

Estate Management Procedure

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Owner:	Fiona Ross	Job Title:	Head of Housing Services
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Version Control

Date	Owner	Version	Reason for Change
Oct 2020	Fiona Ross	V1.0	3 yearly review

Summary of Changes

Section	Change
Throughout	Into new procedural format
	Change in procedure reference to tie into new policy

Estate Management Procedure

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1.0 Introduction

This procedure describes how Ark will undertake its role and responsibilities as a landlord to ensure that the environments adjacent to, or around the homes in which our tenants live, are managed and maintained to a high standard and are therefore attractive and safe places for tenants to live.

This procedure will set out the standards, which adhere to legislative requirements as detailed in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 and established good practice, so that tenants know what to expect from our estate management services.

This procedure ensures we comply with Outcome 6 of The Scottish Housing Charter which states:

- *“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.”*

This procedure is aimed at all staff with a responsibility for:

- Monitoring and enforcing the terms of Tenancy Agreements;
- Monitoring and enforcing the terms of contracts such as landscaping or cleaning contractors;
- Monitoring the responsibility of third parties where it impacts on the estates in which our tenants live;
- Partnership working where it benefits the improvement of estates;
- Tenant involvement, participation and feedback.

2.0 Information and Advice

We will provide information and advice about our responsibilities and the tenant’s responsibilities with regard to estate management through the following:

- Tenancy/Occupancy Agreement;
- Tenants’ Handbook;
- Articles in our Tenants’ Newsletters;
- Leaflets on specific matters - both paper versions and available on our website, including alternate versions where required;
- Updates on our social media sites;
- Tenants’ groups.

3.0 Estate Management Responsibilities

Estate Management can be a complex area to manage as numerous parties have different responsibilities for managing and maintaining parts of an estate.

3.1 External agencies and service providers

- Local authority – pavements/roads, street lighting, refuse collection, dog fouling, untaxed vehicles, illegal parking, play parks and landscaped areas owned by the Local Authority;
- Police – abandoned cars, untaxed vehicles and illegal activities.

3.2 Employed third parties

- Contractors employed by Ark to provide a service – cleaning; landscaping; lift maintenance; graffiti removal.

3.3 Residents

- The behaviour of residents may affect how estates function – control of pets; behaviour of household members and visitors; garden maintenance; alterations; running businesses from home; use of communal areas such as car parks/drying areas/stairways

3.4 Ark staff and Partnership Working

Both Housing Services Officers (HSOs) Maintenance Officers (MOs) have a responsibility to identify and note any estate management matters of concern while visiting an area at any time. The staff member who comes across a matter that requires action will either deal with the matter directly or ensure that it is passed on to an appropriate colleague. We will work to build relationships with all parties involved. This will include:

- Establishing and building strong links at an estate and neighbourhood level with agencies and service providers;
- Being clear with tenants when the local authority has responsibility for dealing with particular issues and will provide contact details so they can report and follow up on any issues directly;

- Being clear with tenants when the Police has responsibility for dealing with particular issues and will provide contact details so they can report and follow up on any issues directly;
- Providing regular reminders to residents in relation to their responsibilities in terms of their tenancy agreements. This may take the form of verbal or written reminders and general reminders in quarterly newsletters.

We will record all relevant information resulting from estate visits or reports from residents etc. and any action we take based on that information on the Housing Management System.

Joint structured and estate management visits will be carried out at least 3 times per year to each project by HSOs and MOs,

MOs and HSOs will jointly prepare an annual schedule of estate management inspections to ensure that visits are carried out each year. Additional joint visits may be required to areas with specific problems.

The Senior Housing Officer (SHO) or Senior Property Officer (SPO) may choose to accompany the HSO and MO on one of their inspections to monitor the standard of the areas.

3.5 Specific Duties

3.5.1 Maintenance Officer Duties

MOs will implement these procedures by:

- Undertaking quarterly estate inspections either a specific visit or as part of general visit to an area (**Appendix 1**);
- Noting any repairs or other estate management action required including checks on cyclical or planned maintenance projects and the structural condition of the projects;
- Ensuring that any work or action required is initiated, otherwise reporting, by email, any action required to the person responsible for authorising the action required;
- Ensuring that the communal landscaped areas we own are maintained to the agreed satisfactory standards, as specified in the current landscaping contracts.

3.5.2 Housing Services Officer Duties

HSOs will implement these procedures by:

- Ensuring that all housing management checks are carried out on the quarterly visits (**Appendix 2**) and noting any action required;

- Making arrangements for Estate Walkabouts with tenants to take place once per year in each development with the presence of the MO to help address any estate management issues.
- In blocks of flats, check the internal stair and stair windows for cleanliness;
- Check on the condition of self-contained gardens, where tenants have a responsibility to maintain these;
- Check communal areas such as laundry's, bin stores, bike stores;
- Check bin store areas to ensure that sufficient bins are available for tenants;
- Recording the outcome of each visit on contact management;
- Ensuring that any action required is initiated or is reported to the person responsible for ensuring that it is carried out;
- Undertaking settling in visit's within 4 weeks of a new tenancy starting;
- Enforcing the conditions of the Tenancy Agreement when required.

Where there are specific problems in an area HSO may need to arrange one or more visits specifically to deal with estate management matters or to monitor compliance with any measures agreed following previous action.

3.6 Reports from tenants

Reports or complaints regarding estate management issues from tenants or local residents will be passed to the relevant HSO or MO depending on which department is responsible for the matter.

Where the problem is the responsibility of another agency and/or is not on land Ark owns, the person reporting it may be given advice as to which authority or agency they should contact.

Where a report requires our response or action, the HSO will:

- Note the details on the tenancy diary on the Housing Management system, so that there is an 'audit trail' of reports and action taken;
- Request the acknowledgement letter of the report to be issued to the complainant by the Housing Services Assistant (HSA) in writing within 2 working days stating the enquiries and/or action that will be taken;
- Initiate any action required, which may include:
 - writing to the tenant(s) involved to remind them of their responsibilities under their Tenancy Agreement, and
 - taking any other enforcement action necessary if the problem persists;
- Where the tenant is in receipt of support, contact the service provider to request staff assistance in dealing with the matter;

- Contact the relevant Local Authority department, the Police or another agency where the problem is one that they have powers to deal with.

Action taken to enforce Tenancy Agreement conditions may include warning letters, home visits, use of 'specific implements' which can be obtained from Courts and, if necessary, the issue of a Notice of Proceedings (NOP) as the first stage of legal action.

The HSO and MO will also check that the matter has been dealt with, either by a specific visit, or as part of their next visit to the area.

4.0 Specific Areas

4.1 Communal Landscaping

The communal landscaping areas owned by Ark are maintained under contracts let by the Maintenance Department. The contract specification is the same for all areas and includes the regular cutting of grass, pruning and weeding of any shrub beds, pruning and trimming of any trees and hedges, general control of weeds and uplift of litter.

The MO is responsible for monitoring contractors' performance and any problems or issues regarding communal areas will be passed to the MO for attention.

The costs of communal landscaping are recovered through a service charge made to tenants.

4.2 Litter and Dumped Rubbish

If there is a general litter problem in an area around our properties, on land that is not owned by Ark, the HSO will report this to the relevant Local Authority staff.

If large items or rubbish are dumped at or close to our properties the HSO will write to all Ark tenants and request that they make arrangements for them to be removed and if it is not removed that the cost of removing the items will be divided by tenants.

In the event that tenants respond to confirm who the perpetrator is, the HSO will follow the line of enquiry and take action in accordance with the terms of their tenancy agreement.

If it is found that the rubbish has been dumped on Ark's land by an individual who is not an Ark tenant the HSO will make contact with the Local Authority to make arrangements to have the items removed, if there was a cost Ark would absorb the cost.

4.3 Cleaning of common stairs and entrances

Where the cleaning of common stairs is carried out by a contractor under our Service Charges Procedure (HM02a), the contractor's work will be monitored by the HSO carrying out spot checks when visiting that area.

The HSO will follow up any matters of concern with the contractor and where required keep the tenants involved advised of the outcome of any meetings.

Where tenants and residents are responsible for cleaning common stairs the HSO will check that cleaning is being carried out as part of their visits to the area.

Where tenants fail to take responsibility to clean the stairs the HSO will write to the tenants in the block to remind them of their responsibilities under their Tenancy Agreement (**Appendix 3**). The letter will give them 14 days to set up a rota or fully comply with an existing one.

If cleaning is still not being carried out satisfactorily the HSO will write again to the tenants involved and advise that if cleaning is not being carried out within 7 days Ark will arrange for the stairs to be cleaned with the costs being charged to them and the cost split among tenants within the block (**Appendix 4**).

4.4 Safety of Common Entrances and Landings

The MO will check common entrances steps, pathways and communal parking areas at each visit to the site and ensure that any repairs or other actions required are carried out.

Where common stair landings and entrance corridors are regularly blocked by bulky items, including bicycles etc., the HSO will write to the relevant tenants to enforce the tenancy conditions and remind them of the fire, and health & safety hazards they are causing.

Tenants will be given a date to clear the objects and advised that if they are not removed Ark will make arrangements for them to be moved and the cost will be recharged to the tenants.

4.5 Unauthorised external work

Tenants who have created driveways, or carried out similar external work without permission, will be asked to submit a request for approval under our Tenant Alterations and Improvements Procedure (M24). This will be dealt with in the same way as any other application for retrospective permission, i.e. if the work is not up to an acceptable standard the tenant will either have to bring the work up to standard or re-instate the area.

4.6 Graffiti

Where walls, doors etc. on our properties have had graffiti painted on them the MO will arrange to have it removed as quickly as possible.

Where the graffiti is offensive, the aim will be to remove it within 1 working day of it being reported.

If the graffiti is on a building that is not ours but is nearby, the HSO/MO will check with the Local Authority that they are aware of it, so that appropriate action may be taken.

4.7 Vandalism

Vandalism will be dealt with under our Neighbour Nuisance & Anti Social Behaviour procedure (HAM01c). Depending on the frequency and seriousness of the vandalism the HSO will report the incidents to the Police, or advise tenants to report incidents directly to the Police.

4.8 Tenants' Gardens

Tenants who have their own gardens are responsible for maintaining them.

As part of their overall estate management monitoring HSOs will carry out routine garden inspections at each site visit, The HSO will take photographs as required to record the condition of badly maintained gardens and will send the **Condition of Garden Letter (Appendix 5)** reminding them of their responsibilities under their Tenancy Agreement. The letter will give the tenant 7 days to improve the condition of their garden.

At the end of the 7 days the HSO will check if the tenant has complied. If the garden is still not in an acceptable condition the HSO will send a **Final Warning Letter (Appendix 6)** that if the tenant does not carry out the work within a further 7 days action to enforce the tenancy conditions, which may include legal action, will be taken.

The options for further action open to the HSO will include:

- Writing to the tenant to advise that if they do not comply by a specified date we will arrange for the garden to be tidied up and will recharge the costs to the tenant, **unless** there are special reasons why we would not make a charge;
- Seeking a 'specific implement' in the Sheriff Court (a specific implement is a legal requirement to make someone do something they should be doing) and advising the tenant in writing that we are doing so;
- Issuing a Notice of Proceedings (NoP) with a covering letter as the first step in the formal legal process, as the tenant is in breach of their Tenancy Conditions.

The action to be taken will depend on the seriousness of the problem and the tenant's circumstances in each case. The HSO will discuss the matter with the SHSO before starting any form of legal action.

4.9 Sheds or other buildings in the garden

If a tenant has a shed or building in their garden which is in a poor state of repair, and Ark is not responsible for maintaining it, the tenant will have to repair or remove it.

The tenant must also ensure that at the end of the tenancy any sheds/buildings should be dismantled and disposed of.

4.10 Pets

The types of problems caused by pets, in particular those caused by dogs - excessive barking or fouling of communal/public areas - will be dealt with under our Neighbour Nuisance & Anti Social Behaviour procedure (HAM01c). In dealing with such problems the HSO may seek the help of the Local Authority.

Under the current Tenancy Agreement only tenants in properties with their own front door and self-contained garden are allowed to keep a dog, although there are some tenants in flats with a previous version of the Agreement which allows them to keep a dog.

4.11 Vehicle Repairs

If it is suspected that a tenant or a member of their household, or an immediate neighbour, is running a vehicle repair business from their home and this is resulting in both a noise nuisance and the collection of several vehicles outside our properties, the HSO will deal with this under both the Neighbour Nuisance & Anti Social Behaviour procedure (HAM01c) and the Running a Business from Home procedure (HAM01h).

4.12 Abandoned vehicles

If it is suspected that a vehicle has been abandoned in one of our parking areas the HSO will check with local tenants directly, or in writing, to establish if anyone knows who the owner may be.

If the owner cannot be traced within 7 days of the matter first being reported, the HSO will report the vehicle to the appropriate Local Authority to arrange for it to be removed.

If the abandoned vehicle is on a public road or car park the HSO will advise the tenant that they should contact the Local Authority to make them aware. The Local Authority must remove abandoned vehicles from land in the open air and roads (including private land)

4.13 Abandoned Properties

If it is suspected that a tenant has abandoned a property, the HSO will follow this up as detailed in the Abandoned Properties procedure (HAM01a).

5.0 Implementation and Review

5.1 Implementation

The Head of Housing Services and Head of Asset Management are responsible for ensuring that this procedure is implemented.

5.2 Review

The Head of Housing Services and Head of Asset Management will ensure that this procedure is reviewed at least every 3 years.

Appendix 1 Structured Visit Checklist

Ark Housing Association - Structured visit - 3 per year

SHEET 1 - Site survey

Site	Site Road, Town	Year	2020/21	Visit number	1 of 3
Maintenance Officer	M.O. name	Area	Central	Date	24/02/20

External - Condition survey

Roofs	
Gutters / Rhones	
Painterwork	
Walls	
Windows	
Doors	
Lighting	
Roads / Car park	
Grounds	
Trees	

Internal (communal) - Condition survey

Painterwork	
Doors	
Lighting	
Flooring	
Kitchen	
Bathrooms	
Lifts	

Minor works

Notes from site visit / works orders to raise: (Alt + Enter for new line)

Major Work to be considered

Notes from site visit: (Alt + Enter for new line)

Other issues

Notes from site visit: (Alt + Enter for new line)

SHEET 2 - Service contracts, periodic checks, and documentation

Fire safety service contracts

Fire Alarm	Service frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
Emergency lights	Service frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
Fire equipment servicing	Service frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
Sprinklers	Service frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO

Specialist equipment service contracts

Specialist bath	Service frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
Hoist	Service frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
Clos o Mat	Service frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
Automatic door opener	Service frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO

Service contracts - Other

Lifts	Service frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
CCTV	Service frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO

Periodic testing

PAT testing	Testing frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
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EICR	Testing frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
Gas - Plant	Testing frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
Gas - Other	Testing frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO

Legionella

Water sampling	Testing frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
Tank inspection	Testing frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
TMVs	Testing frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO
Shower disinfection	Testing frequency:	FREQUENCY	Last visit:	DATE	In date:	YES/NO

Documentation

Legionella logbook	On site:	YES/NO	Checked:	YES/NO
Fire logbook	On site:	YES/NO	Checked:	YES/NO
Asbestos register	On site:	YES/NO	Checked:	YES/NO
Noticeboard	On site:	YES/NO	Checked:	YES/NO
Repair reporting sheet	On site:	YES/NO	Checked:	YES/NO

Inspections

Lift motor room	Checked:	YES/NO	Comments:
Switch room	Checked:	YES/NO	Comments:
Plant room	Checked:	YES/NO	Comments:

Communal meter readings

Electricity	Meter no.	NUMBER	Meter Reading:	READING
Gas	Meter no.	NUMBER	Meter Reading:	READING

Appendix 2 Housing Officers Quarterly Check

ESTATE MANAGEMENT VISITS - REPORT

Date:

Street/Area:

Where appropriate, for each item reported on please note individual addresses.

Item	Initial	Comments/ Action taken/follow up required
Check for graffiti		
Gardens checked		
Landscaped areas checked		
Standard of litter pick up checked		
Check for dog foul issues		
Any rubbish/bulky refuse items needing to be removed?		
Bin storage areas checked		
Condition of paths checked		
Any unauthorised external works evident?		

Any abandoned road vehicles or parking issues evident?		
Any security or safety hazards evident?		
Standard of stair cleaning checked		
Suggested improvements for area		
Any other items/notes re Maintenance follow ups (gutters etc)		

Signature:

Name:

Date:

Appendix 3 Stair Cleaning Letter 1

Thursday, 03 March 2022

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
POST CODE

Dear **NAME**

COMMON STAIR AT ADDRESS

Following a recent estate visit, I noted that the common stair is not being cleaned and is not being maintained to an acceptable standard.

I refer to section 2 of your tenancy agreement which states:

2.10 *Where we do not provide a cleaning service you must take your turn with all other tenants sharing the common parts (see 1.12 above) in keeping them clean and tidy, free from litter and free from dog or other animal dirt.*

If you share a common stair, unless we have agreed to take care of it and charge you for the service, you must also take your turn in regularly cleaning, washing and keeping tidy the common stair, its windows, banisters and any bin chute accesses so that the stair is kept in a good and tidy order, free from litter and free from dog or other animal dirt and so that the windows, banisters and any bin chute accesses are clean.

If you and the others cannot agree on the arrangements for doing this or you fail to do the work, we are entitled to decide exactly what you should do and when.

Before making our decision, we will consult with you and the others.

Our decision will be binding on you.

If you do not do the work contained in this paragraph, we may do it ourselves and charge you for it.

This is in addition to any other legal remedies open to us.

You hereby agree to pay for any work carried out by us in this regard.

I now give you 14 days notice to set up a rota, or fully comply with any existing rota, for stair cleaning. A follow up visit will be made on **DATE AFTER 14 DAYS** to ensure the required work has been completed.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Name

Housing Services Officer

Tel:

Mobile:

Email:

Appendix 4 Stair Cleaning letter 2

Thursday, 03 March 2022

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
POST CODE

Dear **NAME**

COMMON STAIR AT ADDRESS

Following my letter on **DATE OF FIRST LETTER** regarding the unacceptable condition of the common stair, I noted from my follow up visit on **DATE** that the stair is still not being cleaned and maintained to an acceptable standard.

If stair cleaning is not carried out by **DATE AFTER SEVEN DAYS**, Ark will arrange for the stairs to be cleaned and the costs will be split between all tenants within the block.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Name
Housing Services Officer
Tel:
Mobile:
Email:

Appendix 5 Condition of Garden Letter 1

Thursday, 03 March 2022

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
POST CODE

Dear **NAME**

Following a recent estate visit, I noted that the condition of your garden is not being maintained to an acceptable standard.

I refer to section 2 of your tenancy agreement which states:

(DELETE SECTION 2.12 or 2.13 AS APPROPRIATE)

*2.12 Where you have **exclusive use of the garden** attached to your house you agree to keep the garden including footpaths and driveways in good and tidy order, free from weeds, free from litter and free from dog and other animal dirt.*

You hereby agree to cut the grass frequently so that it is no longer than ten centimetres.

You agree to cut hedges so that the hedges do not exceed one metre in height where the vision of motorists would be impeded and two metres elsewhere.

*2.13 Where you **share a garden** with others, where we do not provide a garden maintenance service, you will in turn with other occupiers keep the garden including footpaths and driveways in good and tidy order, free from weeds, free from litter and free from dog and other animal dirt.*

You will use the communal garden only for the purposes of a garden.

You in turn with the other occupiers will cut the grass frequently so that it is no longer than ten centimetres.

You in turn with other occupiers agree to cut the hedges so that the hedges do not exceed one metre in height where the vision of motorists would be impeded and two metres elsewhere.

I would ask that you bring the standard of the garden to an acceptable condition, and maintain the garden in a proper manner in the future. A follow up visit will be made on **DATE AFTER SEVEN DAYS** to ensure the required work has been completed.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Name

Housing Services Officer

Tel:

Mobile:

Email:

Appendix 6 Condition of Garden Letter 2

Thursday, 03 March 2022

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
POST CODE

Dear **NAME**

Condition of Garden – Final Warning Letter

I refer to my letter dated **DATE**. I carried out a further inspection on **DATE** and noted that the condition of your garden has not been brought up to an acceptable standard.

I will visit again on **DATE AFTER SEVEN DAYS**. If your garden is still not in an acceptable condition, I may consider action against you to enforce the conditions of your tenancy agreement, which may include legal action against you.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Name
Housing Services Officer
Tel:
Mobile:
Email: