

Gentoo Chargeable Repairs Policy

1.0 Introduction and scope

1.1 This document covers our policy on chargeable repairs. It covers how we will deal with customers who deliberately or accidentally cause damage to their homes.

Most people take a real pride in their homes, but there are a few who damage things deliberately or through lack of care. If this is the case those who caused damage deliberately or by neglect have to pay for the repair. These jobs are called 'chargeable repairs'.

1.2 The scope of this policy covers:

Gentoo Group	X
Gentoo Homes	X
Gentoo Developments	
Gentoo Genie	

1.3 It applies to:

General Needs rented properties	X
Supported Housing	X
Sheltered Housing	X
Leasehold/Shared ownership	X
Rent to Buy properties	X
Market rented properties (domestic)	X
Temporary Accommodation	X
Stock owned but not managed by the Group	X
Communal Areas, including those relating to Leasehold/Shared Ownership properties	X
Commercial Property (offices, depots etc)	
Stock managed by Gentoo on behalf of a third party	X
Garages and outbuildings	X
Remote plant (district heating, electrical pumps etc)	X
Curtilage	X

2.0 Links to organisational goals

2.1 Our Vision and Values set the direction and culture of the Group. They ensure that the business is aligned around the desire to create sustainable homes and communities and to improve the lives of our customers. The vision and values ensure that all of our people understand Gentoo's ethos and are clear about what is expected of them and the contribution they can make.

Vision:

Great Homes - Strong Communities - Inspired People
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Values:

Do the right thing
Make a difference
Work together
Keep learning
Give all you've got

2.2 This Policy operates within our Vision and Values and links to the Income Management, Tenancy Management and Vulnerability toolkit.

The Group's strategic aims set the overall direction for the Group and are the demonstration of how the Group is progressing towards the Vision.

This Policy contributes to the strategic aims and in particular Aim 1 which is to "Deliver outstanding service to customers so that people and communities thrive".

3.0 Regulation and legislation

3.1 This Policy helps to fulfil the RSH Regulatory code and the Homes Standard - which requires that:

Registered providers shall:

- Provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time
- Registered providers shall ensure a prudent, planned approach to repairs and maintenance of homes and communal areas. This should demonstrate an appropriate balance of planned and responsive repairs, and value for money. The approach should include: responsive and cyclical repairs, planned and capital work, work on empty properties, and adaptations.

This policy has been cross referenced with good practice and the CIH Manual.

4.0 Our policy statement

- 4.1 Most of our customers take great pride in their homes, but there are a minority who cause damage either deliberately or through lack of care. Responsible customers should not have to pay for the cost of these repairs through the rent they pay. It is also important that we have an approach which can both protect our assets and “nudge” customers towards taking care, by charging those who cause damage deliberately or by neglect. Our Chargeable Repairs Policy means the vast majority of customers who look after their homes are not penalised by paying an inflated rent that includes the cost of ‘chargeable repairs’.
- 4.2 Customers will be charged for any damage to their home which has not been caused by fair wear and tear, but where it **has** occurred through wilful neglect, misuse, malicious damage, lack of care, or repetitive damage by the customer, other household members, or legitimate visitors to the property. This applies where the customer has not taken reasonable steps to prevent the damage being caused.
- 4.3 We will also charge for certain repairs items which fall outside our responsibility. In addition we will charge customers who misuse the Emergency Repairs Service or leave refuse, furniture, personal belongings in empty properties where relevant.

4.4 We are committed to the principles of diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation and aim to:

- Meet the needs and choice of people from all backgrounds
- Ensure that our services are relevant, responsive and sensitive to the needs of our existing and future customers
- Ensure that all sections of the community in which we work have equal access to our services.

4.5 Our Chargeable Repairs policy will ensure that customers will be treated as Individuals and with fairness and respect. An equality assessment has been completed with regard to this policy.

5.0 Roles and responsibilities

5.1

Roles	Responsibilities
Executive Director (Operations)	Is accountable for ensuring effective implementation of this policy
Head of Operations (South)	Is responsible for adequate resourcing and having effective processes in place to implement this policy
Head of Operations (South)	Is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to and that all staff are appropriately trained
Technical staff	Are responsible for flagging up potential chargeable repairs to neighbourhood staff both in tenanted homes and during void inspections
Housing Management staff	Are responsible for deciding whether to charge customers, and for

	administering the charge and chasing the debt
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5.2 For information on customer and Gentoo responsibilities please refer to the Repairs and Maintenance Policy and the Tenants Handbook.

6.0 Monitoring and review

- 6.1 This Chargeable Repairs policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or in line with business need.
- 6.2 The accountability for this Policy lies with the Executive Director (Gentoo Operations) and the overall responsibility lies with the Head of Operations (South).
- 6.3 The Business Assurance team will monitor this Policy every 2-3 years, or in line with business need, and report to Risk and Audit Committee.
- 6.4 This Policy is Grade 3 and changes will need the approval of the Executive Director (Operations).
- 6.5 The below KPIs will be monitored by the Head of Operations (South) and reported as part of the Operational KPI's to Gentoo Group Board every 6 months.
 - To improve current collection rates by 15% during 2016/17 and year on year
 - To reduce the current cost of delivering the service by 40% during 2016/17, from approximately £40K to less than £20K
 - To reduce the average time between identification of the repair and the raising of the charge to the customer to 72 hours by the end of 2016/17

7.0 Policy outcomes

- 7.1 Our Chargeable Repairs Policy aims to achieve the following outcomes:
 - Protect our assets by empowering customers towards taking care, and by charging those who cause damage by wilful neglect, misuse, malicious damage, lack of care, or repetitive damage; this includes damage caused by household members, or legitimate visitors to the property.

- Offer a Value for Money and responsive service by introducing a minimum £50 charge, and minimising the involvement of support staff.
- Aim to improve collection rates by engaging with customers quickly in line with the Income Management Toolkit and introducing the option of serving a NOSP for non-payment or a lapsed agreement.

8.0 Records

- 8.1 The debit and any monies collected for all chargeable repairs will be raised within Orchard. A weekly report by area, neighbourhood and patch will show any arrears outstanding, as well as debt collected. This will form part of the monthly Monitoring Matrix of each Neighbourhood Operations Manager.