevant to this Policy are:

1. Equalities

Social Landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

2      **Communication**

Social landlords 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.

3.     **Participation**

Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

6      **Estate Management, anti-social, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes**

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.

13.   **Value for Money**

Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

**3.      Our Aims/Objectives**

3.1    It is our vision:

“To provide excellent quality homes, in well maintained neighbourhoods where our tenants feel safe, and to provide valued services to our tenants and other customers.”

3.2    The purpose of this Policy is to contribute to the delivery of our vision by setting out our approach to neighbourhood management.

3.3    The overall aim of this Policy is to set out clearly, for our staff, tenants and other customers, how we intend to manage and maintain our neighbourhoods to ensure they remain desirable and safe places to live.

3.4 To achieve our overall aim and to help deliver our Vision we have identified the following key objectives:

- To identify and prioritise problems within our area at the earliest possible opportunity, look for solutions and take action to resolve any issues.
- To establish good working relationships with key external agencies and other local landlords to provide solutions to neighbourhood management issues.
- Ensure adequate resources are directed where they are needed including the creation of a staff sub team which will have responsibility for neighbourhood management.
- To provide clear, good quality information to our tenants to enable them to conduct their tenancy in accordance with the terms of their legally binding Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement.
- To ensure that any services we provide such as open space/garden maintenance, stair cleaning are to a high standard and provide value for money.

## **4. Neighbourhood Profile**

### **4.1 Stock**

4.1.1 Rosehill owns and manages almost a 1000 properties in the Pollok Area. Our houses are located in four particular neighbourhoods: Craigbank; Househillwood; Nitshill and Priesthill.

4.1.2 The stock is primarily main door housing including 4-in-a-blocks, terraced and semi detached houses. Only 8% of our properties are tenement flats.

4.1.3 The properties range in size from 2 apts to 5 apts (we have 1 x 8 apt property). 3 and 4 apts account for the majority of our stock equating to 76%, with the remaining balance being split almost evenly between 2 apts and 5 apts.

4.1.4 We have a mix of refurbished and new build stock with refurbished properties (including the tenement flats) accounting for 55% of our total stock and new build accounting for the remaining 45%.

4.1.5 In addition we have two supported accommodation units and have 13 shared ownership properties and provide a factoring service to 36 owners.

## **4.2 Neighbouring Landlords**

4.2.1 There are two other local registered social landlords who operate in the area and as such some of our stock is in close proximity to their properties. However in general our stock is located in clearly defined areas.

## **4.3 Mixed Tenure**

4.3.1 In general there are low levels of mixed tenure within our area of operation. However we do have some areas where a mixed tenure set up is more significant.

### **Priesthill**

4.3.1.1 Our new build development known as The Lindens and our tenements in Priesthill are located within a larger area which consists of shared ownership and privately owned properties.

### **Nitshill**

4.3.1.2 Our 4-in-a-block properties in Nitshill, which we acquired through a stock transfer in 2010, have a mix of owner occupiers and tenants. There are a total of 29 blocks of which one has 100% owner occupation. Out of the other 28 blocks, 6 are fully tenanted and the remaining 22 blocks have a mix of tenants and owners.

## **4.4 Private/Shared Areas and Open Spaces**

4.4.1 As the bulk of our stock is main door there is mainly private garden ground for each property which is the tenants' responsibility to maintain. However the majority of our 4-in-a-block properties have shared drying green areas which form part of the rear gardens. The tenants in these properties have shared responsibility for the maintenance of the drying areas.

4.4.2 We have two groups of tenements that we provide backcourt maintenance to. We provide a close cleaning service (which the tenants pay for) to the tenements in Priesthill. The tenants in the Nitshill tenements are responsible for the close cleaning.

4.4.3 We have a number of open spaces located throughout our stock which we maintain through the use of a grounds maintenance contractor.

4.4.4 From time to time Rosehill may own land which has not yet been developed. Whilst the land remains vacant appropriate ground maintenance will be carried out to keep the land in reasonable condition.

4.4.5 There are other areas of vacant land located within our neighbourhood but which are not within our ownership and therefore not within our authority to directly tackle any issues that may arise.

## **5. Preventative Measures**

5.1 We will place emphasis upon preventative measures, whilst adopting procedures designed to resolve issues and problems at an early stage. In all instances, insofar as resources allow, Rosehill will seek to co-operate with other relevant agencies, and to contribute to broader measures and initiatives aimed at reducing poverty, unemployment and crime.

### **5.2 Design Issues**

5.2.1 We recognise that the poor design of properties and communal areas can lead to neighbourhood management problems. As a result, our design brief acknowledges the importance of factors such as quality sound insulation; privacy; security; the reduction of communal areas and scheme layout.

5.2.2 We will ensure that all new-build schemes are to “secured by design” standards.

### **5.3 Allocations**

5.3.1 A key objective of our Allocations Policy is to meet the needs of those in high levels of housing need. When meeting this objective we are mindful of the need to meet another key objective which is “To make the best possible use of Rosehill’s housing stock through fair and sensitive allocation of houses, thus creating and maintaining sustainable communities.”

5.3.2 This means that we will take account of the social mix of an area in the allocations process.

### **5.5 Void Management**

5.5.1 This is the subject of a separate policy however in summary Rosehill will aim to re-let empty houses as quickly as possible.

5.5.2 Whilst a property is empty and unallocated Rosehill will take the necessary measures to keep it maintained and secure. Such measures will range from lock changes, disconnection of services, garden maintenance during the growing season, use of curtains/blinds and timer lights and use of more formal means of security e.g. security screens for doors and windows. Not all of these measures will be undertaken for each empty property. The length of time a property will lie empty will determine the appropriate measures to undertake.

5.5.3 It will only be in exceptional circumstances that we will use formal methods of security such as screens fitted to front/back doors and windows. For example when it is known that the property will be empty for a significant period of time and/or where there is a high risk of vandalism.

## **5.6 Information to Tenants**

5.6.1 The provision of good quality information to tenants about their tenancy rights and responsibilities plays a key role in effective neighbourhood management.

5.6.2 As part of the sign up process for new tenants, tenants are taken through the key clauses of their tenancy agreement.

5.6.3 We will also use our newsletters and website to provide our tenants with important information about their tenancy and neighbourhood management related matters.

5.6.4 We also publish relevant information leaflets including:

- A Guide to being a good neighbour. This leaflet covers a range of important issues including: what is meant by being a good neighbour; what is nuisance behaviour; keeping of pets; making alterations and improvements; and the use of private and shared gardens and other communal areas.
- Neighbourhood Management Information Leaflet which provides useful telephone numbers for tenants e.g. Land and Environmental Services including: cleansing; roads and lighting; fly tipping, and Community Safety Glasgow's Out of Hours Enforcement Team, Police Scotland, Abandoned Vehicles and Strathclyde Fire and Rescue.

## **6. Managing the Neighbourhood**

### **6.1 Gardens**

- 6.1.1 Tenants are responsible for the upkeep of their own garden areas. In the case of garden ground held in common with other tenants, each tenant is responsible for carrying out this duty in rotation with his/her neighbours.
- 6.1.2 To ensure tenants are undertaking this responsibility, inspections will be carried out by the Housing Assistants (Generic Team) on a weekly basis during the growing season i.e. normally April to October.
- 6.1.3 Action taken against tenants failing in this responsibility will include: warning letters, suspension of transfer applications where appropriate and if necessary legal action.
- 6.1.4 In addition to these options Rosehill may consider the feasibility of giving tenants an opportunity to transfer to alternative accommodation without gardens. A transfer under such circumstances still has to be in accordance with our Allocations Policy.
- 6.1.5 Rosehill offers a garden assistance scheme to tenants, who live alone and have no other form of support, who due to age, health or disability are unable to maintain their gardens. Places on the scheme are limited and as such a waiting list is operated.

### **6.2 Shared/Common Areas**

- 6.2.1 Tenants living in tenement property, where there is no close cleaning service, will be required to take their turn of sweeping and cleaning the common areas i.e. stairs and landings on a weekly basis.
- 6.2.2 To ensure tenants are undertaking this responsibility, inspections will be carried out by the Housing Assistants (Generic Team) on a fortnightly basis.
- 6.2.3 The Housing Assistants will also organise close meetings as a means of tackling such problems. Formal rota systems will be implemented if necessary.
- 6.2.4 Action taken against tenants who fail in this shared responsibility will include: warning letters; suspension of transfer applications, where appropriate, and if necessary legal action.

### **6.3 Other Inspections**

- 6.3.1 The two Housing Assistants in the Generic Team manage a patch of approximately 500 properties each. In addition to garden and close inspections, each Housing Assistant will monitor his/her entire patch 3 times a month by doing a full walk about.
- 6.3.2 If these inspections highlight particular issues e.g. fly tipping, which are significant, this will be determined by the scale and/or frequency of the problem, staff can designate areas as “hotspots”. Such designated areas will be inspected on a weekly basis until the issues have been addressed.
- 6.3.3 The Housing Assistants are also responsible for monitoring the service provided by our private contractors for close cleaning, open space maintenance and our garden maintenance and assistance scheme.

### **6.4 Pets**

- 6.4.1 Section 2.7 of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement sets out the conditions for the keeping of domestic pets. Domestic pets are dogs, cats, birds, fish or rodents. Tenants require our permission if they wish to keep more than one domestic pet.
- 6.4.2 Tenants are responsible for the behaviour of any pets and must take all reasonable steps to supervise and keep any pets under control. They must ensure their pets do not cause a nuisance to neighbours or deterioration in the condition of the house, common areas or the vicinity of the house. This includes fouling, noise or smell from the pet.
- 6.4.3 Action taken against tenants who fail to meet the conditions for keeping pets will include warning letters, suspension of transfer applications, where appropriate, and if necessary legal action. Rosehill has the right to require removal of a pet from a tenant’s house if it is causing a nuisance or damage.
- 6.4.4 For the avoidance of doubt tenants can not keep or fly pigeons from within the property and/or garden area.

### **6.5 Alterations/Improvements**

- 6.5.1 Section 5.3 sets out tenants’ rights and responsibilities in relation to making alterations or improvements to their houses and/or garden areas. Tenants must obtain our permission before making any alterations and

improvements. This includes erecting garden sheds, garages, decking and fencing and installing alarms and satellite dishes.

- 6.5.2 We will not unreasonably withhold our consent but we may set out conditions to ensure the work is carried out to a standard acceptable to us. For the avoidance of doubt satellite dishes can not be fitted on the building or on any fencing. Obtaining our consent does not remove the need for the tenant to also obtain consent from Glasgow City Council for works which require Planning Consent and/or a Building Warrant.
- 6.5.3 Action taken against tenants, who fail to obtain our permission before carrying out any alterations and improvements or fail to meet any conditions set out by us, will include warning letters, suspension of transfer applications, where appropriate, and if necessary legal action. Rosehill has the right to remove any unauthorised alterations or improvements and restore the house to its previous condition during or at the end of a tenancy. The cost of undertaking any such remedial work will be charged to the tenant.

## **6.6 Vandalism and Graffiti**

- 6.6.1 All incidents of vandalism will be reported to the Police within 24 hours and a crime report number obtained for insurance purposes.
- 6.6.2 Where a repair which would otherwise be rechargeable to the tenant arises as a result of vandalism (e.g. re-glazing of smashed window) the tenant will be required to report the incident to the Police.
- 6.6.3 If the offender is identified as a tenant of Rosehill, a member of the tenant's household or a visitor to the tenant's home, the tenant will be held liable for the cost of repairing any vandalism.
- 6.6.4 If there are persistent acts of vandalism which result in damage to any Rosehill property, we may take further action against the tenant including: reporting the tenant (or household member/visitor) to the Police; issuing warning letters, pursuing ASBOs, suspending transfer applications and ultimately legal proceedings for recovery of the tenancy.
- 6.6.5 Graffiti which is deemed to be offensive e.g. racist, sectarian, homophobic in nature will be removed within 24 hours or the next working day if the incident occurs out with office hours. All other graffiti will be removed in line with our timescale for routine repairs i.e. 7 working days.

- 6.6.6 If the offender is identified as a tenant of Rosehill, a member of the tenant's household or a visitor to the tenant's home, the offender will be encouraged to remove the graffiti. If Rosehill has to have the graffiti removed the cost will be recharged to the tenant.

## **7. Partnership Approach**

- 7.1 This Policy has set out the issues that tenants and Rosehill alike are responsible for. However it is recognised that there are other neighbourhood management issues e.g. litter, fly tipping and dog fouling that fall out with the direct responsibility and authority of Rosehill. In addition some of the issues may be as a result of the actions of private owners or tenants of other landlords. Therefore, it is essential, to effective neighbourhood management, that the key agencies are identified and involved in the creation and delivery of effective solutions.
- 7.2 We will continue to develop strong links with agencies such as Environmental Health, Land Services and other key services within Glasgow City Council.
- 7.3 Clean Glasgow is an initiative run by Glasgow City Council to look at a range of issues that link to cleansing and the local environment. This organisation is currently responsible for de-littering, street sweeping and uplifting fly tipping. They also have an enforcement role and will issue fixed penalty notices to those dog fouling or discarding litter in the street.
- 7.4 We hold Silver Service Membership of the Community Safety Glasgow scheme which assists housing organisations in tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour.
- 7.5 We recognise that we are not the only provider of social rented housing in the area and that neighbouring properties are owned and managed by other landlords. Therefore, it is essential that we work with Glasgow Housing Association's local area offices (Parkview and Pollok Tenants Choice) and Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association to ensure that the area as a whole is maintained to a high standard.

## **8. Resolution of Issues**

- 8.1 Rosehill is committed to working with its tenants to ensure they do not breach the terms of their legally binding tenancy agreement. Under section 5.6 of this Policy we recognise the importance of the provision of good quality information to our tenants about their tenancy rights and

responsibilities.

8.2 Where tenants do breach their tenancy agreement our staff (Generic Team) will work with tenants to achieve a satisfactory resolution to the issue. However if tenants fail to engage with us and persist in breaching their tenancy agreement we will take further action.

8.3 We will undertake a course of action which will be proportionate to the seriousness of the breach. The actions open to us include:

- Issuing warning letters
- Reporting offender to the Police
- ASBOs
- Suspension of Transfer Housing Applications
- Legal action such as enforcement to remove pets from houses, removal of unauthorised alterations and improvements to the property including the garden area

8.4 If all or a combination of the above fail to resolve the issue, Rosehill may have no option but to pursue legal proceedings to evict the tenant. This is generally viewed as the last resort once all other options have been exhausted.

## **9. Strategies/Initiatives**

9.1 To support our Neighbourhood Management aims and objectives from time to time we may produce a strategy for a particular period of time to tackle specific issues.

9.2 The production of a strategy will be done in consultation with our tenants. The progress with implementing a strategy will be reported to tenants through our newsletters.

9.3 As part of our Partnership approach with other external agencies Rosehill may participate in local initiatives to tackle Neighbourhood Management issues. This may involve supporting or actively taking part in local events e.g. major clean up of waste ground/vacant land.

## **10. Performance Management**

10.1 Staff will monitor the outcomes of any specific strategies in place. The results will be reported to the Management Committee on a quarterly basis and published in our newsletters.

10.2 As part of the annual return for the Scottish Housing Regulator we are required to provide information on tenants' satisfaction with our management of the neighbourhood. In the main, this information will be captured as part of our comprehensive satisfaction surveys which are carried out every three years.

10.3 As an interim measure, if we are implementing any local strategies we will conduct satisfaction surveys on the outcomes of these.

## **11. Tenant Participation**

11.1 We are a tenant focussed organisation and as such we are committed to involving tenants in all aspects of our work and ensuring that tenants are included, informed and consulted about decisions that have an impact on the way their homes are managed.

11.2 As part of this commitment we will involve our tenants in the development of our policies and seek feedback where appropriate. We will ensure that any significant changes to this Policy and other Policies which will affect our tenants will be the subject of consultation.

## **12. Equality and Diversity**

12.1 We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment for all people in our work. In implementing this Policy, we will provide a fair and equal service to all people, irrespective of factors such as gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes.

## **13. Risk Management**

13.1 In all the key areas of our business we need to consider any risks which may arise. To this end we have in place a robust Risk Management Policy and from this flows our Risk Register. We have identified our "Top 5" risks which are regularly monitored by our Management Team and Audit Sub-Committee.

13.2 Key to the mitigation of the risks associated with neighbourhood management issues and the subsequent impact on the desirability and lettable of our housing stock is having a comprehensive policy in place to govern the prevention and management of such issues.

- 13.3 To ensure we continue to manage the associated risks we will periodically review this Policy to ensure compliance with all legislative requirements and regulatory and best practice guidance.

#### **14. Complaints Procedure**

- 14.1 We aim to get things right first time and provide a good quality service to our tenants. However, we acknowledge that things can go wrong and that some tenants may be unhappy with the service provided.
- 14.2 We promote our Complaints procedure through our website and periodic articles in our newsletters. In addition, we initially issued all of our tenants with a copy of the new Procedure introduced in October 2012. This information leaflet is also issued to all new tenants as part of the signing up pack.

#### **15. Data Protection**

- 15.1 On the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 the legislation governing data protection changed with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- 15.2 We hold a variety of Personal Data relating to individuals including tenants, waiting list applicants, factored owners, other service users, employees and Committee Members. Our Privacy Policy sets out the basis on which we can process and share such data with third parties, it also sets out how we will securely store individuals' data, whether electronically or in paper format. It also provides information on individuals' rights under GDPR including: to view personal data held about them by us; to request a restriction of processing of their data; the right to be forgotten and a right to object to us processing their data. In terms of the rights to be forgotten and to restrict or object to processing of Personal Data, any such requests will require to be considered on their own merits and legal advice will need to be obtained in some circumstances. We have the responsibility for accepting or refusing such requests and will do so in writing.
- 15.3 Under GDPR we are required to provide all customers whose Personal Data we hold with a Fair Processing Notice (also known as a Privacy Notice). The Notice sets out the Personal Data we process and the basis for doing so.
- 15.4 We will only keep and process Personal Data for the original purpose we gathered it for and we will not keep it for any longer than necessary. Attached to our Privacy Policy is a table of Retention Periods for

Personal Data held and processed by us. We recognise that not all Personal Data can be processed and kept for the same period of time, and this will vary depending on the individual circumstances of each person whose Personal Data we hold.

15.5 The Privacy Policy sets out what should happen in the event of a Data breach e.g. does the breach require reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office and whether the individual affected should be notified. Timescales are set out for dealing with data breaches.

15.6 Full copies of our Privacy Policy are available upon request at our office or from our website [www.rosehillhousing.co.uk](http://www.rosehillhousing.co.uk)

## **16. Policy Review**

16.1 This Policy will be reviewed at least every three years or sooner to ensure it continues to reflect current thinking and practice and to comply with legislative requirements and regulatory guidance.