

Recharge Policy

Approved: HOC Apr 2023
Reviewed: HOC Apr 2025
Review: HOC Apr 2030

NOTE: This policy can be made available in a range of formats. Please contact the Head Office if you require this document translated or issued in a format which is more appropriate for you.

RECHARGE POLICY

Introduction

At Sutton Housing Society (SHS) we recognise that most residents (tenants) act responsibly and maintain their homes to an acceptable standard. However, sometimes things go wrong, leading to repairs being requested which would otherwise be the resident's responsibility. When this happens, SHS may respond by undertaking the repair and recovering the cost from the resident(s).

There are times when items such as mattresses, microwaves etc are dumped in communal areas or on other SHS land rather than being disposed of properly. This is not only unsightly but can be a serious health and safety issue. Where we can identify the resident/s responsible for leaving these items, we will invoice the costs incurred for removing and disposing of these items, to the resident(s) responsible. If there is no known owner, the costs may be added to the services charges for the site.

When a tenancy ends, any personal items and furniture left in the property, which lead to SHS incurring costs to remove and dispose of, will be invoiced to the former resident(s) or their estate.

The aim of this policy is to promote a responsibility by residents toward their property, the communal areas and SHS land. We may maximise our income through the recovery of debts owed relating to rechargeable repairs / dumped or left items / court costs from current and former residents.

Definition of Recharge:

- 1) Recharge repairs are repairs that are caused by damage to fixtures and fittings internally or externally (including the garden / garage / car park) that cannot be attributed to fair wear and tear through the duration of their tenancy, by a resident, a member of their household and / or their visitors.
- 2) Recharge for disposal of dumped or left items relates to the costs SHS incur for removal and disposal of these items left in communal areas, on SHS land or in empty flats, that is the resident's, former resident's, or their family / visitors' responsibility to remove.

Where damage has been caused due to crime, and there is a valid crime reference number provided to SHS, a recharge may not be applied.

Recharge Policy

Approved: HOC Apr 2023
Reviewed: HOC Apr 2025
Review: HOC Apr 2030

Where items are lost on more than one occasion, such as a telecare pendant / wrist alarm or a door fob, the replacement of these items will be recharged at the current cost.

The Property Services Manager and / or the Housing Services Manager must approve any recharge prior to any payment being taken or an invoice being issued to the resident / family etc. (The Property Services Manager is responsible for authorising all repairs / property related recharges. The Housing Services Manager is responsible for all other recharges).

A list of examples is attached at Appendix A but is **not exhaustive**.

Vulnerable Residents

We recognise that we may be dealing with vulnerable residents and those facing severe financial hardship. We will seek to agree sustainable, affordable repayment plans for rechargeable repairs.

Where there are mitigating circumstances, the decision about whether to recharge vulnerable residents will be at the discretion of either the Property Services Manager (for all repairs / property related matters) or the Housing Services Manager for other recharges, after consultation with relevant colleagues. Factors that are considered when using discretion should include age, disability, income, and savings.

Recharge Payment Methods

When residents report a (rechargeable) repair or requests a replacement item such as a telecare pendant, employees who receive the request will inform residents if their repair is a potential recharge. They will also advise of the approximate guide cost (see Appendix A). SHS employees can take the payment straight away using the SUM UP payment method. If the payment is made via debit / credit card, a receipt can be issued via email or text. If the resident does not have an email address, the receipt can be emailed to SHS, downloaded and printed at the office and then issued to the resident. SHS employees can also agree a repayment method and have a signed agreement in place before the work is carried out where possible. (Appendix A is to be used as a list of guide prices. SHS charges will be invoiced to the resident at cost. All contractor charges will be invoiced at cost plus 15% SHS administration charge.)

Payment methods available are in line with current rent payment methods. In addition, it is possible to make an immediate payment using the SUM UP payment machine. Invoices will not be raised for recharges where this payment method is used. Payment may also be spread over a period of time in a payment plan.

The resident will be asked to complete a "Request for chargeable repairs to property" form before the repair is carried out.

Recharge Policy

Approved: HOC Apr 2023
Reviewed: HOC Apr 2025
Review: HOC Apr 2030

In circumstances where there is a safety risk or potential further property damage, or where SHS has a statutory duty, the removal / disposal or repair order will be issued prior to a payment arrangement being agreed.

Recharge Process and Debt Recovery

If the resident chooses to employ their own contractor to carry out the works, they must obtain written permission from the Property Services Manager. The repair works must be carried out within four weeks of permission being granted. We reserve the right to inspect the repair after completion. Should the repair not be satisfactory, and a contractor is required to correct the works, this will be carried out at the resident's cost. Due to the door lock system we use, residents cannot use their own contractor for the replacement of door locks.

When an order has been placed for the works, the resident will receive notification from us of the repair priority, target completion date and the named contractor.

If, when the contractor carries out the work to the property, the work is subsequently deemed not to be rechargeable, the Property Services Manager / Housing Services Manager will contact the resident.

Once the works have been completed, SHS will send a recharge invoice, with a copy of the contractor invoice attached, to the resident. The invoice payment terms are 14 days from date of invoice.

The invoice amount is added to a sundry account linked to the resident's rent account.

Residents' ability to transfer or exchange to alternative accommodation may also be affected by identified recharges and/or outstanding recharge debts. On a quarterly basis, the Property team will review any recharges via the order enquiry report and cross-check any outstanding payments with Finance colleagues to ensure all appropriate recharges have been raised.

Complaints

If a resident is unhappy with the decision on a recharge, then they can appeal within 14 days of receiving the recharge invoice to the Property Services Manager for all repairs / property related matters, or the Housing Services Manager for other recharges. The appeal must be made in writing and will be replied to within 10 working days.

If after appealing the resident is still dissatisfied with the decision that SHS has made, the Complaints policy should be followed, starting at the point of appealing to the Operations Director. The Complaints policy is available on the website or on request.

Equality and Diversity

SHS recognise that residents of all races, ages, religions, gender, sexual orientation, literacy levels and disability should be treated equality and fairly and we will not discriminate in implementing this policy and procedure.

Recharge Policy

Approved: HOC Apr 2023
Reviewed: HOC Apr 2025
Review: HOC Apr 2030

SHS will be sensitive to residents' individual needs and will tailor our services and approaches accordingly.

Equality and Diversity training is mandatory for all SHS employees.