



# Estate Management Policy

Board Approved:

12 February 2025

Next Review:

February 2028

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Estate Management is a general term used to include Tenancy Management and Environmental Management.
- 1.2 It is the aim of HfL to provide a comprehensive estate management service, which is effective in ensuring that the estates in which we have properties are attractive, well-maintained, and safe places to live. This Policy on Estate Management outlines what HfL's position is and how we deal with certain estate-related issues.

## 2.0 AIMS

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to outline the framework and measures HfL has adopted to provide an effective and responsive Estate Management service. It will ensure a pro-active and strategic approach to Estate Management that can tackle problems quickly, sensitively and effectively.
- 2.2 HfL will place emphasis on preventative measures whilst adopting procedures designed to resolve issues and problems at an early stage.
- 2.3 In all instances, as far as resources allow, HfL will seek to co-operate with other relevant agencies and, where possible, adopt a partnership approach to promote sustainable communities.
- 2.5 All residents will be made aware of their respective responsibilities when they sign their Tenancy Agreement. Those responsibilities will be reinforced in HfL's Newsletters, estate visits and on our website.
- 2.6 Estate Management covers a wide range of issues and as such the policy cross-references several other policies.

## 3.0 PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives underpinning the Estate Management policy are:

- Provide good quality up to date information to promote effective Estate Management and manage the expectations of users of the services.
- Respond quickly to complaints in an effective, sensitive, and consistent manner by undertaking thorough investigations, ensuring accurate record-keeping and keeping complainants informed of progress.
- Carry out regular estate inspections and communicate with other agencies/departments to tackle problems early and effectively, and to minimise the risk of escalation.
- Ensure that the approach to Estate Management issues complies with and reflects the legal framework and that best practice is incorporated throughout service delivery.
- Co-ordinate and support a multi-agency approach with relevant agencies to effectively tackle Estate Management within our communities.

- Work with residents to tackle persistent problems, which will improve the local environment.
- Develop and implement procedures that guide staff through the process of investigating and resolving estate management problems.
- Develop and promote staff training to ensure all staff are equipped to carry out the role expected of them.
- Carry out regular satisfaction surveys to ensure that the aims and objectives of this policy meet the expectations of our tenants.
- Monitor and review the effect and outcomes so the aims and objectives of the policy are successfully met.

## 4.0 LEGAL AND REGULATORY WORK

4.1 From a tenant and landlord perspective, the foundation to Estate Management lies mainly in the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, which tenants have signed with HfL. The key legislation behind the tenancy agreements is the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

4.2 This Policy and HfL's general approach to dealing with estate management is based on the above legislation, good practice and compliance with the principles outlined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter:

### **Outcome 1 – Equalities:**

- They support the right to adequate housing
- Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs and rights recognized, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

### **Outcome 2- Communication:**

- 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.

### **Outcome 3 – Participation:**

- 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.

### **Outcome 6 - Estate Management, Anti-social behaviour, Neighbour Nuisance and Tenancy Disputes:**

- Tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

### **Outcome 11 – Tenancy Sustainment:**

- 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.

### **Outcome 13 – Value for Money:**

- Tenants, owners, and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

#### **4.3 Links with Other Policies**

- Asset Management Policy
- Contractors and Insurance Policy
- Tenant Participation Strategy
- Anti-social Behaviour Policy
- Pet Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy

## **5.0 SERVICE STANDARDS**

### **5.1 Estate Management Inspections**

Our Housing and Maintenance Teams will carry out Estate inspections to manage and monitor the condition of our estates. This will include:

- Regular inspections of common areas, including stairways, external pathways, garden areas and amenity areas.
- Monitoring of HfL's common landscaped areas.
- Monitoring of the stair cleaning contract.
- Monitoring of the ground's maintenance contract
- Effective management of 'hot spot; areas that have been identified by residents or colleagues.
- Organise meetings with tenants to deal with and resolve ongoing issues.
- Involve and include the Tenants Panel in changes and ongoing feedback on the Estate Management Service
- Record, monitor and learn lessons from Estate Management complaints in accordance with SPSO Guidelines.
- Liaise with other appropriate staff and agencies to share information and to ensure the effective implementation of this policy and to prevent problems escalating. The Housing and Maintenance teams will work with our contractors and ELC (Waste services. Street Lighting, Environmental Protection, Roads Department) and SSPCA to find solutions to problems as they arise as far as is realistically feasible.
- Minor repairs identified during inspections will be processed by the Maintenance team in accordance with our Asset Management Policy.

### **5.2 Common Areas**

Responsibilities for common areas are set out in the Tenancy Agreement between HfL and tenants. The responsibility of owners for common areas is set out in their title deeds. All tenants and owners sharing common areas must keep these areas clean and tidy and comply with local arrangements for the use and sharing of common parts.

### 5.3 Communal areas include:

- Entrance doorways
- Stairs
- Bin store areas
- Shared garden areas
- Drying areas
- Pathways
- Car parks
- Play parks

HfL will ensure that these areas are regularly inspected to make sure that they are maintained, kept clean and litter-free. Where services are provided by another agency, faults will be reported directly to the relevant agency. Where recurrent problems arise, HfL will work with the relevant agencies to enable these to be resolved. If any items are found within the common areas or stairwells that are posing a Health and Safety issue, HfL staff will take the appropriate action to resolve the situation.

HfL will ensure that repairs to controlled entry systems, stair doors, stair windows, loft hatches and other common repair items are progressed in accordance with the contractual agreements.

### 5.4 Stair Cleaning

HfL provides a stair cleaning service that ensures that the stairs windows are washed stairs and landings are swept and washed regularly.

To ensure the stair-cleaning contractor is performing to a high standard, a customer satisfaction survey will be carried during the time of the annual rent consultation survey. Staff will raise any stair cleaning issues with the contractor.

HfL may organise stair meetings where other issues regarding stair maintenance if required. Where the condition of a common stair shows no improvement, HfL may enforce action in accordance with the terms of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. This may include recharging tenants with associated costs or may result in referring the matter to the Environmental Health Department, which has statutory powers in this respect under the terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

### 5.5 Individual Gardens

HfL will ensure that tenants maintain gardens in accordance with their Tenancy Agreement.

If a tenant has exclusive use of a garden, they must take reasonable care to keep it from becoming overgrown, untidy, or causing a nuisance. Gardens must not be used for the storage of bulky items or dog fouling.

If the garden is not maintained to a reasonable standard, the tenant will be contacted to find out the reason for this. HfL will advise the tenant of the action required to remedy the situation and will confirm a date when the garden will be re-inspected. If there has been no improvement in the garden, HfL may explore legal options or arrange for a contractor to complete the necessary work and re-charge the tenant the cost.

#### 5.6 Communal Gardens and Drying Areas

- Lawn/meadow/grassed areas will be cut fortnightly during the growing season.
- Shrubby areas will be maintained with the removal of weeds and litter as necessary
- Boundary hedges and trees will be maintained and encroaching growth cut back as necessary

HfL considers that it is reasonable to allow young children who are under responsible supervision to play in the communal garden areas as long as consideration towards other neighbours is shown.

HfL will provide communal washing lines and tenants should be considerate of their neighbours when using this facility. It is the tenant's responsibility to report any damaged or missing washing lines.

#### 5.7 Refuse Disposal

HfL will work with East Lothian Council to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided for refuse disposal and recycling.

All residents will be responsible for ensuring that their refuse is disposed of safely and securely in the refuse and recycling bins provided.

At the start of their tenancy, tenants will be informed of the arrangements and scheduled days for the uplift of refuse, bulk items, and recyclable material.

A bulk uplift service is provided by East Lothian Council. A charge per item may be applied for this service.

#### 5.8 Play Areas

Three developments have play areas which are subject to quarterly safety inspections by ROSPA qualified contractor and weekly inspections by our grounds maintenance contractor.

The three estates that benefit from play equipment are:

- Muirfield Gardens, Gullane

- McFarlane Court, Elphinstone
- Limeylands Court, Ormiston

Play areas will usually be enclosed by fencing for safety, and we will prohibit dogs and other pets within this enclosure for safety and hygiene reasons. We will routinely inspect play equipment and facilities and ensure that they are safe and fit for purpose

#### 5.9 Vehicles and Parking

All tenants will be made aware of their respective responsibility for vehicle parking, as contained in the Tenancy Agreement. No vehicle, caravan, trailer, or boat may be parked on communal land unless that land is set aside for parking. In any event, parking should not cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours.

Tenants should ensure that vehicles in their ownership, and no longer in use, are disposed of through an approved contractor. Where it is suspected that a car has been abandoned, this will be reported to East Lothian Council, Abandoned Vehicles Team.

#### 5.10 Vandalism and graffiti

All incidents of vandalism will be reported to Police Scotland (where applicable) as soon as we are aware of this, and a crime report number obtained for insurance purposes.

Where a repair arises as a result of vandalism (for example, reglazing), the tenant will be required to report the incident to the Police, or the cost of the repair will be re-charged to the tenant.

Where the identity of a perpetrator of acts of vandalism to HfL's property is known and proven, and the perpetrator is a tenant or a member of a tenant's household, HfL's will normally require that the cost of any repairs are met by the tenant concerned.

HfL will take action in line with its Anti-Social Behaviour policy where it is known that an individual has been responsible for an act of vandalism.

Graffiti will be removed. Timescales for removal is dependent on the nature of the graffiti We may liaise with ELC in such instances.

#### 5.11 Dog Fouling

HfL will take action where a tenant fails to control their pets in terms of the Tenancy Agreement and Pets policy (see Pet Policy). Tenants will be required to keep dogs under control at all times.

Stray dogs will be notified to the SSPCA. In instances where a dog is considered to pose a danger to the public, HfL will reserve the right to initiate legal action for removal of the animal under the terms of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and Dangerous Dogs (designated type) (Scotland) Order 2024.

#### 5.12 Bulk Refuse and Items of Furniture

All residents are responsible for the disposal of items of bulk refuse including furniture by arranging for uplift by the East Lothian Council. If HfL have to arrange the removal of items due to them being a risk to residents' safety the cost of the removal will be recharged to the resident responsible.

#### 5.13 Vermin, Pest, and Insects

Tenants have a responsibility to report all issues with regard to vermin, pest, or insect infestation to HfL.

Where the infestation can be attributed to the tenant's living conditions, HfL will advise the tenant on how best to rectify the situation to ensure that it does not re-occur.

The tenant must be advised that they will be responsible for the remedial work required to bring the property up to standard. Any treatments which require to be carried out will be carried out by an approved contractor.

The keeping of pigeons, or the construction of pigeon lofts, will not be permitted.

#### 5.14 Satellite Dishes

In conjunction with ELC planning restrictions the installation of individual satellite dishes on any of HfL's property will be considered. Tenants are required to complete an Alteration and Improvement application for permission.

#### 5.15 Sheds

If a tenant wishes to erect a shed, they must receive written permission from HfL prior to commencing the work. HfL will not refuse permission unreasonably, although permission may be subject to certain conditions. Tenants are required to complete the Alteration and Improvement application form.

It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure that the building meets the planning regulations and appropriate building standards. This will be checked during the application process with HfL staff.

### 6.0 Proactive Estate Management



HfL recognises that the level of tenant satisfaction within an area can be assisted by proactive measures which can enhance the environment for all who live there. Consequently, the following processes will be implemented to minimise the effect of environmental problems occurring.

### 5.1 Community Co-operation

HfL will aim to foster a positive community image and to enlist the co-operation of all sections of the community by:

- Encouraging membership of HfL, the Board and the Tenants Panel
- The provision of clear and comprehensive information relating to all aspects of HfL's work.
- Participating in, or organising, social and community activities within existing resources.
- Promoting specific initiatives, e.g. Garden and pot competitions.
- Consulting with tenants over estate design plans, use of open spaces, and our Estate Management policy.

## 6.0 INFORMATION TO TENANTS

Tenants will be made fully aware of the terms of their tenancy and their respective responsibilities when signing their Tenancy Agreement. Additional practical guidance will be provided by the Community Housing Officer at the sign up appointment. Updated information will be published in the Newsletter, available during estate visits and on our website.

## 7.0 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

HfL fully recognises that Estate Management has to be tackled in partnership because no single agency can tackle such a wide-ranging issue in isolation.

HfL is committed to building and developing effective partnership working with agencies such as the Police Scotland, East Lothian Council, and other agencies working within our communities. Meetings will be convened by the Housing Manager/Community Housing Officer as appropriate, depending on the issue being raised.

The Tenancy Sustainment Officer will support our Estate Management by resource funding for community green space projects and individual tenants for garden improvement works.

## 8.0 INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The sharing of information is vital to providing effective joint working with local agencies. HfL will treat all information provided confidentiality.

## 9.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

HfL will monitor and report on the achievement of Estate Management

performance standards set in consultation with Tenants. This will include reporting to HfL's Tenant's Panel and Board on:

- Annually on Tenant satisfaction with grounds maintenance and stair cleaning services
- Quarterly satisfaction with the management of the neighbourhood by locality
- Quarterly any serious estate management complaints received, and action taken

Residents will be kept informed of progress and updates in the delivery of Estate Management services through articles in Newsletters, on our website and via direct resident communications as required.

## 10.0 STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

HfL recognises that staff are the key resource in ensuring an effective Estate Management service. It is important that staff have the confidence and knowledge to identify and investigate issues and take appropriate action.

All staff will receive training on Estate Management issues to keep them aware of all options available for dealing with problems, and to enable them to develop the necessary skills to put these effectively into practice.

## 11.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk can arise from the HfL's Estate Management policy as a result of:

- Dissatisfaction with service levels which can damage HfL's reputation.
- Higher turnover of properties as a result of poor environmental standards.
- A lack of confidence in HfL being a good landlord.
- Poor value for money in service provision.

HfL will monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of this Policy, to ensure that these risks are prevented where possible.

## 12.0 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCESS

Information on how to make a complaint is available on our website. Complaints can be made via the website, in person in writing or by email, or by telephoning the HfL.

HfL will attempt to resolve complaints quickly through front line resolution by staff who receive the complaint. Where this is not successful or where the complaint has been categorised as constituting a serious service failure, we will conduct a full complaint investigation.

Beyond HfL's two stage internal procedure, complainants have a right to refer their complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) for an independent external review. HfL's Complaints Handling Procedure details the way in which

complaints can be made to the SPSO, and the timescales for responding.

### **13.0 MONITORING OF THE POLICY**

The Housing and Maintenance and Asset Manager are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy and supporting procedures by staff and; for the maintenance of all the necessary records on the HfL customer management system to enable the development of regular reports on performance and satisfaction.

### **14.0 REVIEW OF POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or where there is a change in legislation, regulatory requirements and/or best practice.



## Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment (EDIA)

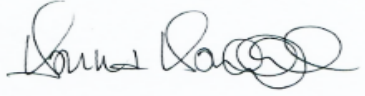
The aim of the EDIA is to consider the equality implications of a policy, practice, or service to prevent discrimination against people who are categorised as being disadvantaged or vulnerable within society (as listed in point 4) and to consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

Name of the <b>policy/practice/service</b> to be assessed	Estate Management Policy	Is this a <b>new policy/practice/service</b> or a <b>revision to an existing?</b>	New Policy – replacing several others
<b>1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose</b> of the policy, practice, or service.		<p>The aim of this policy is to outline the framework and measures HfL has adopted to provide an effective and responsive Estate Management service. The main objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to provide good quality up to date information to promote effective Estate Management and manage the expectations of users of the services.</li> <li>• Respond quickly to complaints in an effective, sensitive, and consistent manner by undertaking thorough investigations, ensuring accurate record-keeping and keeping complainants informed of progress.</li> <li>• Carry out regular estate inspections and communicate with other agencies/departments to tackle problems early and effectively, and to minimise the risk of escalation The purpose of this policy is to effectively manage the environment around HfL's properties and any common areas, in order to ensure that the neighbourhood is an attractive, well-maintained, safe and secure place to live.</li> </ul>	

2. Who is intended to benefit from the policy / proposal? (e.g. applicants, tenants, staff, contractors)	Everyone who resides within or works within our communities; our staff, our partners/ contractors are intended to benefit from this policy.																					
3. What outcomes are wanted from this policy / proposal? (e.g. the benefits to customers)	Various outcomes are wanted however, the policy should enable HfL to effectively manage the environment around HfL properties and any common areas, in order to ensure that the neighbourhood is an attractive, well-maintained, safe, and secure place to live. HfL aims to provide a responsive service to tenants and owners which will ensure the efficient and effective management of all estates.																					
4. Which <b>protected characteristics</b> could be <b>affected</b> by the policy, practice, or service?	<p>(✓) <i>tick all that apply</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1131 571 2036 1050"> <tr><td><i>Age</i></td><td>✓</td></tr> <tr><td><i>Disability</i></td><td>✓</td></tr> <tr><td><i>Gender reassignment</i></td><td>✓</td></tr> <tr><td><i>Marriage/Civil Partnership</i></td><td>✓</td></tr> <tr><td><i>Pregnancy/Maternity</i></td><td>✓</td></tr> <tr><td><i>Race</i></td><td>✓</td></tr> <tr><td><i>Religious or belief</i></td><td>✓</td></tr> <tr><td><i>Sex</i></td><td>✓</td></tr> <tr><td><i>Sexual Orientation</i></td><td>✓</td></tr> <tr><td><i>Consider if you want to add any more</i></td><td></td></tr> </table>		<i>Age</i>	✓	<i>Disability</i>	✓	<i>Gender reassignment</i>	✓	<i>Marriage/Civil Partnership</i>	✓	<i>Pregnancy/Maternity</i>	✓	<i>Race</i>	✓	<i>Religious or belief</i>	✓	<i>Sex</i>	✓	<i>Sexual Orientation</i>	✓	<i>Consider if you want to add any more</i>	
<i>Age</i>	✓																					
<i>Disability</i>	✓																					
<i>Gender reassignment</i>	✓																					
<i>Marriage/Civil Partnership</i>	✓																					
<i>Pregnancy/Maternity</i>	✓																					
<i>Race</i>	✓																					
<i>Religious or belief</i>	✓																					
<i>Sex</i>	✓																					
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>	✓																					
<i>Consider if you want to add any more</i>																						
5. If the policy / proposal is not relevant to any of the protected characteristics listed in part 4, state why and end the process here.																						



<b>6. Evidence Gathering and Engagement</b> – As this policy applies to all protected characteristics in a consistent manner no qualitative and quantitative evidence has been gathered to inform this policy			
<b>a. What evidence has been used for this assessment? For example, national statistics.</b> Scottish Housing Regulator Legal and regulatory Frameworks HfL Vision, Values, Business Plan, Objectives, Strategy, Policies, Standards, Customer Promise. Tenant satisfaction survey results			
<b>b. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of your assessment?</b> Maintenance and Asset Manager, Tenant Information Service			
7. Describe the positive or negative impact(s) the policy / proposal could have on the groups identified in part 4	Positive Impact(s)		Negative Impact(s)
	This policy ensures consistency of service delivery for all customers including those with protected characteristics.		
8. What actions are required to address the impacts arising from this assessment? (This might include; collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative impacts)	Issue	Action	Timescales
			N/A
9. Decision Please record decision e.g., •No change/amend (see above) •Cease •Progress with risk (monitor and add to risk register?)	The policy does not have any adverse impact on any of the protected characteristics.		

Signed:	
Job Title	Housing Manager
Date the EDIA was completed	18/01/2025
Review Date	January 2028