

**Pathfinder Inspection Report  
Summary  
November 2004**

# Manor Estates Housing Association



1. Communities Scotland is responsible for the regulation and inspection of all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). We inspected Manor Estates Housing Association Ltd in June 2004. This summary report sets out the main findings from our inspection.

## Manor Estates Housing Association Ltd

2. Manor Estates Housing Association Ltd was established and registered with Communities Scotland (Scottish Homes) in 1994 and is a charitable housing association. It owns 924 properties, mainly general needs housing, but also has three sheltered housing schemes. Manor Estates Housing Association Ltd was formed to take over ownership of houses from Communities Scotland's predecessor, Scottish Homes and manages housing throughout Edinburgh. Manor Estates also provides a factoring service to around 1700 owner-occupiers.

## Inspection Grades

3. These are the inspection grades achieved by Manor Estates Housing Association Ltd:

Overall Performance	A	Manor Estates is an excellent performer with major strengths  The prospects for improvement overall are promising.
Governance and Financial Management	A	Manor Estates is an excellent performer in governance and financial management with major strengths.  The prospects for improvement in governance and financial management are promising.
Housing Management	B	Manor Estates delivers a good housing management service with many strengths but there are some areas where improvement is needed.  The prospects for improvement in housing management are promising.

Property Management	A	<p>Manor Estates is an excellent performer in property management.</p> <p>The prospects for improvement in property management are excellent.</p>
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## Overall Performance

4. This section describes how good Manor Estate services are overall and how well they are managed. These areas are working well overall:
  - ✓ The management committee governs the organisation very effectively.
  - ✓ Tenants are provided with an excellent repairs service.
  - ✓ Housing management services are delivered well
  - ✓ Manor Estates is taking an excellent approach to property development.
  - ✓ Service users have easy access to services.
  - ✓ Manor Estates communicates well with its tenants and service users.
  - ✓ Tenants are given good range of opportunities to participate in the work of the association.
  - ✓ Feedback is actively sought and used to improve service delivery.
  - ✓ Manor Estates reports on its performance to service users.
  - ✓ Complaints are dealt with effectively and the information gained is used to improve services.
  - ✓ Manor Estates promotes equality of opportunity both as a landlord and as an employer.
  - ✓ Manor Estates takes a positive approach to sustainability issues.
  - ✓ There is a good awareness of strengths and plans are in place to address weaknesses.
  - ✓ Manor Estates uses a good performance management framework as a tool for improving service delivery.
  - ✓ Manor Estates makes good use of its staff resources and had achieved Investors in People status.
  
5. These areas could be working better overall:
  - Consistency in service delivery would be better supported by providing staff with comprehensive procedures to guide the implementation of policy.
  - Manor Estates could involve tenants more effectively in policy review.

6. These are our key overall recommendations:
  - ❖ Manor Estates should make sure that written procedures are available covering all key service areas to assist staff deliver services consistently.
  - ❖ Manor Estates should improve the involvement of tenants and service users in policy and rent review.

## **Governance and Financial Management**

7. This section describes how well Manor Estates' governing body of volunteer members controls the organisation, and examines the wider opportunities for tenants and other members to become involved in managing Manor Estates. It also looks at Manor Estates' financial health and how it manages its finances.
8. These areas are working well in governance and financial management:
  - ✓ The management committee is very effective and controls the organisation well.
  - ✓ The majority of management committee members are Manor Estates' tenants or service users.
  - ✓ Manor Estates has a good financial management framework in place covering budget setting, reporting and monitoring of performance.
  - ✓ Manor Estates has 25-year cash flow projections in place that indicate that the organisation will remain viable in the long-term.
9. These are the areas that could work better in governance and financial management:
  - The management committee does not receive reports to inform it of performance against loan conditions.
  - Manor Estates cannot demonstrate how open and inclusive its membership policy is.
10. These are our key recommendations in governance and financial management:
  - ❖ Performance against lenders' covenants should be reported to the management committee.
  - ❖ Manor Estates should monitor membership in terms of equalities to confirm that equal opportunities exist amongst diverse groups.

## Housing Management

11. This section summarises how well Manor Estates provides access to its houses, meets housing need, manages empty homes and sets rent levels. It also covers how it deals with rent arrears, antisocial behaviour and how well its estates are managed.
12. These are the areas that are working well in housing management:
  - ✓ There is fair and open access to the housing list.
  - ✓ Empty homes are repaired and let quickly.
  - ✓ Housing is provided to those in the greatest need.
  - ✓ Good information is given to tenants on their rights and responsibilities.
  - ✓ Manor Estates has low levels of rent arrears.
  - ✓ Estates are clean, tidy and well maintained.
  - ✓ Manor Estates provides a good quality sheltered housing service.
  - ✓ Manor Estates is working in partnership with the community and other landlords to promote sustainable communities.
13. These are the areas that could work better in housing management:
  - The published information provided to applicants for housing could be improved.
  - Investigations into suspected abandoned tenancies could be more thorough.
  - Manor Estates do not always take affordability and comparability into account when rents are reviewed.
  - Rent arrears are not always dealt with at an early stage and in line with good practice.
  - Reports of antisocial behaviour are not always responded to appropriately.
  - The allocation policy does not reflect what happens in practice.
14. These are our key recommendations for housing management:
  - ❖ Tenants in rent arrears should be visited at an early stage and cases actively managed in line with good practice
  - ❖ Reports of antisocial behaviour should be properly recorded, investigated and appropriate action taken.
  - ❖ Suspected abandoned tenancies should be properly investigated
  - ❖ The published information available to applicants should be improved.
  - ❖ The allocation policy should be reviewed to reflect practice.

## Property Management

15. This section summarises how well Manor Estates maintains the fabric of its houses. It describes the quality of repairs that are done when they are needed (“responsive repairs”) as well as maintenance and improvements planned in advance. It also looks at how Manor Estates adapts houses so that tenants can stay in their homes when their needs change.
16. These are the areas that are working well in property management:
  - ✓ Houses are in good condition because they are well maintained.
  - ✓ Tenants feel they get a good repairs service from Manor Estates.
  - ✓ A high proportion of repairs are completed within the published target time.
  - ✓ Tenants receive good information about Manor Estates’ repairs service.
  - ✓ Manor Estates actively seeks feedback from tenants and uses it to improve its property management services.
  - ✓ Manor Estates takes a proactive approach to customer care and ensures that all its contractors behave in accordance with a code of conduct.
  - ✓ Tenants get a good Right to Repair service.
  - ✓ Tenants have reported a better service standard since Manor Estates entered into partnership contracts.
  - ✓ Tenants who need adaptations to their homes get a responsive service.
  - ✓ Manor Estates holds good information about the condition of its stock allowing it to effectively target its spending.
  - ✓ Manor Estates maintains and improves its stock on a planned basis effectively securing the long term life of its stock.
17. These are the areas that could work better in property management:
  - Manor Estates cannot verify that its emergency repairs are completed on target.
  - There is not a complete range of procedure notes, to make sure staff have enough guidance to provide a consistent service.
  - Although Manor Estates recharges tenants for repairs appropriately there are weaknesses in how payment is monitored and pursued.
  - Tenants are not effectively involved in prioritising planned maintenance and stock improvement projects.

18. These are our key recommendations for property management:
- ❖ Manor Estates should complete its set of written procedures for staff to guide them to provide consistent services.
  - ❖ Manor Estates should improve the monitoring of its emergency repairs to allow them to confirm that repairs are completed on time.
  - ❖ Manor Estates should consult tenants on maintenance and improvement priorities.
  - ❖ Manor Estates should ensure rechargeable repair debts are pursued.

## **Property Development**

19. Manor Estates is currently preparing its first new build project for three years, with another housing association acting as development agent. Although project preparation is progressing well and Manor Estates' approach is sound, the project is not sufficiently advanced to allow us to award a grade for property development.
20. Anyone can ask for a copy of the full inspection report. All reports are on the Communities Scotland website at <http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk>.
21. This summary can also be made available on tape, in Braille, MOON, large print and community languages. For information please contact Janette Campbell on 0131 479 5162 or email [janette.campbell@communitiesscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:janette.campbell@communitiesscotland.gsi.gov.uk).
22. We have asked Manor Estates to produce an improvement plan within eight weeks of publishing the inspection report to show how it intends to respond to all our recommendations. We will agree the plan with the organisation. We will re-inspect Manor Estates in five years' time.