



CALEDONIA GROUP

RECHARGEABLE REPAIR POLICY

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST	
Policy Guardian:	Operations Director
Author:	Operations Director
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Data Protection compliant:	Yes
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QL system changes made:	Yes
KPIs / reporting arrangements implemented:	
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CALEDONIA HOUSING GROUP

GROUP POLICY STATEMENT: RECHARGES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy statement sets out how the Associations within the Caledonia HA Group will look to recover the cost of any rechargeable item from its residents.
- 1.2 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that recharges are dealt with effectively and that recovery of debt is handled efficiently and equitably. Recharges will in the main will be applied for rechargeable repairs; however, each Association retains the right to raise a recharge for any debt owed to it.
- 1.3 The term resident is defined as being a tenant of the Association, a shared or whole owner of the Association and people living with tenants and shared/whole owners.

2. Context

- 2.1 It is a requirement of the tenancy agreement that tenants keep their property in reasonable condition and that when they end their tenancy they leave their property clean and tidy. The agreement sets out that tenants may be charged the cost of making good any damage that they have caused.
- 2.2 Each Association has a policy which sets out the repairs the Association is responsible for and which repairs are the responsibility of their tenant. The policy affirms that tenants may be charged if the Association is required to undertake repairs for which the tenant is responsible.
- 2.3 Each Association has a policy which explains the actions, including legal action, which may be taken by the Association to ensure their tenants meet their responsibility in paying rent and service charges for their tenancy. The policy affirms that where a Court awards legal costs the Association will seek to recover these costs from their tenant.
- 2.4 Other items, such as the cost of missed appointments, unnecessary emergency call outs, costs for delays to annual gas & electrical servicing, repairs and maintenance at shared or whole ownership properties for which the occupier/owner is responsible, may also be recharged.

3. Aims

- 3.1 The aims of the policy are to:
 - Promote a responsible attitude by residents towards their property by ensuring that costs are pursued from those who are negligent or deliberately cause damage
 - Ensure rechargeable items are dealt with transparently and efficiently
 - Recover the cost of rechargeable items from current and former residents

- Maximise income by the recovery of debts owed relating to rechargeable items and thus demonstrate value for money
- 3.2 This policy applies to rechargeable items in all tenanted, occupied and void properties.
- 3.3 The policy also applies to repairs that are required in communal and external areas as a result of resident damage.
- 3.4 The policy also applies to tenants or occupiers of garages.

4. Scope

- 4.1 Recharges cover but are not limited to the following items:
- Repairs required due to deliberate damage, damage from misuse or damage due to neglect
 - Repairs required due to unauthorized or unsatisfactory alterations / additions to the property
 - Costs of repairing accidental damage not rectified by the occupier
 - Damage caused by the police following a lawful raid at a property, which results in arrest
 - The cost of those repairs deemed residents' responsibility, provided these are agreed in advance
 - The cost of removing any goods or belongings left at the property on tenancy termination
 - Damage to furniture provided or missing items of furniture
 - Legal Costs awarded by the Court
 - Costs for missed appointments, unnecessary emergency call outs and delays to annual gas & electrical servicing

5. Recovery

- 5.1 When a rechargeable item is identified or rechargeable costs incurred a sub-account will be created and the resident will be informed in writing. This will include an explanation of the recharge and detail the full cost being pursued.
- 5.2 Residents will be contacted to make a repayment agreement to pay the amount they owe in relation to rechargeable items and will be offered the full range of payment methods.
- 5.3 Recovery action will take place to collect the money owed, this may involve legal action or referral to a debt collection or recovery agency.

6. Enforcement action

- 6.1 Where a tenant has caused serious damage to their property or has caused damage to their property on repeated occasions, enforcement action may be taken for breach of tenancy, in addition to charging the tenant for the cost of the repair.

7. Exemptions to paying for rechargeable items

7.1 Tenants or occupiers will not have to pay for rechargeable items in the following circumstances:

- If the damage is a result of vandalism by a third party and a crime reference number has been provided to the Association within 7 calendar days (an incident number will not be sufficient).
- If the damage is caused as a result of domestic violence, harassment or hate crime and this has been reported to the Police / ASB Team. In these circumstances, it is not necessary to produce a crime number from the Police. However, if action is taken to remove a joint tenant from a tenancy as a result of domestic violence, the cost of any damage will be recharged to the perpetrator.
- Where residents have reported damage caused by anti-social behaviour and this is being investigated by the Association's staff.
- Where forced entry has taken place due to concerns about the well-being of the tenant or occupier
- Where repeated repairs have been carried out due to the nature of an impairment of a member of the household and where appropriate adaptations have not been made.

8. Appeals and complaints

8.1 If a resident disagrees with the amount or reason for a recharge they can make an appeal against the decision.

8.2 The appeal must be made in writing and will be investigated by a relevant manager (who was not involved in the original decision), depending on the nature of the appeal.

8.3 If a resident is not happy with the way that their situation has been handled or the decision of an appeal they have made they should make a complaint through the Association's complaints procedure.

9. Write Offs

9.1 Where a recharge is deemed uneconomic to pursue, or attempts to recover the debt have failed, or the former occupier's whereabouts are unknown, or there is no prospect of recovery, the debt will be written off in accordance with the Association's policy on irrecoverable debt.

10. Equality and diversity

10.1 The Group aims to treat all people fairly and in accordance with its Equality and Diversity Policy and will carry out impact assessments on this policy to ensure that it is not unfairly affecting anyone or group.

11. Monitoring and Reporting

- 11.1 Quarterly reports will be prepared for each Association's Head of Service detailing the volume, value and frequency of rechargeable items and sums recovered.
- 11.2 Each Association will undertake a detailed annual analysis of the above information in order to make recommendations or amendments to the Policy or any relevant procedures.

12. Review

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every three years unless there is a change in legislation or guidance which requires it to be reviewed sooner.