



CHARGEABLE REPAIRS POLICY

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| Version Number | V6 |
| Date of Current Version | December 2023 |
| Approved by / Date | H Stockham / February 2024 |
| Annual Review Date | December 2024 |
| Full Review Date | December 2025 |

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| Executive Summary: |
| <p>The purpose of this policy is to promote the expectation that we require customers to look after and take care of their homes. The policy is designed to ensure there is a consistent and transparent approach to Chargeable Repairs.</p> |

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| Policy Grouping/ Directorate(s) | Customer & Communities | |
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| EIA Completed | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Publication | Intranet <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Notes: | | |

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 customers 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 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 promote the expectation that customers must value and take care of their home.
- To provide a clear and transparent statement that sets out how decisions to charge for repairs 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 customer 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 customers.

Democracy - This approach has been developed in partnership with members.

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.

Collaboration - We will work with RBH Teams and Customer Representatives to deliver this policy.

4 Policy Statement

4.1 Definition of a Chargeable Repair

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

Chargeable repairs will be identified in several ways including, but not limited to, conversations with customers when they call to request a repair, visits by RBH

employees to homes for inspections, other repairs visits and for appointments with customers.

Customers 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 customer 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 and damaged frames.
- Renewing or repairing damaged internal doors
- Replacement of external doors
- Replacing locks/ lock changes,
- Making right cracks in sanitary fittings (WHB, WC, etc), damage to internal walls etc.
- Alterations to the property that have been carried out by the customer and need returning to their original state before re-letting. Including the removal of items and excessive cleaning or repairing damage not attributable to fair wear and tear.
- Unauthorised alterations?

4.1.1 Where a Police Search Warrant is served upon one of our customers at our property, the customer will be responsible for the cost of any repairs that may arise in executing the warrant whether a prosecution is successful or not.

4.1.2 There may be exceptional circumstances where RBH may consider waiving any charges associated with such repair work. RBH will make decisions on a case-by-case basis. RBH will consider matters such as:

- Health
- Vulnerability
- Disability

We will discuss all circumstances with the customer and may carry out background checks and liaise with other agencies who may hold important information to assist RBH make an informed decision. RBH will always explain to the customer how it has come to a decision.

If the customer believes they should not be charged for a repair, appeals will be dealt with through the RBH formal complaints procedure.

4.1.3 RBH uses the Schedule of Repairs set out in the Responsive Repairs Policy (see '8'). This sets out the cost of the most common recurring chargeable repairs. This enables RBH to inform customers 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 customers of the cost within 7 days of the original request.

4.2 Agreement to Pay by Instalments

If a customer is unable to meet the full cost of the repair immediately, payment by instalments may be agreed as detailed in the Chargeable Repairs procedure.

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

We will expect that all works are paid for in advance and only where the work is classed as an emergency or the customer has left the property, will we set up a separate rechargeable repair account.

4.3 Recovery of Charges

In situations where the customer 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 Arrears Recovery Full Procedure Feb 23.

Whilst a chargeable repair remains unpaid, any subsequent requests for chargeable repairs could be delayed, unless the repair is considered urgent, until the customer 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.

4.4 Insurance

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

4.5 Visitors

If a customer, friend(s) 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 customer for putting these matters right.

5 Monitoring

5.1 Collection of chargeable repairs under this policy will be monitored through the production of statistical data that includes year on year comparisons of cash collected, with a view to maximising the amount collected.

5.2 This policy will be monitored to ensure charges are not negatively impacting our vulnerable customers. We will do this by assessing how many vulnerable customers are able to afford their chargeable repair alongside successfully managing their tenancies.

5.3 This policy will be monitored for how it affects people in the borough who need rehousing e.g., how many people needing a home are refused due to an outstanding chargeable repair.

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.

7 Links with Other RBH Documents

- 7.1 This policy links to the following policies and strategies:
- Income Policy
 - Arrears Recovery Full Procedure
 - Tenancy Agreements
 - Tenancy Policy
 - Responsive Repairs Policy
 - Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy
 - Equality and Diversity Policy

8 Schedule of Repairs

- 8.1 Charges will be at the current NHF SOR with an uplift for out of hours emergency works