



## **Fair Treatment**

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The Association is committed to making sure that all tenants and sharing owners are treated equally, regardless of ethnic or national origins, race, colour, age, gender, sexuality, political or other belief, religion, marital status, illness, disability or other status.

We will ensure that information and advice about the housing service we provide is available in a form that can be understood by people with special language requirements or visual or other impairments. Where it is not possible to have information translated into relevant ethnic languages, we will seek to provide a facility for personal interpretation for those tenants or sharing owners who may require this.

If you have a particular difficulty in respect of reading, understanding or interpreting any information, including letters which you may receive from us, you should contact your Housing Officer, or your Scheme manager if you live in sheltered housing, and all possible steps will be taken to address your needs.

We also take a particularly serious view of any reports of tenants committing acts of harassment or assault towards other tenants on the grounds of their race, colour, sex or disability and we will not hesitate to take legal action against a tenant where such behaviour has been proven.

If you wish to see the Association's Equal Opportunities policy a copy of the full document can be obtained from our office.

### **ALLOCATIONS AND TRANSFERS TO PERSONS CONNECTED WITH THE ASSOCIATION**

If Association employees, committee members or relatives of these people qualify for an offer of accommodation or for a transfer of accommodation then the offer must first be agreed by the Management Committee of the Association and the decision must also be reported to Communities Scotland.

## **COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

If you feel you have received unfair treatment or you are unhappy about a decision or policy which the Association has made, you should first discuss the problem informally with the appropriate member of staff. If you feel the matter cannot be resolved then you should contact that member of staff's line manager.

Thereafter, if you wish to make a formal complaint to a Director of the Association, we can issue you with the appropriate form and further advice. Ultimately your complaint within the Association may be raised with the Management Committee.

If you are still unhappy about the response received to your complaint you may wish to contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Housing Associations. The Ombudsman service is free and impartial but there are limitations to the nature of complaints that can be addressed.

For further advice and information about the complaints procedures and about the Public Services Ombudsman service please contact our office.

## **USE & STORAGE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION**

The Association retains all the information that you have provided to us – such as your housing application form and any subsequent letters you may have sent us. We also hold copies of letters that we have sent to you and any reports or correspondence about your circumstances which we may have requested from other sources such as tenancy reports from previous public sector landlords - these are held in your tenancy file.

Basic details about your tenancy will also be held on our computer system and on manual records. If you are accommodated in sheltered housing the scheme manager will keep a note of your date of birth, your next of kin details and details of your housing support plan and any relevant medical condition you may have, all locked in the scheme office.

It is essential that we hold this information in order to provide you with an accurate, efficient and consistent service, and to ensure that the tenancy contract between us can be fulfilled, but we promise to ensure that:-

- your records are kept securely.
- your records are kept up to date and accurate, providing this is within our control.
- no unauthorised person can gain access to your information.
- when we no longer require information about you we will dispose of your records securely but for legal reasons we have to keep your details for a number of years after you end your tenancy.
- you may view information that we hold about you, subject to you making a specific request in writing to the Director of Housing Services. A small charge may be made for this. Guidance about the information available and the process of assessing it are in our policy document "Access to Personal Information".

## Others who may see information about you

We have strict rules about who, other than essential staff within the Association, can see or receive information about your personal details that we hold. We will only pass information about you to one of the organisations or agencies listed below if we have a legal right or responsibility to do so through the Data Protection Act 1998.

The organisations are –

- **Police**
- **Department of Works and Pensions (Formerly DSS)**
- **Social Work Department**
- **Housing Benefits Department** (if you have a current, past or pending claim for Benefit)
- **Council Tax Department**
- **Utilities Provider (water, gas or electric)**. We may provide basic information such as your name and address and commencement or end of tenancy date for administrative purposes.
- **Communities Scotland** (the body responsible for regulating and inspecting housing associations)
- **Our Solicitors**
- **Sheriff Officers**
- **Our Accountants** (where carrying out a financial audit)
- **Community Alarm Centre** (if your home is linked to an emergency call system)
- **TV Licencing authority** (where your home is covered by a concessionary licence)

If any other organisation or any individual asks us for information about you we undertake to check with you first to get your approval before disclosing any details, unless the organisation or person gives us a signed authorisation from you in respect of such approval. Even then we may reserve the right to withhold information until we have personally checked with you.

**Contractors** who carry out repairs and maintenance in your property will be given basic information such as your name, address and telephone number. If you have a special requirement in relation to your sight, hearing or mobility, which may be important for the contractor to know about, this information may also be passed to them. Contractors have a requirement to keep any information about you confidential. If we have any reason to believe that a contractor or employee may be at risk in your home then we are obliged under health and safety law to advise that contractor or staff member to take certain precautions. The reason for requiring additional precautions will not be discussed with the contractor.

## Use of CCTV camera

Occasionally, if properties are likely to be, are, or have been the subject of vandalism or tenants have experienced anti-social or illegal activity around their block, the Association will place CCTV cameras in a communal area to **deter** further crime. Where this is the case we will erect appropriate signs to advise tenants and others that cameras are operating. If the

purpose of the camera is to **detect** a crime and apprehend a criminal then covert cameras may be used, in which case tenants would not necessarily be advised of their presence.

### **Sensitive Personal Data**

You have particular rights in relation to certain sensitive personal data that the Association may hold about you or members of your household. Any information which you have supplied to us, or we have obtained from another person such as your GP, relating to your –

- ethnic or racial origin
- state of physical or mental health
- sexual life
- religious or similar beliefs
- trade union membership
- criminal record or allegations of criminal conduct

is regarded as sensitive personal information.

If you have particular concerns about any personal sensitive information which has been provided to us about you or any member of your household (for example – within your housing application) you should speak to your Housing Officer or Housing Manager. If there is no necessity for us to continue holding the information it may be possible to have it deleted from your records.

The information contained does not affect your rights under the Data Protection Act. If you would like to receive a booklet about these rights please speak to your Housing Officer. Castlehill Housing Association is registered with the Data Protection Commissioner as a Data Controller.