Rechargeable Repairs Policy

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<th>Policy Name:</th>
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<td>Approved by:</td>
<td>Group Board</td>
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KEY OBJECTIVES:

Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (the Group) is committed to fulfilling its statutory repair obligations and aims to deliver a repairs service that is in line with best practice with a continuous improvement approach that includes challenging targets and measured service standards. Details are outlined in the Responsive Repairs Policy.

The objective of this policy is to set down the principles of the Group’s approach to charging customers for maintenance repairs that are not normally the responsibility of the Group.

In pursuit of our efficiency & value for money objectives, the Group has a duty to ensure that all available finance can be targeted at legitimate repairs. The consistent application of this policy will assist in delivering fair treatment to all of our customers.

1.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all Group tenants, former tenants and leaseholders, who will for the purposes of this document be referred to as customers.

The policy aims to ensure we are both fair and consistent whilst providing customers with the ability to access additional repairs services. The policy also ensures we minimise losses to the Group through cases of neglect or vandalism.

The Group reserves the right not to carry out a rechargeable repair, although we will carry out all such repairs that are required to protect the health and safety of the customer and their household. Similarly, we would also normally carry out all rechargeable repairs that are necessary to protect our interest in the property.

2.0 POLICY

Where the health and safety of any person would not be prejudiced, the Group will require the cost of the rechargeable repair to be paid for before it is performed.

This will be exercised except where it is believed that delay would adversely affect our interest in the property, or where the vulnerability of the tenant is such that discretion is required.

Rechargeable repairs are given the same priority and completed to the same deadlines as standard non-rechargeable repairs.

This policy is underpinned by the Rechargeable Repairs Procedure, which details internal processes for identification and collection of recharges.

3.0 DEFINITION OF A RECHARGEABLE REPAIR

‘A repair that is the result of neglect, unauthorised works or damage caused by a customer or third party’

A rechargeable repair arises where the repair is:
• Work undertaken by the Group that is the customer’s responsibility
• The consequence of wilful damage, neglect, misuse or abuse by the customer or third party
• To return the property to the agreed standard at the end of a tenancy
• Emergency repair reported when not required
• Missed appointment without prior arrangement

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Group has certain responsibilities to maintain and repair our properties. These responsibilities are set out in the various Housing Acts the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and 1987 and the Human Rights Act 1998, and are detailed in our tenancy agreements.

Under the terms and conditions of the Tenancy Agreement the customer is responsible for certain items of repair. Appendix A provides a summary list of repair responsibilities.

5.0 EXCEPTIONS

The Group will not recharge the customer for undertaking repairs if:

• Damage is the result of a criminal act and a crime reference number has been obtained from the police and made available to the Group.

• Where damage has occurred and it is considered to be fair wear and tear.

6.0 VULNERABILITY

The Group will aim to treat vulnerable customers sympathetically and sensitively, ensuring that the service offered is appropriate and reflective of their needs and circumstances. Therefore certain circumstances may mean that the customer cannot reasonably be held accountable for the cost of certain repairs and recharges may be waived.

Where these circumstances arise, the decision will be made by a senior manager. A separate procedural document is available to provide consistent guidance on its application.

The reporting of possible rechargeable repairs should be seen in the context of other potential issues within the tenancy, for example anti-social behaviour (victim or perpetrator), and officers should alert Housing Services to monitor the address in these cases.

7.0 CHARGES

The Group will charge for repairs in line with the National Housing Federations Schedule of Rates at the current trading adjustment of Wythenshawe Works.

It is expected that repairs are paid for at the point of request by the customer and in advance of works being completed. Where payments are made in advance, no administration charge will be added.
In cases where the Group carries out works and has to put in place payment plans or pursue payments, a 10% administration fee will be added to the charge.

Where rechargeable repairs are deemed to be essential, for example property security, the Group may implement a reduced standard charge in order to increase the likelihood that customers are able to pay in advance.

8.0 RECOVERY OF RECHARGES

The recovery of recharge payments will be an operational priority in the pursuit of the Group’s efficiency and value for money objectives.

If recharges remain at end of a tenancy, they will be treated as former tenant debt.

The process for recovery of recharges is detailed in the Rechargeable Repairs Procedure.

9.0 APPEALS

Where customers are dissatisfied with a recharge decision, the Group will endeavour to resolve this informally.

Where the customer remains dissatisfied, this will be reviewed in line with the Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

10.0 REPORTING AND REVIEW

The Group is committed to improving service standards. To achieve this aim the Quality Assurance Team will periodically review and analyse recharges in order that we, learn from situations and take steps to reduce the risk of them happening again, ensure the size of recharges are kept fair, consistent and reasonable and identify service areas where improvements are needed.

11.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Group has a responsibility to serve the needs and promote the interests of its colleagues and customers. The Group will provide equal service in accordance with the Equality Act. The Group works towards developing services, facilities and working practices, which are equally accessible to and appropriate for all its customers, irrespective of their gender, age, race, sexuality, transgender, disability, religion, marital status/civil partnerships or income.

A key element of the Equality standards involves carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment on all existing and, in particular, new policies to ensure they do not have an adverse impact on or have any that can be justified on a particular group. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

The Group will consider all identified vulnerable groups when conducting this service. At the discretion of the Group consideration will be given to all vulnerable groups, tailoring our service and customer needs. This will be dealt with case by case on an individual need.
We will provide information in languages other than English, in Braille, Large Print, CD and Audiotape. Our reception and interview room are fitted with a hearing loop system.

12.0 RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Gas Safety Policy and Procedure
- Void Policy, Procedure and Standards
- Equipment & Adaptations Policy
- Health and Safety Policy and Working Documents
- Value for Money Strategy
- Stock Condition Survey (2013)
- Customer Complaints, Comments and Complements Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Electrical Periodic Inspection Policy

13.0 STATUTORY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 & 1987
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Occupiers Liability Act 1957
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007
- Right to Repair Regulations 1994
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety Legislation
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) 1999
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- CRE code of practice on Racial Equality in Housing
APPENDIX A

REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility for the maintenance of the Group’s homes is shared between the tenant and the Group. Tenants are expected to keep the property in good decorative order and undertake the following minor repairs:

- Easing to internal doors to fit carpets
- Clearing blocked sinks, basins and shower wastes
- Replacing electric fuses, light bulbs, tap washers, sink and bath plugs, (unless communal)
- Relighting boilers
- Filling plaster cracks & internal decoration
- Toilet Seats, repairs & replacements
- Plumbing in washing machines and repairs to own equipment
- Repairing damage caused by themselves or their visitors
- Repair any fittings or appliances not provided by the Group
- TV aerials or satellite dishes (unless communal) and any damage to property or neighbouring property caused by their installation
- Clothes posts and lines (unless communal)
- Curtain rails & battens
- Garden areas including tenants own fencing

The Group have a legal responsibility for keeping the structure, exterior and services of the building and most of the fixtures and fittings in good order. These include:

- Drains, gutters and external pipes
- Roofs
- External brickwork and doors, window sills and frames
- Chimneys, chimney stacks and flues
- Pathways, steps and other forms of access
- Plastering
- Repairs to boundary walls or boundary fences
- Replacing keys and locks (tenants may be charged for this if replacement is a consequence of their actions)
- All services. This includes gas and water pipes and electrical wiring
- Communal entrances, halls and passageways, stairways and lifts
- Communal lighting and security