

Rechargeable Repairs Policy

Objective

Homes for Lambeth (HFL) is committed to ensuring that its properties are appropriately repaired and maintained in a way which is timely and efficient while still maintaining value for money. Where repairs cannot be attributed to reasonable wear and tear, they will be treated as rechargeable. Costs recovered through the recharging of repairs will be used to further improve Homes for Lambeth's services.

This policy aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To provide Homes for Lambeth tenants with clear guidance on the circumstances in which a repair will be recharged
- To outline the basis for calculating the recharge, and the process of recharging
- To inform Homes for Lambeth tenants of the action which will be taken if payment is not made

Homes for Lambeth will operate its Rechargeable Repairs Policy in compliance with the Housing Regulator's Standards as set out in "The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012" as updated in 2015 and 2018 and associated guidance documents.

Definition of a rechargeable repair

Within this policy and associated procedures, a rechargeable repair is defined by Homes for Lambeth as a repair or clearance work which is necessary because of one of the following:

- Damage caused by a tenant or former tenant, either through wilful action or neglect
- Damage caused by actions of the tenants' family, invited guests or contractors employed by the tenant
- An item becoming defective due to anything other than reasonable wear and tear
- Damage to the property or neighbouring properties caused by alterations carried out by a tenant (regardless of whether these alterations were done with Homes for Lambeth's approval)
- Property or garden clearance work either during or at the end point of the tenancy (including clearing of items left in any communal areas)

Other circumstances in which Homes for Lambeth will recharge include:

- Abuse of the emergency call-out service (e.g. a repair is reported as an emergency but is not genuinely an emergency)
- Repairs carried out by Homes for Lambeth where the repair would normally be considered minor and the responsibility of the tenant
- Any court costs incurred by Homes for Lambeth as a result of the tenant breaching tenancy conditions

This list is not exhaustive, and each case should be considered individually. As part of the decision-making process, we will also review the tenant's repair recharge history; tenants who are regularly damaging their property risk breaching their tenancy agreement and will be referred to a housing management specialist. Before a recharge invoice is raised, the circumstances of the person to be recharged will also be considered, taking into account protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 as well as the tenant's vulnerability, and whether proceeding with the charge is appropriate and in Homes for Lambeth's best interests (e.g. damages resulting from an incident of domestic violence).

If the repair required is of a health and safety matter, at no point will the completion of a repair be delayed based on a decision whether to recharge.

Payment of Rechargeable Repairs

If a tenant contacts Homes for Lambeth to report a repair which is deemed rechargeable, the tenant will be advised of this and will be provided with indicative costs of the repair.

Payment for repairs would normally be expected to be paid in full before any works are undertaken, with an invoice raised retrospectively and a copy sent to the tenant as receipt of payment. If full payment prior to the repair is not possible, arrangements should be made for an agreed lump sum to

be paid initially to acknowledge the debt, with an invoice for the remainder issued to the tenant for payment within 28 days.

Any correspondence with the tenant within which payment arrangements are agreed (e.g. emails, telephone calls) will be recorded and kept as proof of the tenant's agreement to the payment arrangements. Failure to pay the full cost of recharged repairs within agreed timeframes should be treated as a threat to the individual's tenancy and addressed by Homes for Lambeth as a priority.

Appeal

Current and former tenants have a right to appeal any recharged repairs; these appeals should be made directly to Homes for Lambeth.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every two years in accordance with any future legislative changes as and when they occur.

In addition, Homes for Lambeth will proactively monitor the effects of its rechargeable repairs procedure. Areas to be monitored will include:

- Total cost of rechargeable repairs
- Income received from rechargeable repairs / recovery rate
- Number of disputes and outcomes (including monitoring by age, disability etc.)

Equalities and Diversity

Homes for Lambeth does not discriminate against tenants or residents regardless of their race, religion, language, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, health or disability, location, political or immigration status.

We recognise that vulnerable tenants have housing related support needs and will work with agencies to meet those needs.

We work in accordance with the organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy, ensuring that appropriate advice and assistance is given to those disadvantaged in the community, and that adequate translation and interpretation facilities, large print material, Minicom, induction loops etc are available. All actions carried out are in accordance with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Training and Promotion

We will publicise this policy to staff and tenants through:

- Our website
- Policy briefings and training

HFL Policy Name:	HFL Rechargeable Repairs Policy
HFL Policy Owner:	HFL Operations Manager
Applies to:	All HFL Group Companies
Policy Compliance:	Annual Review
Policy Review Cycle:	Every two Years (min or as per legal/regulatory requirements). Next review July 2021
Version Control/Audit Trail:	
	DRAFT v1.0 Prepared for HFL Board approval Sent to Board for Approval on 3 June 2019 Approved on 15 July 2019 by circulation to Board

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