
RECHARGEABLE WORKS

Date: November 2008

Review Date: November 2011

1.0 Key Objective

- To demonstrate efficiency and value for money by ensuring that South Lakes Housing does not incur costs for repairs that are the responsibility of the tenant and by deterring tenants from committing wilful damage to the Council's housing stock and communal areas.

2.0 Strategic Links

Guiding Principles

- Cumbria Housing Strategy 2006/11
- SLH Business Plan
- SLH Corporate Debt Recovery Policy

Legal Framework

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985

3.0 Key Policy Standards

3.1 General

South Lakes Housing is responsible for the repair of the structure and exterior of the property, gas and plumbing systems, heating and hot water equipment, fixtures and fittings. A full list of these items is contained within the tenants' handbook.

We will require tenants to pay for repair works to their property if the work has been caused by:

- deliberate damage, neglect or accidental damage caused by the tenant, a member of the tenant's household or visitors
- Repairs that are necessary as a result of unauthorised alterations that the tenant has carried out
- Any act of vandalism, unless a crime log number is obtained
- Any other repair that is the responsibility of the tenant (a full list of these items is contained within the tenants handbook)

Any damage requiring a repair (including to glass) caused by criminal activity must be reported to the police and a crime log number obtained by the tenant. If the damage presents a security problem, South Lakes Housing will be responsible for ensuring that the property is made secure. A charge will be made unless a crime log number is provided by the tenant.

For non-urgent repairs, current tenants will be given the option of South Lakes Housing attending to the repair or employing their own qualified tradesman to carry out the repair.

Tenants employing their own tradesmen must allow access for officers of South Lakes Housing to inspect and all repairs and materials must be of an equal or approved standard.

Tenants vacating properties will be charged for damage (to fixtures, fittings and decorations) which is assessed as being other than due to fair wear and tear and for the removal of rubbish.

3.2 Vulnerable Tenants

Tenants who are elderly, disabled or vulnerable may request South Lakes Housing to carry out repairs that are normally the tenants' responsibility at no cost to them.

All applications will be determined by the Repairs Operations Manager from tenants that meet the following criteria:

- 70 years of age or over or
- in receipt of disability living allowance, incapacity benefit or attendance allowance or
- living in sheltered accommodation or supported housing or
- judged as requiring special assistance due to their vulnerability or
- living in a household where a member is frail and infirm and the repair is likely to aggravate their condition

3.3 Ability to pay

Assistance will be provided to help tenants who genuinely do not have the ability to pay. Full details of provision are contained within the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy.

3.4 Debt Recovery

South Lakes Housing will be responsible for pursuing all non-payment of rechargeable works in line with procedures laid down in the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy.

3.5 Documentation

The following documents are to be used and referred to as part of this policy:-

- Tenants' handbook
- Tenancy agreement
- Corporate Debt Recovery Policy
- Void inspection reports

4.0 Key Targets and Performance Indicators

- Number and total amount of recharges raised during financial year
- Proportion of recharges collected

5.0 Monitoring, Review and Consultation Process

The Repairs Operations Manager will monitor tenant recharges on a monthly basis to ensure procedures are being correctly followed. Outcomes from the recharge procedure will be reported to the South Lakes Housing Board and Tenants Committee on an annual basis.

6.0 Service Development and Review Priority

Changes to the service may take place as the result of the work of relevant Service Improvement Groups with tenant representation. The policy will be reviewed at least once every three years to ensure that it is meeting the current needs of the community, and to ensure that it takes into consideration any changes to legislation at any given time.

7.0 Equality and Diversity

South Lakes Housing recognises that there is a broad range of visible and non-visible differences that characterise its tenants. Some of these qualities include race, religion, culture, nationality, ethnic background, colour, disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, literacy and income level. By understanding and respecting this diversity it is able to set a policy which ensures that all tenants are able to access services provided by South Lakes Housing in an equitable manner.

South Lakes Housing is committed to providing information and services equally and without discrimination so that they meet the needs of all sections of the community who are either housed by South Lakeland District Council, living near properties managed by South Lakes Housing or seeking access to or information on housing services in the South Lakeland area. In carrying out all housing management policies, South Lakes Housing’s Equality and Diversity Policy will be adhered to.

