

ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Classification: Management

Status: Approved

Policy Lead:	Director of Housing & Care Services
Date Approved:	December 2020
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Review Period:	5 years unless required earlier due to changes in the law, regulation, best practice or requirement of the Association

REFERENCE PAGE

Document Title:	Estate Management Policy
Aim:	Tenants and residents of Eildon properties can live in their homes in clean, safe and secure environments.
Objective:	3 Housing and Support Services: Deliver improvements and a more responsive service to our customer base
Scope of Policy:	All stakeholders
Nominated Officer:	Housing Services Manager
Approval Source:	Executive Team
Legal & Regulatory References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 • Scottish Social Housing Charter • Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement
Procedural References:	<p>This policy interfaces with several other Eildon Polices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property Management Policy • Health and Safety Policy • Void Management Policy • Keeping Pets in Eildon Homes Policy • Customer Engagement Strategy • Dealing with Antisocial Behaviour Policy • Eildon’s Design Guide <p>The policy is also supported by a suite of procedures to assist staff in delivering a consistent and effective service.</p>
Consultation Completed:	Yes - Staff & customers
Risk Implications:	1- Existing policy, minimal change
Equalities Assessment:	All Eildon policies and key documents are developed with the clear objective of ensuring that they do not discriminate against any person and have negative impacts for equality groups. We will always welcome comments on the impact of a policy on particular groups of people in respect of, but not limited to, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation, being pregnant or on maternity leave and children’s rights and wellbeing.
Accessibility:	Accessible electronically/online and in print. All documents can be translated and made available in audio, braille and large print versions upon request

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 We recognise that effective estate management is a vital part of our landlord role, the satisfactory delivery of which, often in conjunction with other agencies, will assist greatly in promoting safe, secure, sustainable and desirable communities.

1.2 We define estate management as:

“Property and environmental management and services which aim to enable tenants and residents to enjoy safe and secure homes”

1.3 We recognise that excellent estate management goes beyond looking after buildings and the physical environment. It is also about providing or arranging necessary information and advice to support tenants and residents. It involves liaising and working with tenants and neighbouring residents and ensuring that the environment is safe for others who may visit, use or enter our land or property.

1.4 This policy relates to the estate management service delivered in all developments where we own or manage housing or have a factoring responsibility.

1.5 Estate Management covers a diverse range of areas including:

- providing information, advice and assistance on the rights and responsibilities of Eildon and of tenants and residents.
- enforcing tenancy conditions and deed of condition requirements in a firm, fair, prompt and sensitive manner
- providing advice and assistance to tenants and residents on services which enhance the local community, such as initiatives which improve the environment and seek to reduce crime
- consulting tenants on estate management issues and ensuring that estate management services are appropriate to local needs
- agreeing and meeting standards for the management of communal areas and facilities in our ownership
- working with other agencies including the statutory authorities to ensure that estate management standards are achieved
- providing information on action we can take to address issues

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

2.1 This policy aims to ensure:

- that tenants and residents of Eildon properties can live in their homes in clean, safe and secure environments.
- the development of mutually beneficial landlord/tenant relationships, or property manager/owner where we provide a factoring service.
- the upkeep of the housing stock and surrounding environment is managed and maintained to a standard which enhances tenant/resident satisfaction, and which contributes to minimising the duration and level of void properties.
- that estate management services are adequately funded and resourced.

3. MAIN PRINCIPLES

3.1 The delivery of an effective Estate Management Policy is contingent on:

- good quality design and layout of developments
- a Planned Maintenance Programme which includes modernisation and component replacement.
- proactive management through early identification of issues and appropriate preventative or remedial action.
- Effective communication channels to enable customers to play a key role in helping us to monitor the provision of services such as window cleaning, stair cleaning and ground maintenance

4. STANDARDS AND APPROACH

4.1 This section outlines the standards of Estate Management which Eildon will meet and the approach we will take. Further information can be found in our Tenants' Handbook and on our website www.eildon.org.uk or by contacting us directly.

4.2 Our staff will inspect common areas regularly when they are in developments visiting customers, to monitor the provision of grounds maintenance and cleaning services, condition of common areas, and tenants' adherence to their tenancy conditions (or Deeds of Conditions where factoring services are provided).

4.3 We will also carry out twice-yearly Estate Management Walkabouts in each area with customers. Walkabouts will be advertised in our newsletter and through social media and text/email notifications, with customers being invited to participate where they can. Customers are also encouraged to report any issues where these standards are not being met or provide any other feedback regarding estate management issues by using our [online form](#), or by contacting us directly.

4.4 Communal Garden Ground

- 4.4.1 Any shared garden or ground that is owned by Eildon will normally be maintained by us. This service will be provided by contractors on our behalf, the cost for which will be included as part of customers' rent or factoring charge.
- 4.4.2 We have an agreed specification for grounds maintenance, which outlines the work that will be undertaken and the frequency of that work. Customers can find this specification on our website.
- 4.4.3 Customers are encouraged to report any issues to us where work has deviated from the specification. We will investigate any such reports by inspecting the area and discussing issues during regular meetings with our contractors.

4.5 Private Garden Areas

- 4.5.1 Some Eildon homes have private gardens, for exclusive use by the customer living in that property. In such cases, the customer has sole responsibility for the maintenance of the garden.
- 4.5.2 The tenancy agreement sets out the standard to which private gardens are to be maintained and this includes not letting the garden become overgrown, untidy or a nuisance to others; for the avoidance of doubt, this includes any nuisance caused by fouling, noise or smell from a pet(s). Customers should read the '[Keeping Pets in Eildon Homes Policy](#)' on the Eildon website for further information on our commitment to encourage responsible pet ownership.
- 4.5.3 Appropriate action will be taken to enforce the tenancy agreement where these standards are not being met.

4.6 Vehicle Parking

- 4.6.1 We will provide information on car parking available at all of our developments on our website and will explain the arrangements for parking to all new customers when they sign up for an Eildon home. We will also provide clear signage to denote customer car parking where appropriate; additionally, in our supported housing locations we have designated and clearly marked disabled parking bays and drop off / emergency vehicle areas. All Eildon-owned car parking areas are used by customers at their own risk and we will not accept any responsibility for damage caused.
- 4.6.2 The provision of car parking spaces in new build developments will comply with the local authority's planning requirements for all new build, except where there are exceptional circumstances, in which case alternative arrangements will be agreed with the local authority. As part of the planning process for new build developments, we will consider the provision of electric

vehicle charging points and work with the local authority to ensure appropriate bicycle storage is provided.

- 4.6.3 We are responsible for the maintenance of car parking areas which we own and will liaise with the local authority concerning maintenance where areas have been 'adopted'.
- 4.6.4 Customers with a Blue Badge who require a disabled persons' parking bay can apply to the local authority for a bay to be designated for the use of a Blue Badge holder. We can provide advice on the process and will liaise with the local authority on the appropriate positioning of the bay where the request is for a designated space within a car park under our ownership. We will not unreasonably refuse the designation of a bay for disabled persons' parking.
- 4.6.5 The tenancy agreement states that no vehicle, caravan or trailer belonging to a customer (or anyone living with or visiting a customer) may be parked or stored on Eildon-owned land unless the land is set aside by Eildon for parking or storage, or written permission has been provided by Eildon. In every case, the parking and storing should not cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbours. Any unauthorised use will be deemed to be a breach of tenancy agreement.
- 4.6.6 We will report any abandoned or untaxed vehicles on Eildon-owned land to the local authority. The local authority has a duty to remove vehicles abandoned on land in the open air or on any other land which forms part of the highway. Customers can also report abandoned vehicles to the local authority directly.

4.7 Garages

- 4.7.1 Where a customer is the tenant of an Eildon-owned garage, the responsibilities associated with this are included in the terms of the lease. This includes keeping the garage clean, in good condition (reporting repairs where necessary) and using it only for the purposes outlined in the lease agreement.

4.8 Mobility Scooters – Use and Storage

- 4.8.1 We do not wish to restrict anyone's ability to benefit from the use of a mobility scooter; however, we must take into account the suitability of the development for such use and the potential for health and safety issues to occur where there are a number of mobility scooters present in an individual development.
- 4.8.2 Anyone who wishes to store, charge or use a mobility scooter in property owned by us must seek permission first. Permission will not be unreasonably withheld but will be subject to a risk assessment carried out by a member of Eildon staff... Our supported housing locations have designated stores for

mobility scooters which are limited, and it should be noted that applications submitted may join a waiting list

4.8.3 If permission is granted, the customer will be required to sign a mandate agreeing to follow the guidelines set out in the Mobility Scooter Use and Storage Guidance Note for Customers; failure to adhere to this guidance could result in the permission being withdrawn.

4.8.4 Customers can appeal against any decision to refuse permission for the use and storage of mobility scooters; these will be dealt with in line with our complaint handling procedure.

4.9 Keeping Pets and Livestock

4.9.1 We acknowledge the many benefits of keeping pets but are keenly aware of the nuisance and health risks than can be associated with irresponsible pet ownership.

4.9.2 All customers who wish to keep a pet must seek permission from us which, if granted, will be based on the conditions set out in the customer's tenancy agreement and in the ['Keeping Pets in Eildon Homes Policy'](#), which can be found on our website. These conditions include not allowing pets to foul in common areas and keeping dogs on a leash within the development.

4.9.3 We will not give permission for customers to keep livestock and will not normally give permission for customers to keep racing or homing pigeons.

4.10 Bird Feeding

4.10.1 The feeding of birds can cause issues for neighbours and lead to pest, vermin or insect infestation. To avoid this, the ground feeding of birds is not permitted and the only feeding that should take place is on appropriate bird seed feeders or tables.

4.11 Pest / Insect / Vermin Control

4.11.1 We aim to ensure that all our homes are free from pest, insect and vermin infestation.

4.11.2 Where any infestation is present in communal areas, we will arrange and pay for necessary eradication work. If the infestation in a common area can be attributed to the behaviour of a customer (e.g., bird feeding), the costs of eradication may be recharged to the customer responsible.

4.11.3 Where an infestation is present in/on an individual home, the responsibility for arranging the eradication lies with the customer. Our staff can provide advice on how best to deal with the infestation through signposting to the local authority pest control team.

4.12 Security

- 4.12.1 Our Design Guide ensures that the homes we build meet the 'Secured by Design' standard. This standard aims to deter or prevent crime by the use of certain products and design features.
- 4.12.2 We will investigate any issues raised by customers in relation to the security of our homes and customers will also be reminded in newsletters and social media of the necessity to make use of security features like secure door entry systems and on the safe storage of items such as bicycles and tools.
- 4.12.3 Customers will also be strongly advised to take out contents insurance to cover their possessions in their home and garden.

4.13 Domestic CCTV

- 4.13.1 Customers must seek permission from us to fix or mount CCTV cameras to our property or on our land using the Alterations Request form which can be accessed on our website. This includes cameras fitted into doorbells. If we grant permission this does not remove any responsibilities on individuals under the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act (2018).
- 4.13.2 The Information Commissioner's Office provides useful information and guidance on the use of domestic CCTV systems, the potential repercussions of not respecting the privacy of others, and also the rights of those being filmed by domestic CCTV systems. Customers will be reminded of this when they make a direct enquiry.
- 4.13.3 We have a small supply of CCTV cameras which we can lend to customers for short periods for the purpose of gathering evidence of antisocial behaviour. Customers using these will be required to agree to adhere to the Information Commissioner's Office guidance for use of CCTV.

4.14 Vandalism

- 4.14.1 We will respond promptly to any reports of vandalism and repair any damage for which the customer is not responsible. This includes any damage to empty homes.
- 4.14.2 Customers will be responsible for repairing or paying for the cost of repairing any vandalism carried out by them, a member of their household, or a visitor to their household.
- 4.14.3 Acts of vandalism will be reported to Police Scotland.

4.15 Graffiti

- 4.15.1 We will remove graffiti on any property we own. Any graffiti of a racist, sexual, or generally offensive nature will be removed wherever possible

within one working day of it being reported. Other types of graffiti will be subject to the same timescales as a general repair. Customers are encouraged to report any instances of graffiti so that we can take appropriate action.

4.16 Household Recycling and Refuse Disposal

- 4.16.1 The local authority has responsibility for refuse disposal and recycling, and we will work in conjunction with them, as far as is reasonable, to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided within our developments.
- 4.16.2 Many of our developments were built before the introduction of individual 'wheelie' bins and, although we have provided solutions for the storage of these bins in many of our developments, in some cases this will not be possible due to the design or size of the outside space. In these circumstances we will work with Scottish Borders Council to agree the best suitable alternative.
- 4.16.3 Customers are responsible for ensuring that their household waste and recycling is presented for disposal appropriately, in a safe, tidy and timely manner. Customers are advised of these responsibilities and the waste provisions available at their home at the outset of their tenancy, including the uplift service provided by the local authority for bulky items.
- 4.16.4 We will maintain communal bin stores (where these are provided at developments) and our staff will inspect them when they are in developments, and during the Estate Walkabouts.
- 4.16.5 We will take appropriate action, in conjunction with the local authority, in any cases of illegal or inappropriate dumping of rubbish or items on our land or premises, including recharging any costs incurred to individuals where they can be identified as being responsible.
- 4.16.6 Customers are responsible for disposal of any unwanted items at the end of their tenancy. Any rubbish left in a property or garden at the end of a tenancy will be disposed of by us and the cost will be recharged to the former tenant.

4.17 Litter

- 4.17.1 As above, customers are responsible for ensuring that waste and recycling is presented for disposal appropriately. This includes littering. Customers are informed of their responsibilities at the start of their tenancy and will be reminded of this again should issues arise, and that they could be recharged any costs which we incur in clearing litter.
- 4.17.2 The disposal of wind-blown litter in communal areas serviced by our ground's maintenance contractors is included in the contract specification and should be carried out in line with the schedule.

4.18 Hazardous Materials and Safe Collection and Disposal of Drug Related Litter

- 4.18.1 We will arrange for the safe cleaning and/or collection and disposal of any hazardous items (such as syringes and needles, or bodily fluids / excretions) in the communal areas of our properties or land.
- 4.18.2 Where the individual(s) responsible for these hazardous materials is known, we will take appropriate action (alongside Police Scotland, NHS Scotland and the local authority) to attempt to resolve the issue.

4.19 Snow Clearance and Gritting

- 4.19.1 We do not provide a general snow clearing and gritting service. However, we have identified individual developments which we regard as high priority for snow clearing and gritting services and will take action to assist in these areas if required.
- 4.19.2 These include all supported housing for older people developments, and a selection of other developments where there are a number of vulnerable customers, there are steep, sloping roads and pavements, and there are unadopted areas (i.e., areas for which Scottish Borders Council is not responsible). Subject to contractor availability, we will respond to incidents of significant poor weather in these locations – this will involve snow clearing after a heavy fall and gritting when conditions are poor.
- 4.19.3 We undertake an annual review of our winter preparedness through our Health and Safety Working Group to ensure that any new developments are assessed in terms of this criteria; this review will also be informed by the reported experiences of customers and staff, and changes in demographics of customers living in our developments.
- 4.19.4 We will provide grit bins in new developments so that customers are able to grit roads and pavements which have not yet been adopted by the local authority if required.

4.20 Stair and Window Cleaning

- 4.20.1 We provide a stair and/or window cleaning service in some of our developments with communal stairwells. Customers who are provided with this service have a charge for it included in their monthly rent, service charge, or factoring charge.
- 4.20.2 We make available on our website information on the developments where stair and window cleaning is carried out, the specification to which the cleaning should be completed, and the schedule of cleaning.
- 4.20.3 The service is delivered on our behalf by contractors with the standard of the work monitored by our staff. Customers are encouraged to report any issues

with stair cleaning to us so that these can be investigated with the appropriate stair cleaning contractor.

4.21 Fire Safety

4.21.1 Our approach to fire safety is specifically one of life preservation and fire prevention through minimising risk. This includes a commitment to carry out Fire Risk Assessments of common areas within multi-storey flats and our supported housing developments.

4.21.2 Our Tenancy Agreement states that no resident possessions should be stored in any of the common parts except in areas set aside for storage. We will take action to enforce this tenancy condition if customers block fire escapes or store any combustibles within common stairwells. We will also respond to any reported concerns of hoarding within our properties and work closely with other agencies to address any immediate health and safety issues.

4.21.3 All new customers are offered a fire safety visit by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service at the start of their tenancy, and we may also request SFRS to carry out an enhanced fire safety visit if we have any concerns about increased risk.

4.22 Signage

4.22.1 We aim to limit the use of signage within our developments and, where it is required, ensure that it is appropriate and of good quality.

4.22.2 While there may be a need for some signage to help us to manage specific issues within developments and provide information to customers, signage is not our default position to address issues. We may also use signage on a temporary basis to help address particular issues and monitor the effectiveness of this approach.

5. REQUESTS FOR ALTERATIONS / ADDITIONS

5.1 Customers must seek our permission for any external alterations or additions to Eildon homes and garden areas. This includes (but is not limited to) requests to erect sheds, fences, patios and to install satellite TV dishes.

5.2 This must be done in writing and provide sufficient detail (including measurements, materials etc.) to allow us to carry out an assessment of the proposals.

5.3 Failure to seek permission for alterations will be deemed to be a breach of tenancy agreement and we will take appropriate action.

5.4 We will aim to protect our interests, the interests of our customers and the general amenity of the area when deciding on these proposals. In addition,

any permission could include conditions on compliance with the local authority Planning and Building Standards requirements.

- 5.5 Permission will not normally be granted for additions or alterations to communal areas. In some cases, consideration may be given to requests relating to communal areas where all affected customers agree, where there is available space and where the granting of permission does not give rise to any ongoing health and safety, maintenance, or insurance obligations.

6. STAFF TRAINING

- 6.1 Staff involved in any aspect of our estate management will be provided with appropriate training as part of their induction to the organisation and this training will be refreshed as necessary.

7. MONITORING

- 7.1 The application of this policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis, through Estate Management Walkabouts and capturing customer feedback via annual surveys and ad hoc reporting of issues. This information will be used to inform planned and cyclical maintenance programmes and deliver estate improvements where required.

8. COMPLAINTS

- 8.1 We value complaints and endeavour to use information to help us improve our services. Complaints relating to estate management are dealt with in line with our complaint handling procedure. Complaints can be made if we fail to apply this policy properly or do not meet our service standards.

9. REVIEW

- 9.1 This policy should be reviewed within five years unless required earlier due to changes in the law, regulation, best practice, or the requirements of Eildon.