

## Rechargeable repairs



### Stay in touch

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**making a difference...**  
improving homes, communities and lives

We have a rechargeable repairs policy. It helps us to make sure we make the most of the amount of money we have available to invest in your homes and maintain services.

Sometimes residents deliberately damage our homes, or our fixtures and fittings, or leave their homes in a really poor condition when they move or carry out poor home improvements without our permission. This means that our responsible residents end up paying for that damage or those mistakes, and that's not fair.

**There are a few other times when we may re-charge residents for repairs:**

- When we have been asked to carry out a repair which is not our responsibility.
- Where we have to carry out work because of neglect.
- If a pre-arranged appointment with a contractor is missed.

### **What is the cost to us when a property becomes empty?**

On average, we can spend over £1000 each time a property becomes empty before we can let it again. A big part of this amount can be due to damage or neglect by the departing resident, or simply because they have left items of furniture or belongings behind which we have to dispose of.

### **How do I avoid being re-charged when I am moving out?**

Make sure you leave your home clean and tidy and that there are no items of furniture, belongings or rubbish left in the property or outside. This includes appliances, electrical goods, carpets and floor coverings. Kitchens and bathrooms should be cleaned. Make sure you give your keys back to us when you have left.

### **How do we recover money for these repairs?**

We have our own debt recovery team. We also use collection officers and tracing agencies to find residents who haven't left forwarding addresses. We make contact when we find them and will pursue the costs that we have incurred in clearing the property and undertaking any repairs.

### **What are rechargeable repairs?**

Certain repairs are your responsibility, not ours – these are listed in the next paragraph. Repairs may also be needed because of your neglect, or misuse or damage by a member of your household or a visitor and you are responsible for these. We may charge you for a contractor's visit if you have reported the repair as an emergency and it is not one.

### **Which repairs are the resident's responsibility?**

These are some of the items you are responsible for:

- Toilet seats.
- Broken windows.
- Blocked internal pipes (including toilets and sinks) and blocked outside drains if caused by misuse.
- Light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and starters.
- Plugs and chains for basins, sinks and baths.
- Internal decorations including preparing surfaces for decoration.
- Repairs to extra security measures and replacing locks after the keys have been lost or broken. (Not communal (shared) locks).
- Your own domestic appliances, such as cookers, fridges, washing machines and dishwashers.
- Fixtures and fittings such as coat hooks, curtains and curtain rails.
- Floor covering, including changing doors to allow for thick carpets.
- Fuses for appliances.
- Gardening maintenance including dustbins and refuse areas.

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- Telephone extension points and cables.
- Television aerials (unless it is a communal aerial).
- Doorbells and gas fire ignition switches.
- Attic space and garden clearance.
- Treating mould or mildew. (Many bleach free cleaners are now available on the high street). Try to ventilate your home every day to prevent condensation and mould growth.

### **How will I know if a repair is rechargeable?**

We will tell you if a repair is rechargeable and give you an estimated cost at the time you report it. We will offer you the choice of carrying out the repair yourself, or ask you to sign a form agreeing to be re-charged for the cost before the repair is made. If a repair is later found to be rechargeable by the contractor, you will also be recharged for the costs involved.

### **What about DIY and improvement work?**

Before starting any DIY or home improvements, you must talk to your housing officer and get our permission in writing. This is to make sure work is carried out to a safe standard.

You might be able to claim back the cost of a rechargeable repair through your own personal contents insurance. We will not recharge you for repairs due to fair wear and tear.

## **The most common recharges and how to avoid them...**

### **Keep your home clean and clear**

#### **Cost varies**

When leaving your home, remove all your belongings including carpets and floor coverings. Remove any rubbish and clean your home, including your garden, basement, loft and shed if you have them. If you have bulk rubbish items, you may be able to arrange to have them removed by the council.

### **Non return of keys**

#### **Typical cost: £25 – £150**

When you move in to your home, we will give you a full set of keys. If you leave your home, you must return a full set of keys to us. This includes at least two keys for main entrances and may include keys for meter cupboards, window locks, basements, garages, sheds and communal (shared) entrance key fobs.

### **Damage to kitchens**

#### **Typical cost: £25 – over £1000**

Kitchen units, worktops, drawers and doors will match and be in a good state of repair when you move in. If damage occurs through wear and tear, report this to us.

We often find that units and worktops are mistreated, which results in expensive repairs.

Please don't paint kitchen unit fronts and tiles to try and improve them. You are likely to be charged for their replacement.

### **Damage to internal doors**

Typical cost: £120 – £200

When you move in, all your doors will be in good condition, without damage or graffiti. Damage to inside doors is difficult to repair so they will usually have to be replaced.

### **Damage to electrical fittings**

Typical cost: £25 per fitting

Before you move in, we will carry out an electrical safety test and inspection to ensure electrical components are in safe working order.

We sometimes find deliberate damage to electrical sockets, switches and light fittings. Vandalising or tampering with these fittings makes them extremely dangerous. Replacement costs are high and we will recharge for them. We also ask that you do not paint sockets and switches as these will also have to be replaced and recharged for.

### **Unblocking pipes and drains**

Cost varies but typically £100 plus

Don't flush household items such as baby wipes or toilet block cages down the toilet.

### **Damage to smoke alarms**

Typical cost: £70

We have fitted hard wired smoke alarms in many of our homes. By damaging or tampering with them, you are not only putting yourself and your family at risk, but facing a recharge.

### **Putting right DIY and home improvements**

Typical cost: varies

DIY and home improvement problems are common. They can range from botched decorating that costs a few hundred pounds to put right, to structural works costing thousands. If you are considering doing work in your home, you must contact us for advice. We won't unreasonably refuse permission, but there may be reasons why you can't make the changes you want to and we will have to recharge you to put them right.

### **Damage to Internal walls**

Typical cost: over £50

When you move into your home, it will be either in a reasonable state of decoration, or we will offer you a decoration grant.

### **How do I pay for the recharge?**

Once the work is done, we will send you an invoice which will explain how you can pay. If you feel you cannot pay the whole bill at once, contact your housing officer to make arrangements to pay the bill in instalments.

### **What if I disagree with the bill?**

If you dispute any part of the bill, contact your housing officer. We will investigate and reply to your query within ten working days.

### **What happens if I don't pay my bill?**

If you don't pay your bill, then we will take action. This can include court action and the use of a debt collection agency. The extra cost for us to do this will be added to your bill.

Our debt recovery team is here to help. If you need to talk to us about a recharge account, please telephone 03456 780 558 for advice or to make payment arrangements.