



CHARGEABLE REPAIRS POLICY

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Executive Summary:

The purpose of this policy is to promote the expectation that we require tenants to look after and take care of their home. The policy is designed to ensure there is a consistent and transparent approach to Chargeable Repairs.

Policy Grouping/Directorate(s)	Customer & Communities	
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Notes:		
*This policy is currently undergoing review which is expected to be complete by December 2023.		
This policy will remain in place until the review is complete.		

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines Rochdale Boroughwide Housing's approach to Chargeable Repairs. The purpose of this policy is to promote the expectation that RBH requires tenants to look after and take care of the home they occupy. The policy is designed to ensure there is a consistent and transparent approach to the operation of Chargeable Repairs and to define payment and recovery arrangements to ensure maximisation of income when such repairs are carried out.

2 Context

- 2.1 The policy is designed to complement the RBH vision : People succeeding together to offer great services and places to live and work. To support this vision, the RBH strategy Succeeding Together has three fundamental priorities. These are Core Priority: Pride in Quality Homes and Good Services, Supporting Priority: Pride in our People and Communities and Enabling Priority: Pride in our Society. The Rents and Payments Team, who are responsible for the collection of Chargeable Repairs accounts, contributes to the delivery of the RBH strategy, with regard to business sustainability and maintaining our income.

3 Aims & Objectives

- 3.1 The aims of the policy are:

- To help promote a cultural expectation that tenants value and take care of their home to reduce the number of chargeable repairs that need to be carried out.
- To provide a clear and transparent statement that sets out how decisions to charge will be taken.
- To set out what factors will be taken into consideration when exercising discretion when operating this policy.

- 3.2 The policy fits with the mutual values of RBH:

Responsibility - RBH takes a responsible and balanced approach to recovering costs for chargeable repairs and providing support to our diverse tenant base.

Equity – This policy will help ensure a fair and transparent approach to chargeable repairs and provide guidance on the circumstances where discretion may be exercised to protect vulnerable tenants.

Democracy – This approach has been developed in partnership with members through the initial consultation in 2016 and further consultation in 2022.

Pioneering – This policy supports a forward-thinking approach to charging for repairs in advance and RBH recognises that this will contribute to its financial stability by effectively managing its assets and service delivery. In addition, this policy recognises the complex mix of circumstances at play when determining whether to charge or not and we will always look to take a tenant focused approach in our decision making.

Collaboration – We will work with RBH Teams and Tenant Representatives to deliver this policy.

4 Policy Statement

4.1 Definition of a Chargeable Repair

4.1.1 If someone has caused damage to an RBH home, whether this was by neglect, by accident or on purpose, it is the tenant's responsibility to fix it. Therefore, tenants are liable for the costs of any repair required.

Chargeable repairs will be identified in several ways including, but not limited to, conversations with tenants when they call to request a repair, visits by RBH employees to homes for inspections, other repairs visits and for appointments with tenants.

Tenants will always be informed that they can, if they prefer, arrange for the repairs to be carried out by their own suitably qualified contractor. If the tenant intends to arrange for the work to be completed themselves, they must ask for permission from RBH, and the works should be undertaken by a suitably qualified tradesperson. RBH will arrange for the work to be inspected once completed. A certification of work maybe required.

Chargeable repairs include, but are not limited to:

- Replacing broken windows
- Renewing or repairing damaged internal doors
- Replacing locks

Alterations that have been carried out by the tenant and need returning to their original state

4.2 There may be exceptional circumstances where RBH may want to waive any charges associated with the work. RBH will make decisions in light of the full range of circumstances on a case-by-case basis. RBH will consider matters such as:

- Health
- Vulnerability
- Disability

We will discuss all circumstances with the tenant, carry out background checks and liaise with other agencies who may hold important information when making decisions in relation to the waiving of charges. RBH will always explain how it has come to decisions to exercise discretion with the tenant to ensure all relevant matters have been considered.

There is a full appeals process for cases when a tenant believes they should not be charged for a repair. Full details of this process can be found in the Chargeable Repairs Procedure.

4.3 RBH uses the Schedule of Repairs set out in the Responsive Repairs Policy. This sets out the cost of the most common recurring chargeable repairs. This enables RBH to inform tenants of the cost of the repair when it is requested. For non-standard repairs, an inspection may be required to assess the cost of the work required and RBH will inform tenants of the cost within 7 days of the original request.

4.4 Payment in Advance

If a tenant asks that a non-essential chargeable repair be completed by RBH, payment in advance will be required. No work will be carried out until full payment has been made.

4.5 Agreement to Pay by Instalments

If a tenant is unable to meet the full cost of the repair immediately, payment by instalments may be agreed as detailed in the Chargeable Repairs procedure. These will be subject to an administration charge of 10% of the total, capped at £25. This charge will cover the additional costs incurred by RBH by accepting payments by instalments.

If a tenant has been quoted the price of a chargeable repair including the 10% administration charge, this will be waived if the repairs is paid in one lump sum.

With the exception of emergency repairs or where there is a health and safety issue, the tenant must accept responsibility for the full costs before any work is carried out.

4.6 Recovery of Charges

In situations where the tenant does not pay the charge, or fails to keep to an agreed payment plan, RBH will take recovery action as necessary in accordance with the Income Recovery Procedure.

Whilst a chargeable repair remains unpaid, any subsequent requests for chargeable repairs could be delayed, unless the repair is considered urgent, until the tenant accepts responsibility for the costs and agrees to a payment plan or pays for the repairs in full.

Outstanding chargeable repairs may prevent requests for transfers or re-housing in line with RBH's Tenancy Policy.

4.7 Insurance

RBH offers a Tenants Contents Insurance Scheme which all tenants are encouraged to join when they originally sign up for their tenancy. The cover provided is different to some private contents insurance policies in that it allows insured tenants to claim for many chargeable repairs under the Tenants Liability element of the policy.

4.8 Visitors

If a tenant, their friends or family have damaged the home or left unauthorised improvements/alterations or left items that require clearing or the home needs cleaning, RBH will charge the tenant for putting these matters right.

5 Monitoring

5.1 Collection of chargeable repairs under the new policy will be monitored through the production of statistical data that includes year on year comparisons of cash collected.

5.2 This policy will be monitored to ensure charges are not negatively impacting our vulnerable tenants by monitoring the percentage of all tenants with a Chargeable Repair account and comparing this to the number of tenants in vulnerable groups

including but not limited to age, gender and tenants who have informed RBH of a disability.

6 Review

- 6.1 All RBH strategies, policies, service standards and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' and comply with all relevant legislation and statutory regulations.
- 6.2 This policy will go through the full policy approval process every 3 years and will undergo a desktop review annually. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and complies with all relevant and statutory regulations.

7 Links with Other RBH Documents

- 7.1 This policy links to the following policies and strategies:
 - Income & Rent Collection Policy
 - Rents & Payments Team Procedures
 - Tenancy Agreements
 - Tenancy Policy
 - Responsive Repairs Policy
 - Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy
 - Equality and Diversity Policy