



Group Policy: Estate Management

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Approval Body	Social Landlord Operations Committee
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This policy can be made available, in other languages, on request and in other formats such as large print, audio format and braille as required.

1. Scope

- 1.1 This is a Group policy and therefore applies to Staff, Board and Committee members of The River Clyde Homes (RCH) Group of companies. As at September 2019, The RCH Group consists of River Clyde Homes and its subsidiary, Home Fix Scotland Ltd.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide an effective estate management service that maintains a high-quality level of service to our customers, and that ensures that the estates for which RCH are responsible, are attractive and desirable places to live.
- 2.2 The policy is drawn up under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 and within the regulatory Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) framework of the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC).
- 2.3 The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets standards and outcomes that describe the results that tenants and others who use their services can expect from social landlords.
- 2.4 The relevant standards and outcomes for the activity of estate management are listed below.
- **Charter Outcome 1:** Equalities Social landlords perform in all aspects of their housing services so that: *Tenants and other customers have their individual needs recognised, are treated fairly and with respect, and receive fair access to housing and housing services.*
 - **Charter Outcome 2:** Communication Social landlords manage their businesses so that: *Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with the landlord and get information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.*
 - **Charter Outcome 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.*
 - **Charter Outcome 6:** 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.*
 - **Charter Outcome 11:** Social landlords make sure that: *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.

2.5 Key documents and supporting policies.

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Customer Care Policy
- Factoring Policy
- Repairs, Maintenance and Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy
- Void Management Policy
- Vulnerable Tenant Policy
- Customer Involvement Strategy

3. Definitions

3.1 The following definitions apply to this policy.

- Estate – follows the SHR definition of neighbourhood per SSHC indicator 13 as *‘the area that the landlord has defined as having some responsibility for.’*

4. Policy Statement and Responsibilities

4.1 River Clyde Homes understands that the efficient and effective management of this policy is crucial to maintaining the good appearance of the properties that we own and determines the net present value and perceived value both by our customers and by the wider community.

4.2 By taking prompt action, RCH will minimise occasions where the appearance of our properties and the surrounding environment deteriorate. Such deterioration can have a detrimental effect on the neighbourhood, anti-social behaviour and subsequent ability to re-let houses. This in turn can affect the sustainability of RCH tenancies and have a negative impact on the wider community.

4.3 The overall aim of this policy and the associated procedures is to provide guidelines that set out clear lines of responsibility, is transparent, understandable and easily accessible to staff, customers and members of the public, on all issues related to the management of RCH properties and estates.

4.4 The following are the main aims identified as necessary to ensure the successful and efficient management of this policy.

- To enable our customers to enjoy their homes in attractive, safe and secure surroundings.

- To have a transparent and easily accessible policy for dealing with estate management issues that have a positive effect on customer satisfaction.
- To minimise the turnover of stock and reduce any estate management issues that may impact on tenancy sustainment.
- To ensure effective communication between RCH and our customers by highlighting estate management issues and procedures on our website, advertising our estate walkabouts, and including these in our publications including newsletters, posters, open days and with Tenant and Resident Organisations (TARA), and Registered Tenants Organisations (RTO's).
- To ensure that all colleagues within the RCH Group maintain a highly visible presence in our areas and motivate our customers in taking a responsible role by reporting any issues that affect their environment.
- To liaise with appropriate agencies such as Inverclyde Council, Police Scotland, RTO's and TARA's, and other local community groups with the aim of achieving a good physical environment in all of RCH geographical areas.
- To ensure appropriate use of CCTV, where installed, as a deterrent and effective tool to address misuse of common and open spaces.
- To ensure that communal cleaning standards and responsibilities are carried out to a high standard by the caretaking service, and these standards and responsibilities are made clear and maintained by customers in blocks where the caretaking service is not provided.
- To ensure that garden standards and responsibilities are clearly set in out within the RCH tenancy agreement and standards are maintained, this includes having local Housing Officers alert to those who require assistance in maintaining their garden.
- To apply an appropriate grading system to our estates such as the Gold, Silver and Bronze gradings suggested by Keep Scotland Beautiful.
- To ensure that estate management services are planned, adequately resourced and effectively budgeted for.
- To ensure that all repairs to door entry systems, lighting, removal of graffiti, (any offensive or racial graffiti is removed as an emergency i.e. same day), and fly tipping are carried out quickly and efficiently.
- To ensure demolition sites are secured and maintained.

- To explore environmental projects to enhance the desirability and attractiveness of our estates.
 - To re-charge those responsible for the cost of rectifying damage to our estates or where they have breached tenancy responsibilities and works are required e.g. clearing bin areas and communal stairs. These charges will be applied in accordance with our Repairs, Maintenance and Rechargeable Repairs Policy.
- 4.5 RCH will ensure that the provision of the estate management service is cost effective, appropriate and responsive to local needs.
- 4.6 This includes ensuring that appropriate procedures are in place to maintain the regular inspection of all properties, common parts and open spaces in within the boundaries of our estates. Regular inspection shall identify problems and take appropriate action to have these resolved via customers, partners, or RCH teams.
- 4.7 Effective monitoring of tenancy conditions forms an integral part of the estate management inspections procedures and attention is placed on ensuring that RCH customer abide by their tenancy conditions. Appropriate enforcement measures shall be taken should any breach of tenancy be identified.
- 4.8 This will include monitoring of stair/close cleaning, garden upkeep, removal of graffiti, sweeping of litter and control of pets.
- 4.9 No dogs or cats are permitted in multi-storey blocks, sheltered complexes or wellbeing at home developments. River Clyde Homes can look at exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis and decide if permission for a pet will be granted, we will look at reasons for the pet and the type of pet (size and breed) will be take this into consideration. Customers must adhere to the terms and condition of their tenancy agreement for keeping of and control of pets. River Clyde Homes will address dog fouling by working with local residents and Inverclyde Council.
- 4.10 RCH will also monitor and manage any suspected abandoned houses and/or abandoned vehicles in line with our procedures.
- 4.11 This policy and related procedures identify a range of estate related matters contained within the Scottish Secure tenancy agreement that require customers to obtain our permission prior to implementing a change. This includes:
- Leaving the home for greater than 4 weeks
 - Operating a business from the home
 - Keeping pets
 - Using RCH ground for storage purposes
 - Installation of garden huts, driveways and fencing

- CCTV, video doorbells and satellite dishes
- 4.12 The assessment and award of permission requests shall be reviewed within the aims of this policy and associated procedures.
- 4.13 We have a Complaints Procedure that lets customers who are dissatisfied with our service raise a complaint. This includes complaints relating to equality matters. If a customer remains dissatisfied after using the complaints procedure, they can appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. This is in addition to their right to seek independent advice from a solicitor or any other appropriate body.
- 4.14 All relevant staff will receive training to ensure awareness of the RCH Estate Management policy and procedures, which will enable them to be able to respond to, log and resolve any customer enquiries they may receive.
- 4.15 RCH will also actively seek customers views on the quality of estates using estate walkabouts, satisfaction surveys, questionnaires, feedback from TARAs and RTOs and analysis of service complaints.
- 4.16 We are committed to customer involvement in assessing the quality of estates and will continue to develop customer lead peer inspections through the Customer Scrutiny Panel and Armchair critics.
- 4.17 Service Standards will be applied as follows:
- An estate grading of Gold, Silver or Bronze will be applied, where appropriate, to our estates. The Gold, Silver or Bronze grading criteria will follow guidance from a recognised body such as Keep Scotland Beautiful.
 - A programme of estate inspections shall be carried out to a frequency suited to the seasons and grading of the estate.
 - Ad hoc inspections and those in response to reports from our customers shall be conducted within 5 working days of the initial report.
- 4.18 In line with our Customer Involvement Strategy, consultation with customers was conducted to determine their opinion in relation to the outcomes of this policy, and the need to ensure the wider sustainability of their neighbourhood.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 In line with our Equality and Diversity Policy, we have completed an Equality Impact Assessment of this policy to consider any positive or negative impacts on people who share one or more of the protected characteristics listed in the 2010 Equality Act.

5.2 Our assessment reflects our obligations and the needs of the communities that we serve.

6. Review

6.1 This policy will be reviewed in its entirety every 3 years, unless an earlier review is required due to changes in legal, regulatory or best practice requirements, or because monitoring and reporting reveals that a change in policy is required sooner.