
Sanctuary Scotland

Title: Housing Management of Estates -
Sanctuary Scotland Procedure

Business Function: Sanctuary Scotland
Sanctuary Homes (Scotland) Limited

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Authorised by: Director - Sanctuary Scotland

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General Information

1. Objective of this procedure

- 1.1 The overall aim of the policy is to ensure Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association's (Sanctuary Scotland's) housing stock and the surrounding environment is managed and maintained effectively to the highest possible standard. This will ensure that customers can live in peaceful, secure, safe, clean, and tidy neighbourhood.

2. Legislative/Regulatory context

- [Abolition of Feudal Tenure \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#) and [Tenements \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#): carry out maintenance to common parts and open spaces in order that the said common parts and open spaces are fit for use by the tenant and other occupiers.
- [Civic Government \(Scotland\) Act 1982](#): describes the process for dealing with lost or abandoned property.
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcome 6](#): Estate management, antisocial behaviour (ASB), neighbour nuisance, and tenancy disputes which encourages Registered Social Landlords to take steps to ensure that tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

3. Responsibilities for implementation

- 3.1 The Director - Sanctuary Scotland is responsible for ensuring the overall adoption of, and adherence to, this policy and its associated procedures relevant to their operation.
- 3.2 All relevant Directors, Heads of Housing, Housing and Area Managers are responsible for ensuring that effective training is provided to all staff, and that this is applied consistently throughout all areas of operation.
- 3.3 All staff working within Sanctuary Scotland are responsible for ensuring adherence to this procedure.
- 3.4 Any best practice identified that is not already documented in this procedure, must be shared via Housing Managers and Area Managers to cascade.
- 3.5 Associated guidance is reflected on [KnowledgePoint](#) to ensure that all staff can access detailed processes in an easy and timely manner.

4. What's new - What's different?

- 4.1 July 2023 - Formal review, the following changes have been implemented:
- Adjustments have been made to align with the new branding.
 - Clause 1.6 has been updated to highlight the importance of staff liaising with the relevant departments responsible for executing the works before initiating any communication with the customers.

- Clause 2.2.1 has been revised to reflect that if vandalism affects a customer's private property, staff must inform the customer about the necessity of reporting the incident to the police.
- Clause 3.3. revised to reflect that the customer should be informed that a request for maintenance work will be made, and the items will be taken away within the next six-24 hours. It should also be communicated that the customer will be charged for this service.
- Clause 10.1 has been revised to clearly state that customers are not permitted to plant or make any alterations to the landscaped areas maintained by Sanctuary.
- Appendix AG01 - Fire Safety Housing Management Summary of Duties has been removed from the procedure.
- Clause 22.1 has been updated to highlight that fire safety housing summary of duties can be found [on KnowledgePoint](#).
- Clause 20.4.2 has been updated to emphasize the importance of exercising judgment when deciding whether or not to remove the homeowner's items, as this may vary depending on the specific circumstances.
- References and links within the procedure have been updated to correspond with the new [Video Surveillance Management Systems \(VSMS\) - Group Policy and Procedure](#).

5. Definitions

5.1 The following definitions aim to support the user's understanding of this procedure.

<i>Estate/Scheme</i>	A specific location or area such as a neighbourhood where Sanctuary Scotland has responsibility for delivering housing management services and maintaining properties.
<i>Customer Service Centre (CSC)</i>	The CCS is responsible for supporting Housing Management and Property Services in delivering effective services. It is also responsible for the first point of contact for customers reporting repairs and housing related questions.

Detailed Procedures

1. Estate inspections

1.1 Sanctuary Scotland undertake a programme of regular inspections on its estates to monitor the condition of the estate and identify follow up actions for improvements. This programme may be agreed with Managers or dictated by garage inspections that need to be completed for insurance purposes.

1.2 Housing Officers are also encouraged to complete inspections outside of scheduled programmes, when visiting an area for other duties. An inspection may also be prompted by the Weekly Block Inspection reports that Housing Officers receive from Estate Services which identify issues in communal areas. Inspections include monitoring the following:

- caretaking - litter and internal communal areas;
- gardening - individual properties;
- gardening - communal areas;
- exterior of buildings;
- refuse - bulky rubbish and provision of bins;
- parking;
- evidence of vandalism or ASB;
- pathways, stairwells, and signage;
- outstanding repairs to communal areas;
- poorly maintained boundaries;
- poor performance of grounds maintenance contractors;
- the condition of the garage areas, allotments and play areas; and
- the condition of lighting on estates.

1.3 Involving customers

1.3.1 Where possible, staff should also carry out estate inspections with customers, local councillors and police to provide opportunities to participate in identifying issues and concerns or actions to improve the neighbourhood. This can be done in response to a request from a customer (on an ad-hoc basis), or if an estate inspection is being arranged according to a set schedule, customers can be invited to attend. This should be done by advertising the date and time of the estate inspection on office noticeboards or within newsletters.

1.3.2 Staff may consider writing to individual tenants in an area in advance of an inspection to invite them to attend but this is not mandatory. Members of Focus Groups may also be invited to estate inspections if there are repeat reports of concerns with the condition of the neighbourhood. Customers should be given at least two weeks' notice for any inspection they are invited to.

1.4 Frequency of inspections

1.4.1 Frequency of the inspections and re-inspections will be agreed in consultation with Area Managers or Housing Managers and depending on the outcome of the initial inspection. For example, if the outcome is 'Poor' a re-inspection should be scheduled for one month or sooner depending on the issues raised; if there is dangerous waste such as sharps left in communal areas these should be cleared immediately (or as soon as practically possible if a specialist cleaning contractor is required) and the area re-inspected within one working week.

1.5 Recording outcomes

1.5.1 Staff, must record the outcome of the inspection using the electronic form available on [KnowledgePoint](#), which includes an Estate Action Plan to monitor and progress any issues identified. This can be done by updating the estate inspection database. Where possible, staff should encourage customers to feed into action plans where they have accompanied staff on an inspection.

1.6 Contacting customers with outcomes

1.6.1 Where possible, we should agree a timescale of when to contact customers to give updates that are relevant and will be beneficial to the customer for example when actions from the inspections have been completed, agree the format of the feedback with the customer at the end of the inspection. To obtain updates, staff should liaise with the relevant departments responsible for carrying out the works before contacting customer.

2. Vandalism and graffiti

2.1 Graffiti

2.1.1 On pro-actively identifying graffiti, or on receiving a report from a customer, action should be taken to remove it as soon as possible. If staff discover or are notified of graffiti, they must report it to the CSC immediately. Where another organisation is responsible because the graffiti is not on Sanctuary-owned land then it must be reported through the relevant route which can be found on [KnowledgePoint](#).

2.1.2 Wherever possible, graffiti of an offensive nature (homophobic, racist, sexist etc.) should be removed within two hours, this should be treated as an emergency, and we should aim for removal within six hours. These cases should be managed as a case of harassment or hate crime if it is clearly targeting a victim. Follow the [KnowledgePoint](#) processes for ASB new cases or existing cases and refer to the [ASB and Harassment - Scotland Policy and Procedure](#).

2.1.3 If a Sanctuary Scotland customer is responsible for the graffiti, staff must speak to them about a breach of tenancy conditions and advise them to arrange removal. If this is not done within a reasonable timescale, Sanctuary Scotland must have it removed and a recharge of the cost or other appropriate tenancy action should be considered.

2.2 Vandalism

- 2.2.1 If vandalism is reported this should be treated as ASB. If this has affected a customers' private property, staff should inform the customer that they must report the incident to the police, if they have not already done so. Any property that Sanctuary Scotland owns which is damaged, for example, a play area, communal doors, bin storage areas and lifts, staff should contact the CSC to raise a works order for these to be made safe and repaired.
- 2.2.2 After the report has been made to the CSC, staff should follow the [KnowledgePoint processes for ASB new cases or existing cases](#) and refer to the [ASB and Harassment - Scotland Policy and Procedure](#).

3. Fly tipping and dumped rubbish

- 3.1 When items of bulky refuse or rubbish are identified (or reported by customers) on Sanctuary Scotland schemes and land we seek to get them removed as soon as possible using internal resources. The designated Housing Officer should take photographs and provide relevant details of the issue to assist with reporting and resolving the situation. If the bulky items or fly tipping is not on Sanctuary Scotland owned land, contact Environmental Health at the [Local Authority](#) to arrange for removal.
- 3.2 If fly tipped or dumped bulky rubbish is discovered on a customer's property, staff must advise the customer of the appropriate agency to contact for removal and re-inspect within one week to ensure uplift is completed.
- 3.3 If the rubbish is hazardous i.e., needles, toxic waste, or flammable, then this must be removed as a priority. If the perpetrator is known, and they are a Sanctuary Scotland tenant or homeowner, the designated housing officer must contact tenant and request that they remove this rubbish as a matter of urgency. The customer should be informed that a request for maintenance work will be made, and the items will be taken away within the next six-24 hours. It should also be communicated that the customer will be charged for this service. The designated Housing Officer should contact the CSC to request a works order is raised to remove this in accordance with the [Waste Management - Group Policy and Procedure](#). This must be looked at as an emergency and we will have the area cleared within 24hrs but aim to have this done within six hours, if the case is we need to involve an Environmental Contractor it is possible it may take longer than 24hrs for the area to be cleared and made safe.
- 3.4 If bulky rubbish is discovered on a Sanctuary Scotland scheme which has not been collected for longer than two weeks, staff must arrange for removal by contacting the CSC.
- 3.5 If a Sanctuary Scotland customer is responsible for the dumped bulky rubbish, staff must contact the tenant where possible via verbal communication and writing to advise them about the breach of tenancy conditions and advise them to arrange removal. This can also be classed as ASB and reported as such. More information can be found in the [ASB and Harassment - Scotland Policy](#).

- 3.6 Where the customer does not arrange the removal of bulky rubbish, staff should call the CSC to raise a request to have it removed and a recharge of the cost or other appropriate tenancy action should be considered. More information on managing fly tipping and bulky waste can be found on [KnowledgePoint](#). The recharge process can be found here also.

4. Litter

- 4.1 Litter causes an area to look unattractive and may contribute to further environmental problems such as attracting rodents and infestations. Housing management staff will be proactive in identifying problem areas and ensuring prompt action is taken.
- 4.2 Where a site is subject to a service charge, litter collection will normally form part of the service agreement.
- 4.3 For sites where there is no service charge and no litter collection service the relevant outside agency (i.e., local authority) should be made aware of litter issues. Customers will be advised to report such instances to their local authority, or a staff member can contact the local authority on their behalf if requested.
- 4.4 If a Sanctuary Scotland customer is responsible for the litter, the staff must contact the tenant where possible via verbal communication and writing to advise them about breach of tenancy conditions and advise them to arrange removal.
- 4.5 Where the customer does not arrange removal, staff should contact the CSC to arrange removal and a recharge of the cost or other appropriate tenancy action should be considered.

5. Pets and animals

- 5.1 Sanctuary Scotland inspects estates and promptly reacts to reports to ensure neighbourhoods are free from pet or animal related nuisance and will enforce tenancy conditions where pets are undermining the general peace and well-being of the estate.
- 5.2 If staff discover or are notified of a pet or animal related nuisance caused by a Sanctuary Scotland customer, they must arrange for an inspection of the property and area.
- 5.3 Where nuisance is established, staff must contact the tenant where possible via verbal communication and writing to arrange a visit to the pet owner to discuss conditions in the tenancy agreement and refer to the [Tenancy Management - Sanctuary Scotland Policy](#).

5.4 Where customers' pets or animals are causing a nuisance or staff are concerned about their welfare this must be investigated appropriately for example, speaking with the tenant in question, speaking with other tenants within the close (if applicable), and send out diary sheets ([found on KnowledgePoint](#)) to be completed by the tenants. If there is further action required housing management staff must liaise with environmental health, [Scottish Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#) and [National Dog Warden Association \(Scotland\)](#) to take appropriate action. Permission to keep the pet can be revoked if there is evidence that the customer has breached their tenancy agreement with regards to the conditions of keeping a pet. See the relevant tenancy agreement for further information on pets and permissions.

6. Abandoned, untaxed, and un-roadworthy vehicles

- 6.1 Sanctuary Scotland aims to be proactive about identifying and dealing with abandoned, untaxed, and un-roadworthy vehicles which may danger or create an unsightly environment. Further information on how to identify an abandoned vehicle and report it to be removed can be found on [KnowledgePoint](#).
- 6.2 In the event that a vehicle is suspected as abandoned, staff should assess the safety risk surrounding the community. Where it is deemed unsafe, for example there is broken glass, it must be made safe. The designated Housing Officer or CSC Housing Admin is responsible for making enquires with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to obtain the name of the registered keeper as soon as possible. A postal order must be sent with the attached form and cost details which can be found on [KnowledgePoint](#), this can be done either by CSC or the designated Housing Officer.
- 6.3 If there is no registered keeper and the car is untaxed, it is legally classed as abandoned (this is the definition according to the DVLA). The local authority must be contacted to arrange removal, if in 'open air' or roadside. If the vehicle is not in 'open air' inform the local police that the vehicle is abandoned and make arrangements with Police Scotland to deliver the vehicle into their custody which should involve them collecting the vehicle.
- 6.4 Where there is a registered keeper, the designated housing officer should contact the person in writing, including, any photographic evidence, requesting they remove the vehicle within four weeks or further action will be taken. We can report the vehicle to Police Scotland for unauthorised dumping of a motor vehicle and may raise civil court proceeding against the owner to have the vehicle removed.
- 6.5 Regular inspections of the site must take place, to ensure that the condition does not deteriorate and pose a risk to local residents' health and safety.
- 6.6 After four weeks' notice to the registered owner, the Housing Officer should check if the vehicle has been moved. If not, then contact the local authority (or Police Scotland as stated above in section 6.4).

7. Parking

- 7.1 Sanctuary Scotland is proactive in ensuring that only legally taxed vehicles are parked on our estates and that inconsiderate parking does not undermine the appearance of the estate.
- 7.2 Most parking bays are clearly marked. Parking can be used on a first come first-served basis. Where car schemes are in operation, tenants should be advised to contact the provider directly for access (for example, [Enterprise Car Club](#) for Mid-Market Rent in Anderston). Further information on the allocation of parking bays can be found on the [KnowledgePoint process for Parking Bays](#).
- 7.3 For any requests relating to or requesting a disabled parking bay please refer to the [KnowledgePoint FAQ page](#).
- 7.4 Where properties are identified as being used as a business for the purpose of repairing vehicles, staff must investigate and where necessary action must be taken to check if permission was given for this business, or to inform the tenant that they are in breach of their tenancy agreement.
- 7.5 If the tenant has a designated parking bay with/without a parking bollard it is their responsibility to maintain, it's also the tenant's responsibility to maintain/replace any padlocks and or keys if damaged or lost.
- 7.6 Where Sanctuary Scotland customers are found to persistently park in an obstructive or inconsiderate manner, we may investigate this to determine if this is creating nuisance and annoyance to local residents. If this is the case, this should be treated as ASB and managed appropriately. If the driver cannot be identified, or is not a Sanctuary Scotland tenant, it may be necessary to refer this matter to the Local Authority for adopted roads. Housing Officers can use 'No parking' stickers to notify car owners of restricted parking areas and where there are issues on Sanctuary-owned land, signage should be considered if problems persist (see section 8 below).

8. Signage

- 8.1 All estates should have clear and readable signs. They must be placed in prominent areas and free from graffiti or defacement and should damage or defacement occur cleaning and replacement should be arranged as appropriate. For further information on requesting new or replacing existing signage, [refer to the Signage guidance on Solis](#).
- 8.2 Where another organisation, such as the local authority, is responsible for the affected signage the housing officer should contact them. Alternatively, the Housing Officer should encourage the customer to report issues and request repair or replacement, themselves.

9. Bin stores

- 9.1 Bin store areas must be maintained to environmentally safe standards by regularly undertaking inspections of bin stores. Upon identification of a bin store area which is not environmentally safe; for example, there is food waste or toxic waste not contained within the bins or rubbish which may attract rodents or infestations, staff must arrange for a clean up to take place. This can be done by contacting CSC who will instruct Estate Services or a specialist contractor to do this.
- 9.2 Where a Sanctuary Scotland customer is identified as being responsible for misusing the bin store, staff must contact the tenant via verbal communication and writing to advise them on the correct usage of the bin area. Should this become a recurring problem it may be appropriate to consider recharging the costs of clearance or taking other appropriate tenancy action such as issuing a warning letter and reminding the tenant about the terms of their tenancy to take responsibility for the proper use of communal bin areas.

10. Landscaping and gardening

- 10.1 Upkeep and maintenance of landscaped areas should be cost effective and have minimum disruption to the environment and customer. Customers should not plant or make any changes to the landscaped areas.
- 10.2 Open grassed areas that Sanctuary Scotland is responsible for should be cut regularly by Estate Services during the growing season and we have effective weed control measures in place for all our un-adopted footpaths, grassed areas, garages and drying areas.
- 10.3 Shrub beds, trees and communal hedges should be maintained in accordance with good horticultural practice to specifically prevent nuisance, for example blocked access ways, damage to buildings or restriction of light and signage.
- 10.4 Upon being notified of or discovering a communal gardening issue staff should liaise with the relevant Estate Services team or contractor to rectify as soon as possible.
- 10.5 Where a customer's garden is identified as being of an unacceptable condition staff should contact the tenant via verbal communication and writing to advise the customer to remind them of their responsibilities. Further action may be appropriate should the issue be severe enough.
- 10.6 There may be a possibility of a notice being served, then the case should be referred to an Area Manager for consideration. Please also refer to section three and four above and the [KnowledgePoint process](#) for further assistance in the removal of rubbish from a customer's garden.

11. Trees

- 11.1 Trees will be managed to ensure Sanctuary Scotland meets its legal responsibilities for example having regard to our duty of care towards tenants and mitigating any health and safety risks.
- 11.2 Trees in customer's gardens are their responsibility to maintain. Sanctuary Scotland will only intervene to maintain trees in exceptional circumstances, for instance where a health and safety risk is established or there is a risk of damage to our property. Where a tree is not on Sanctuary-owned land (either private or communal), this should be reported to the local authority or private owner who have responsibility for its maintenance.
- 11.3 Trees on communal ground that is Sanctuary-owned are monitored on an on-going basis through the Estate Services grounds maintenance programme. Or through a specialist contractor and recharged through service charges. Trees identified by Housing Management or Estate Services requiring emergency works, for instance as a result of a storm will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and dealt with according to risk identified. In some cases, it may be necessary to bring in a specialist contractor, any cost will be recharged through service charges.
- 11.4 Staff can identify damaged and unsafe trees by looking for:
- splits or cracks in the trunk or branches;
 - branches that are broken, hanging or that have dropped;
 - sections of bark damaged or stripped to show the wood beneath (where the species does not naturally shed their bark);
 - soil movement around the base of the tree in strong winds; and
 - trees showing ill health, disease, or infestation such as signs of rotting, growth of fungi on the bark, wood or around the base of the tree. Infestations may be indicated by holes and damaged material, or foliage dying back or being miscoloured out of season.
- 11.5 Staff should be conscious that some trees are subject to Tree Protection Orders (TPO) which may restrict or prohibit the tree from being pruned or removed. The tree's TPO status should be checked with the Local Authority prior to works being completed except in an emergency.
- 11.6 Emergency works, for instance as a result of a storm will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and dealt with according to the risk identified.
- 11.7 Fallen trees on public highways, trees on, near or affecting country roads, road verges and surfaced public rights of way should be reported to the Local Authority Highway team. Trees in public parks are normally managed by the City Council or Local Council and customers or staff should report it to the Tree Officer or equivalent unless local signage indicates otherwise.
- 11.8 For detailed processes refer to the Trees information on [KnowledgePoint](#).

12. Exterior of buildings

- 12.1 The visual appearance of our properties contributes greatly to the overall environment of estates. Sanctuary Scotland endeavours to maintain all of its housing stock to a high standard. External decorative works are dealt with as part of a maintenance programme in response to regular stock condition surveys.
- 12.2 If there is any deterioration to the external façade of properties that poses a health and safety risk, the customer should be encouraged to report this to the CSC and request a repair. The designated housing officer may take responsibility for reporting a repair if requested, or where the issue affects multiple properties such as a block of flats.

13. Paths and stairwells

- 13.1 Staff must regularly undertake inspections of paths and stairwells to ensure that they are kept neat, tidy, free from litter to assist in the prevention of deterioration and that lightning in communal areas is well maintained.
- 13.2 When notified of or upon discovering issues relating to the poor maintenance of paths and stairwells of faulty lighting staff should raise as a repair via the CSC.

14. Play areas and ball games

- 14.1 Where we are responsible for play areas, we ensure that they are kept in good condition and free from litter, pet fouling or glass. We aim to ensure that they are a safe and pleasant environment for children to play.
- 14.2 We do not permit ball games being played in non-designated areas, staff should refer to the [ASB and Harassment - Scotland Policy and Procedure](#) for guidance. As a deterrent we can place signs in the affected areas, but we cannot enforce 'no ball games' and we wouldn't be able to use CCTV to regulate this activity.
- 14.3 Where play areas or open spaces are a focus for antisocial behaviour staff must enforce our [ASB and Harassment - Scotland Policy and Procedure](#).

15. Garages

- 15.1 Tenants can apply for a garage by contacting their local office where they can make enquires and request an application form to complete, the full process can be found on [KnowledgePoint](#).

16. Boundaries

- 16.1 When dealing with boundary queries staff must establish ownership of the property. Once established that both are Sanctuary Scotland customers, staff must seek specialist advice and inform customers. For further information on our process please refer to [KnowledgePoint](#).

16.2 If the dispute is related to ownership, then staff should refer to Legal Services for advice. An investigation may be required including:

- visiting the property;
- taking photographs;
- investigating boundaries, documents, and drawings; and/or
- liaising with Land Registry.

16.3 For any property left in the garage after the lease has been terminated, we should endeavour to contact the licensee to arrange collection, we must use and complete the Inventory template, if no contact has been established then follow the disposal process outlined above in section 21 unless there are items of value then these should be kept for a maximum of one month. If items are not collected in this time, they should be disposed of, any disposed of or collected items must be updated on the Inventory template.

17. Lost or stolen keys/fobs

17.1 When a customer reports a key or fob stolen staff must obtain a Crime Reference Number (CRN) from the customer. Lost keys/fobs are subject to recharge so if a CRN is not provided for a stolen key/fob the customer will be recharged for a replacement and/or forced access to the property.

17.2 If the key/fob is lost by the customer and is for a suited property, then staff must arrange a replacement with local staff. Once payment is made a replacement will be provided.

17.3 If the fob is faulty, we will replace this at no charge to the tenant. The tenant must bring back the faulty fob to the local housing office, if the tenant is unable to produce the faulty fob they will be charged for a replacement.

17.4 If the fob is for a communal area, then staff must arrange for collection of the new fob. Once payment has been made a replacement will be provided.

17.5 If the tenant has access to a designated parking bay with a parking bollard it is their responsibility to replace and lost/stolen keys, please refer to paragraph 9.5 in above section.

18. Security

18.1 We must ensure that our schemes and properties are as secure as possible. Damaged fencing, gates or security doors should be dealt with and reported as a repair via the CSC.

18.2 Where CCTV is installed staff should refer to the [Video Surveillance Management Systems \(VSMS\) - Group Policy and Procedure](#) for guidance and the Permissions process on [KnowledgePoint](#).

19. Infestations

19.1 We must deal with infestations which occur on estates quickly and efficiently, working with partners and keeping costs down to a minimum. More information can be found on [KnowledgePoint](#) on how we deal with this.

- 19.2 Where the infestation is within a customer's individual property or garden (self-contained), staff must advise them that the removal of the infestation is their own responsibility. Sanctuary Scotland will only take responsibility where the issue is related to bed bugs or other infestations in voids or in communal areas which could cause serious health implications to the individual properties. Housing staff should consult with a Maintenance Surveyor before taking any action.
- 19.3 For infestation of rats, mice or other public health concerns, customers must be advised to contact the local authority. For Mid-Market Rent properties, Sanctuary Scotland will deal with all pests and infestation issues.
- 19.4 When notified of or upon discovering an infestation which is on an estate, staff must report it to the CSC.
- 19.5 The CSC will then complete investigations into the nature and cause of the infestation. Where it is established that the cause of the infestation was the fault of the customer, they must be advised that they will be re-charged for removal.

20. Managing communal areas

- 20.1 Sanctuary Scotland provides a comprehensive maintenance service to all common areas we are responsible for. This includes, cleaning, window cleaning (flats only) and general maintenance.
- 20.2 When notified of or upon discovering that grounds maintenance has not been provided, staff must contact the local Estate Supervisor to ensure that the service is provided.
- 20.3 Storing goods in communal areas
- 20.3.1 Customers are not permitted to store items in communal areas (for example lounges or passageways) which may cause inconvenience or danger to anyone using or requiring access to common areas.
- 20.3.2 Customers who leave items in communal areas should be given an opportunity to remove them. This should be done by Housing Officers writing to tenants in a close or scheme to try and establish ownership of the goods and request removal within seven days. The letter should clearly state that if items are not claimed and removed within this timescale, they will be removed and stored for up to six months. If items are not claimed during this time period, they will be classified as abandoned and disposed of. Staff should explain the reasons for removing the items to encourage customers to understand the risks.
- 20.3.3 If customers fail to remove the items within the specified timescale, a second letter must be sent to tenants, or a notice clearly displayed in the area where the goods are stored to explain that ownership of the items has not been established and the items have been removed on the specified date. The letter or notice should explain again that the items will be stored for six months and provide contact details if the customer wants to arrange collection of their items. The notice or letter should also explain that the cost of storage may be recharged to the customer.

20.3.4 See the [KnowledgePoint 'storage of goods' process](#) for further information and section 22 below for the procedure for mobility scooters in communal areas.

20.3.5 Where communal areas are also internal fire evacuation routes additional guidance on risk assessments and items that can be tolerated is available in [Fire safety of items in fire evacuation routes](#).

20.4 Removing goods from communal areas

20.4.1 Goods which have been collected from a communal area after at least one attempt has been made to contact the owner or establish ownership will be removed and stored off site for up to six months at the cost of the customer. Before items are removed and stored, an inventory and photographs will be taken by housing management using the inventory template which can be found on [KnowledgePoint](#). Items should be labelled and photographed, the Estate Services Technician must be in attendance when the inventory is being completed to understand the size and number of items requiring removal, and to make an assessment for the most appropriate storage space(s).

20.4.2 For communal areas in a factored property, if the goods belong to a Sanctuary Scotland tenant, then the cost of the storage should be recovered. However, if the goods belong to a homeowner, the goods should be removed and stored but Sanctuary Scotland cannot make a recharge to recover the costs for storage. It is important to exercise judgement when determining whether or not to remove the homeowner's items, as this may vary based on the specific circumstances.

20.4.3 Refer to [KnowledgePoint](#) and relevant procedures for the other scenarios below:

- Abandoned properties - abandoned goods
- Void properties - removing items left in the property
- Evictions - removing items left in the property.

20.5 Storing removed goods

20.5.1 Estates Services are responsible for removing items identified by the Housing Officer to the off-site store.

20.5.2 The designated Housing Officer and Estates Services must both be in attendance when each item is checked into storage, both parties (housing officer and estate technician) will then have to re-sign and date the inventory form.

20.5.3 Keys for storage will be retained by Housing Management and placed in the office key cupboard.

20.6 Disposal of goods

20.6.1 The designated Housing Officer should keep an inventory of all items disposed of as per the Inventory template, including any items re-claimed by a customer.

20.6.2 Before allowing a customer to collect an item, Housing Officers should verify the claim of ownership by asking for a detailed description of the item or proof of ownership such as a receipt or photograph of the customer using the item.

20.6.3 After six months, any unclaimed goods will be classified as abandoned and should be delivered to Police Scotland, for the attention of the Chief Constable, as soon as they are deemed to be abandoned.

20.6.4 If any items cannot be stored because they are hazardous, they can be disposed of immediately; items should be taken to the local refuge site by Estates Services.

21. Mobility scooters

21.1 Tenants will need written permission from Sanctuary Scotland to store a mobility scooter inside or outside the property; a risk assessment will need to be completed. If the mobility scooter is unsuitable to be stored within the property it should be kept within a designated area where space is available.

21.2 If there is no space available, alternative housing options should be discussed. See the [KnowledgePoint process for Mobility Scooters - Scotland](#) for more information.

21.3 If a tenant has a need for storage and a risk assessment has been completed which deems there is no suitable storage space/area, an Area Manager or person of at least equivalent seniority can give the tenant temporary permission to store in a communal area (provided it is not causing issues for fire safety, clear evacuation routes remain, not causing an obstruction for other tenants) if no other option available, until suitable arrangements have been made for storage. This may include making an application to Property Services to build an outside safe storage space or considering different housing options with the tenant, to ensure they have suitable access and storage to their property and creating a transfer application if appropriate.

21.4 No mobility scooter (or aids) should be kept in the communal area at any time as this is deemed to be a fire hazard unless temporary permission has been given. If you have any doubts, any advice from the local fire services should be adhered to.

22. Fire Safety in estates

22.1 Housing Officers are the 'responsible person' for fire safety as described in the processes and procedures signposted in section 8.16 of this policy. A summary of these duties can be found [on KnowledgePoint](#), which should be used in conjunction with the formal procedures. The Fire Safety Leaflet (**AG01**) can also be used to raise awareness among customers on how to keep their properties, communal areas and surrounding environments safe.

23. Estate improvements

23.1 The visual appearance of our properties contributes greatly to the overall environment of estates. Sanctuary Scotland endeavours to maintain all of its housing stock to a high standard. External decorative works are dealt with as part of a maintenance programme in response to regular stock condition surveys.

- 23.2 Any proposed changes or improvements to estates should involve customer consultation where possible.
- 23.3 Customers, resident review panels and local focus groups should be encouraged to identify and contribute to projects which have an impact in enhancing the landscaping, security, and general neighbourhood within our estates.
- 23.4 Staff must work with agencies to explore the possibility of the contribution to the funding of projects and encourage the involvement of the community where appropriate.

24. Partnerships

- 24.1 Staff must look to develop partnerships with other agencies, under written protocols where possible to deliver our aim of making communities a place where customers feel safe and secure. Some of this can include:
- Environmental Health
 - Police Scotland
 - Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)
 - Local Authorities
 - Scottish Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)

Supporting Information

1. Policies and Procedures

- [ASB and Harassment - Scotland Policy and Procedure](#)
- [VSMS - Group Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Fire Safety Management - Group Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Housing Management of Estates - Scotland Policy](#)
- [Personal Safety - Group Procedure](#)
- [Tenancy Management - Scotland Policy](#)
- [Waste Management - Group Policy and Procedure](#)

2. Additional support and guidance

- [Inventory Template](#)
- [KnowledgePoint](#)
- [Scottish Government Guidance on Abandoned vehicles: local authority responsibilities](#)