

Rechargeable Repairs Policy

Riverside Scotland

GENERAL - EXTERNAL

Policy Approval Date:		Date of next review:	
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1. Purpose

Riverside aims to maintain its homes to a safe, decent and legal standard while making best use of resources. This policy sets out when Riverside may recharge tenants or former tenants for the cost of repairs where damage has been caused wilfully, negligently or accidentally by the tenant, a household member or a visitor.

The policy defines:

- circumstances where recharges apply;
- how discretion may be exercised; and
- the approach to recovery, write-off and appeal.

The policy supports Riverside's organisational values:

- **We Care** – protecting homes for current and future customers;
- **We Are Trusted** – acting consistently, fairly and with integrity.

2. Scope

This policy applies across Riverside Scotland and is relevant to:

- tenants and former tenants;
- Board members and colleagues;
- Housing, Asset and Finance teams;
- contractors acting on Riverside's behalf.

The policy applies to all Riverside-owned homes and estates in Scotland.

3. Legislation

This policy is informed by, and operates in line with, the following legislation:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement
- Debtors (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended)
- Bankruptcy and Diligence etc. (Scotland) Act 2007

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4. Principles

Maintaining Legal and Property Standards

Riverside will ensure that all homes meet statutory and tenancy standards. Where damage/neglect caused by a tenant places the property below those standards, Riverside may carry out repairs and apply a recharge.

Examples may include:

- Forced access to complete a legally required health and safety inspection (charge for lock change/damage to door may apply)
- Replacing internal doors that are missing or damaged
- Damage to kitchen or bathroom suites e.g. cracks, burn marks, missing cupboards
- Removing bulk items from gardens
- Removing bulk items from exiting tenants properties including gardens or common spaces after keys are handed in
- Cutting grass/garden maintenance

This list is not exhaustive and other charges may be applied.

Fairness and Consistency

Recharges will be applied consistently, transparently and without discrimination, in line with Riverside's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Customers First

Riverside recognises that individual circumstances vary. Decisions to apply a recharge will consider vulnerability, support needs and the tenant's ability to prevent the damage.

Value for Money

Riverside will avoid unnecessary expenditure by recharging for avoidable damage. Low-value repairs may not be recharged where recovery would be uneconomical.

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Discretion may be applied where reasonable, with clear reasons recorded for audit purposes. Evidence may be required from the tenant and/or third party organisations to support discretion.

Low value recharge repairs below £30 will not be charged but will be recorded on our tenancy management system. If a 2nd re-charge is applied in a 12-month period then the 2nd charge and any subsequent charges will apply.

Write offs

Riverside will not write off any debts while a tenancy remains active. Tenants will be informed of all outstanding debts, and recovery will be prioritised, with debts that could result in eviction addressed first.

Debts owed by former tenants may be written off in limited circumstances, such as where recovery is not cost-effective (below £50), no contact or payment has been received in the last year, the former tenant cannot be traced, has died, or has been declared bankrupt. Any decision to write off a debt must be appropriately approved and clearly recorded.

Write offs of recharges are for financial records and all debts owed will be pursued wherever possible, including writing debt back in where former tenants apply for housing at a later and debt is still legally allowed to be pursued. Legal advice will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

5. Payment of Recharges

Tenants will be notified of the recharge via written letter.

A payment card will be issued. Full payment is expected on receipt of the payment card, however if a tenant wishes to discuss a payment plan, they should contact their Tenant Partner and aim to clear the debt within 12 months.

Once a payment card is received, a direct debit can be set up using your recharge reference number.

Or payments can be made online by downloading the allpay app or registering for an account via the allpay website.

Or by using the payment card at any paypoint outlet or via telephone by calling 0800 529 8789

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5. Further Information & Support

This policy should be read alongside:

- Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement
- Repairs Policy
- Income Management Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- “Welcome to your home” tenant leaflet

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Board/Committee	<p>Approves the policy and oversees compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves write offs over £5000
Managing Director	<p>Approves debt write offs up to £5000 in line with financial regulations</p>
Head of Housing and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees policy adherence • Approves debt write offs up to £1000 in line with financial regulations
Housing Services Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleague procedures and training • Operational compliance with policy • Approves debt write offs up to £500
Tenant Partners/ Asset Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and raise recharge cases • Apply discretion where appropriate • Clear record keeping within Open housing • Excellent customer communication
Tenant Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once recharge is confirmed, raise charge on open housing • Issue invoices to tenants/former tenants • Manage recovery of charges in line with procedures

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7. Risks

Risk	Mitigation
Inconsistent application of recharges	Clear guidance, training and audit trail
Financial loss through unrecovered costs	Robust recovery and prioritisation
Customer dissatisfaction	Clear communication and appeal routes
Failure to consider vulnerability	Case-by-case assessment and discretion

8. Appeal & Complaints

If a tenant disputes a recharge decision, they may submit their reasons and any evidence in writing to the Housing Services Manager within 14 days of notification.

We aim to respond to appeals in writing within one month.

Complaints about the application of this policy will be handled in line with Riverside's Complaints Policy.

9. Monitoring/ Assurance

- Recharges and write-offs will be monitored through financial reporting.
- Audit trails will be maintained within tenancy management systems.
- The policy will be reviewed every three years.

10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Riverside is committed to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. We strive to be fair in our dealings with all people, communities and organisations, taking into account the diverse nature of their culture and background and actively promoting inclusion. This policy aligns with Riverside's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

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