

Policy	Recharge policy
Date adopted	November 2023
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Version	1
Responsible board	Homes board
Responsible officer	Head of income

## Our promise to you

**Our recharge policy explains the circumstances in which we will levy charges in addition to the set rent and service charges and the basis on which such charges may be calculated and applied.**

### We will:

- ◆ Undertake work that is the responsibility of Homes Plus, when it is needed
- ◆ Provide a repairs and maintenance service that offers value for money
- ◆ Operate a rechargeable services policy that is clear, fair and openly communicated to our customers

## 1. Policy statement and purpose

This policy sets out our approach to managing recharges.

The recharge policy follows the regulatory standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). It is specifically aligned with the Homes standard, by addressing the following requirements.

- ◆ Ensure that tenants homes meet the standard set out in section 5 of the Decent Homes Standard and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard.
- ◆ Provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas. The service will respond to the needs of customers, offer choice and complete repairs and improvements right, first time.
- ◆ Meet all applicable statutory requirements for the health and safety of occupants in their homes.

## 2. What the policy covers

This policy applies to all rented homes where the landlord is Homes Plus, including retirement living properties. Garages and Market rent customers are also included.

Shared ownership and leasehold properties are not covered by this policy.

### 3. Definitions contained in the policy

**Compliance inspection** – regular inspections are carried out in customer’s homes and communal areas, in respect of gas, electrical and fire safety features to make sure that Homes Plus comply with regulations and our customers’ homes are safe.

**Customer transfer** – an existing Homes Plus customer moves to another home owned by Homes Plus.

**Emergency repair** – a repair that means there is an immediate risk to safety, security or health.

**Mutual exchange** – where a customer swaps their home legally with another housing association or council tenant.

**Rechargeable repair** – works and repairs that are the responsibility of the customer but carried out by Homes Plus.

**Routine repair** – a repair that is not an emergency.

**Scheduled rate of costs** – a standard list of prices, which allows us to work out the cost of any rechargeable repairs that we carry out. Homes Plus and other social landlords use this schedule for repairs, installations and other minor works.

### 4. The following statements support our recharge policy

- 4.1 We will not accept any deliberate damage to our properties. We will make sure that customers are charged for any repair work that has to be carried out as a result of neglect or damage that is caused on purpose. This applies whether the customer, other members of the household or visitors have caused the damage.
- 4.2 Our customers, including future tenants, are advised of their responsibilities for the care and repair of their home. This is included in our tenancy agreements.
- 4.3 Homes Plus will make sure all our customers are aware of our recharge policy. We will do this through new tenancy sign-ups and home inspections, as well as by posting information on our external communication channels.
- 4.4 Customers moving into their new home will be given photographs of the inside of the property as part of the tenancy sign-up process. Copies of the photographs will also be kept on our systems for reference.
- 4.5 We will carry out all emergency repairs or repairs where the property is not secure. If the repair is classed as a recharge, the customer will be advised of this and how to repay the recharge costs. If the customer is unable to pay in full straight away, the costs will be added to a rent sub-account.
- 4.6 If a non-emergency/routine repair is chargeable to the customer, it must be paid for before any work is carried out.
- 4.7 We will carry out all work to our repairs standard and use the National Housing Federation standard minute value to work out the cost. Where possible, information about the charges will be provided to customers before any payment is requested.

### 5. Recharges

- 5.1 Customers can undertake routine repairs themselves but we will carry out an inspection once work is completed. This is so that we can make sure the work has been carried out to an acceptable standard. We may recharge the cost of this inspection as appropriate.
- 5.2 Any repairs undertaken by the customer or third party will be subject to inspection by Homes Plus.

- 5.3** Customers may make alterations and adaptations to their homes with the approval of Homes Plus but maybe charged for the restoration of the property to it's original condition at the end of the tenancy.
- 5.4** If a customer agrees to carry out a repair themselves but doesn't complete the work or it is completed to a standard that is not acceptable we will carry out the work ourselves and recharge the costs of the remedial work to the customer.
- 5.5** We may charge customers for the cost of an appointment if they miss one or more pre-arranged appointments or fail to allow us access to their property for compliance checks.
- 5.6** Any alterations made by a customer which are found to be dangerous, unsafe or result in a failed compliance inspection, will be classed as a priority and repaired by us. The cost of this work will be charged to the customer or former tenant, as appropriate.
- 5.7** The cost of removing any bulky items from communal areas, including gardens and drying areas, will be charged to the customer(s) responsible. If the customer cannot be identified, we may need to charge a percentage of the removal costs to each person who has access to the communal area as part of their tenancy.
- 5.8** We will recharge customers if emergency services have caused damage to a property during any criminal investigation that results in the customer being charged with a criminal offence. If this does not lead to a criminal conviction we will ask the customer to recover the cost of the damage from the appropriate emergency service. This applies to the customer, other members of the household and visitors.
- 5.9 Customer transfers.** We will visit a customer's home to carry out a property inspection before any transfer can take place. If any chargeable repairs are found, the customer will be asked if they want to carry out the repair themselves or pay us to do so. Unless the transfer is taking place for an urgent reason, the recharge costs should be paid before the repair work is carried out. If the transfer is taking place for an urgent reason and it is agreed with a senior manager, costs can be added to the customer's account and recovered at a later date.
- 5.10 Mutual exchanges.** Our neighbourhoods team will visit customers who have applied to mutually exchange their home. If any chargeable repairs are found, the customer must carry out these repairs themselves or arrange for someone to carry out the repair on their behalf. If this work isn't completed, the mutual exchange will not be allowed to go ahead.
- 5.11 Termination of tenancy.** If a customer has given us notice of their intention to leave their property, we will carry out an inspection. This will take place before the customer moves out or just after the tenancy has ended. If our property team finds any chargeable repairs, the customer will be notified and advised of how much they need to pay. The costs can be added to the customer's account.



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