



Name of Policy: Rechargeable Repairs (Ref: PS/04)

Purpose of Policy: This Policy outlines the circumstances where the Association will recover rechargeable repair costs.

Policy Monitoring Details	
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Association has a legal duty to maintain its houses, to provide a repairs service to its tenants and to meet its duty of care.

The Maintenance Service and Satisfaction Strategy, Property Management Strategy, the Tenancy Agreement and the Tenants Handbook, set out in detail how these responsibilities are put into effect.

- 1.2 Tenants have an obligation not to damage or neglect their house. If damage or neglect should occur, the Association will recharge the tenant to recover the cost.

Tenants have responsibility to allow access, where it has been pre-arranged, to carry out repairs or servicing. If the tenant does not allow access for emergency repairs, repairs required to prevent serious damage to property or threat to health or life of others or for gas servicing, the Association will force access and recharge the tenant to recover the cost (in accordance with the terms of the tenancy agreement and good practice guidelines).

Tenants have responsibility to bring property up to letting standard before they vacate the property. The Association will recharge the tenant to recover the cost of any repairs required to meet that standard.

- 1.3 The purpose of this policy paper is to set out how the Association will deal with any such repairs and the recovery process.

2. Policy

- 2.1 It is the Association's policy to recharge the cost of repairs to tenants in the circumstances set out below. This policy will be applied consistently and fairly to all tenants.

- 2.2 Where a repair is considered to be rechargeable, the Association will issue an invoice to the tenant for the cost of that repair and every effort will be made to recover the sums due.

- 2.3 In line with the Association's Financial Regulations, no amounts due, over £100, will be written off as irrecoverable without the prior approval of the Board.

- 2.4 A list of Standard Charges will be prepared for the most common recharge items from the Reactive Maintenance Contract to allow the immediate raising of invoices on notification that the repair has been completed.

3. Budgetary Implications

- 3.1 The Association's reserves are at risk if rechargeable repairs are not administered, processed and collected timeously. Failure to collect rechargeable costs could ultimately require additional rental income to fund any over-spend on the repairs budget.

3.2 The Associations aim is to keep rents as affordable as possible. Procedures have been developed to ensure the effective implementation and control of this policy.

4. Rechargeable Repairs

4.1 It is the Associations Policy to recharge tenants (including former tenants) the cost of repairs undertaken by the Association where:

Tenants Responsibility : the repairs are deemed the tenant's responsibility as set out in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenants Handbook Repairs Responsibilities Grid

Damage or Neglect : the Association's Tenancy Agreement clearly states that the tenant will be responsible for the cost of any repairs required because of damage / neglect of the property caused by the tenant, members of his/her household, visitors or pets.

Tenancy End : The tenant is responsible for all repairs to bring the house up to standard where it can be let to another tenant. When the tenant leaves the property at the end of their tenancy, and it is found that the property falls below the expected Exit Standard, then the outgoing tenant, including transferees, will be recharged the cost of the repairs necessary to bring it the house back up to the standard where it can be let to another tenant.

Misuse of Emergency Repairs Service : if a tenant persistently calls out the emergency service for a repair that is not an emergency or fails to give the emergency service access, the Association will recharge the tenant for the cost of the call-out.

Lack of Access : Where there has been a persistent lack of access after a warning letter has been issued the Association will recharge the tenant for the cost of the call-out.

Forced Access : Where the tenant has been contacted and failed to respond to written requests to allow access for emergency repairs, repairs required to prevent serious damage to property or threat to health or life of others or for gas servicing, the tenant will be recharged for forcing entry and reinstating the door and locks.

Assistance Requested : A tenant may request the assistance of the Association in the completion of repairs, even though they are aware they will be recharged for the work carried out.

4.2 Excepted Cases

In certain circumstances it may be deemed inappropriate to pursue the raising of, or the non-payment of, a recharge. Each specific case will be assessed and where necessary :

- flagged up by the Housing Officer,

- agreed with Senior Housing Officer or Housing Director and
- recorded on the rechargeable repairs spread sheet/OpenHousing.

As these will be situations where there can be no definite guarantee of when, or which member of staff will first become aware of the special circumstances all officers will be responsible to raise queries for clarification with other teams. The Housing Team will ensure a final decision is made on each case.

5. Advising Tenants

5.1 On raising a repair order, staff will advise the tenant, during the discussion on the repair request, where there could be a recharge:

- tenants own faulty appliance or faulty connection to an appliance has caused the electrical fault or flood

And additionally advise that the:

- tenant also has the option to arrange for any necessary works to be completed by a Private Contractor without the involvement of the Association.

6. Procedure for Recovery

6.1 The Association on identifying a rechargeable repair will whenever possible immediately raise a rechargeable account priced from the standard Schedule of Charges.

6.2 For other works requiring quotations or more complex work, the rechargeable account will be raised immediately on the receipt of the contractors invoice.

7. Administration Charges and Discount for Prompt Payment

7.1 Each rechargeable repair account will be subject to a 15 % administration fee, added on to the total value of the account, to reflect the increased administration with the issue of the notification letters, the invoice and the debt collecting over standard reactive repairs

7.2 To incentivise the prompt settlement of rechargeable repair accounts, the Association will deduct the 15% administration fee if the account is settled within 28 days.

8. Accounts Uneconomic to Pursue

8.1 Where total rechargeable repair costs amount to less than £50.00, the Association would not consider these cases cost effective to pursue.

9. Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

- 9.1 All orders covering rechargeable elements will be recorded in the Open Housing database as job orders. An analysis of the database job orders, together with the spread sheet will be prepared and included in the reporting cycle at the end of each financial year.
- 9.2 The rechargeable event should be recorded and included in the reporting cycle, even if the decision is not to pursue the debt.
- 9.3 The outcome of the policy will be monitored annually.

The Property Services Director will report :

- number of cases of rechargeable repairs raised
- amount recharged
- amount written off
- comparison current and previous year

10. Linked policies

HM PS 01 Void Policy
Rechargeable Repairs Procedure – Housing Management Actions
Rechargeable Repairs Procedure – Property Services Actions