

# CHARGEABLE COSTS POLICY



## 1. Background and objectives

- 1.1. This policy sets out our approach to charging customers for the cost of repairs, or other works, which are the customers' responsibility.
- 1.2. These works or costs will have occurred because of customer actions, or inaction in managing their tenancy and/or maintaining their home, or because such works are elective and not within our responsibilities as a landlord.
- 1.3. Customer's responsibility regarding maintenance of their home (including gardens and outbuildings) is detailed in their tenancy agreement and general information can be found in the repairs and maintenance section on our website.
- 1.4. Customers are directly responsible for any member of their household, visitors or persons residing in their home who cause damage to that home (including any shared areas) and costs arising from such damage will be chargeable to the Customer.
- 1.5. The policy applies to all customers in Alliance Homes rental properties, leaseholders and shared owners.
- 1.6. The Policy aims to:
  - Ensure fairness and consistency in dealing with unacceptable conduct that incurs costs to Alliance Homes.
  - Identify the volume of rechargeable works that Alliance Homes carry out to manage this service demand and ensure that our revenue stream is protected through efficient debt recovery.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1. We consider costs relating to the management and maintenance of our properties and tenancies to be chargeable when they:
  - (a) arise from some action or inaction by a customer or a member of their family or an invited visitor to their property; and
  - (b) are over and above our reasonable management expenditure.
- 2.2. The following are examples of the circumstances in which we regard our costs to be rechargeable.
  - Damage or deterioration caused wilfully or through accident or neglect by a customer or a member of their family or an invited visitor to their property.
  - Unauthorised works to their property or to the communal areas around it.
  - Remedial work over and above 'fair wear and tear' when preparing a property for reletting.

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- Gaining access to a property following repossession or abandonment or for the purposes of carrying out gas/electric checks.
- Storage and/or disposal of belongings; and the property not being left in a clean and tidy condition.
- Providing an “out of hours” response for an emergency repair when it transpires that the customer has deliberately misled us, and the repair is not actually an emergency.
- Enhancement to the property or providing a service to enable the tenant to meet their tenancy obligations such as keeping the garden tidy.
- Lock changes or replacing electronic access fobs.
- Removal of items placed on Alliance Homes land without our consent, for example abandoned vehicles.
- Court costs relating to possession action or injunctions.
- Alleged break in at the property where the tenant has not reported this to the Police and does not have a crime reference number.
- Removal of items left in communal areas.
- Making good any alterations carried out by the tenant where approval has not been authorised to carry out such works or has resulted in damage to the property or neighbouring property.
- The cost of specialist equipment and/or materials that have been ordered and the tenant refuses to have them fitted or provide access.
- Remedial work relating to pests and other localised outbreaks.
- Clearing utility debt on a customer’s behalf to enable a compliance service to proceed.

2.3. The list is not exhaustive and other costs may be deemed rechargeable.

## 3. Carrying out Works

- 3.1. Where the work required is urgent, either due to a health and safety concern or to safeguard against serious longer-term damage to the property, the work will be undertaken prior to customer payment and the amount will be invoiced following the work.
- 3.2. Where the work required is not urgent it will not be scheduled until the customer has paid the full cost in advance.
- 3.3. Customers will be advised of the option to carry out some works themselves to reduce cost, or to explore another third-party contractor who may be less expensive.
- 3.4. Works or remedial action to communal areas or shared spaces will be undertaken as soon as possible with an investigation to follow that identifies those responsible who may be recharged.
- 3.5. Recharge amounts will be based on the actual cost (materials and labour) incurred or on our standard Schedule of Rates, whichever is lowest. Recharges will also be subject to a 10% Administration Fee + VAT.

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## 4. Exceptions and Discretion

4.1. In some circumstances it will be reasonable for Alliance Homes to not recover the charge. These may include (but are not limited to):

- Works resulting from a criminal act where a crime number is obtained.
- Works resulting from incidents of Domestic Abuse.
- Works rechargeable to a deceased customer.
- Charges directly linked to a known support need of the customer in question.

4.2. Approval to make a charge non-recoverable can be given by the Tenancy Sustainability Manager or Tenancy Services Manager.

## 5. Recovery, Non-Recovery and Dispute

5.1. Chargeable costs will be issued to a customer in invoice form and recovery will be progressed in line with the principles of the Debt Management Policy.

5.2. Costs that have been classed as non-recoverable based on the customers circumstances, and the discretion referred to in Section 4, will be written off based on the authority levels within the Alliance Homes Financial Regulations.

5.3. Decisions to determine a cost as chargeable and recoverable do not carry appeal rights, however customers may dispute the decision via our complaints and feedback team. Any costs subject to a complaint will not be recovered until the complaint decision is reached.

## 6. Monitoring and Review

6.1. The impact of this policy will be monitored through the following measures:

- Volume of works classed as rechargeable (£)
- % of recharges recovered (by month and year to date)
- % of recharges deemed non-recoverable

6.2. The Tenancy Sustainability Manager is responsible for the implementation, monitoring and review of this policy.

6.3. This policy will be reviewed within three years of its approval date.

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## 7. Equality and diversity

- 7.1. This policy is subject to a periodic Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).
- 7.2. The purpose of such an assessment is to consider the effect of the policy regarding the recognised protected characteristics of equality and ensure that it does not unfairly impact any individual or group. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or other grounds set out in our Equality and Diversity Strategy and Policy. Remedial action will be undertaken if a detrimental effect is identified.
- 7.3. The EIA also requires the policy author to consider whether the policy is likely to negatively impact on a person's Human Rights.
- 7.4. This policy and any other related Alliance Homes publications can be provided in other formats for those with visual, literacy or language difficulties.

## 8. Associated Documents

- 8.1. Reference should be made to the following internal documents when reading this policy:
- Debt Management Policy
  - Tenancy Agreement
  - Leasehold Agreement
  - Shared Ownership Lease Agreement
  - Repairs, Maintenance, and Improvements Policy
  - Estate Management Policy

## 9. Version control and approval dates

Approval stage	Date completed
Equality Impact Assessment completed	31/08/2023
EIA reviewed by specialist colleague within HR	04/09/2023
SLT review / approval	03/10/2023
Board or Committee approval	N/A
Next review date	August 2026

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## Appendix 1

### Equality Impact Assessment

**An Equalities Impact Assessment must be conducted alongside the review of an existing policy or the creation of a new one.**

**1. Name the Strategy, Policy, Procedure or Function (SPPF) being assessed and name of author.**

Chargeable Costs Policy – Phil Carroll, Tenancy Sustainability Manager

**2. Aims of the SPPF being assessed.**

- *Whose need is it designed to meet?*
- *Are there any measurable elements such as time limits or age limits?*

To ensure a fair, efficient and consistent approach to classifying activities as chargeable to customers and recovering these costs when incurred.

**3. Who has been consulted in developing the SPPF?**

- *Make reference or links to consultation/evidence documents*

Managers and Heads of Service across Repairs, Housing Services

**4. Does the SPPF promote equality of opportunity?**

The Policy does not have any specific impact on equality in terms of accessing services. The discretion referenced in Section 4 gives an opportunity to tailor the impact of this policy on customer groups who may have vulnerabilities.

**5. Identify potential impact on each of the diversity “groups” by considering the following questions (the list is not exhaustive but an indication of the sort of questions assessors should think about):**

- *Might some groups find it harder to access the service?*
- *Do some groups have particular needs that are not well met by the current SPPF?*
- *What evidence do you have for your judgement (e.g. monitoring data, information from consultation/research/feedback)?*
- *Have colleagues/residents raised concerns/complaints?*

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- Is there local or national research to suggest there could be a problem?

Protected Characteristic	No impact	Negative impact	Positive impact	Information source/s **	Comments/evidence
Race	X				
Disability	X				
Gender	X				
Transgender	X				
Sexual orientation	X				
Religion or belief	X				
Age	X				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	X				
Pregnancy and Maternity	X				
Rural issue	X				
Social mobility	X				

Was there a negative impact identified in question 5? No

6. If “negative impact” identified in table (4) above is it?

Legal -

What is the level of impact? -

YES	NO
HIGH	LOW

If it is not legal and/or high impact – (i.e.: if you have highlighted NO to legal and HIGH to impact, then the document should be referred to Head of HR)

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**7. If positive impact has been identified in table 4 above, how can it be improved upon or maximised, either in this SPPF or others?**

N/A

**8. Full EIA (or if you decide full EIA is not necessary but some changes should be considered)**

- *Are there changes you could introduce which would make this SPPF work better for this group of people?*
- *Is further research or consultation required?*

**9. Does this proposal have any potential Human Rights implications?**

If yes, please describe (if necessary, please refer to the Alliance Homes Group Human Rights Policy)

No