



# Chargeable Repairs

Policy	Chargeable Repairs
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Policy owner	Head of Neighbourhoods
Policy author(s)	Head of Neighbourhoods
Accountable Exec Director	Executive Director (Housing)
Approved by	Executive Director (Housing) and Executive Director (Corporate Services)
Equality assessment	Yes
Next review of policy due	November 2025
Policy Grade	3

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## 1.0 Introduction and Scope

- 1.1 This document covers our policy on chargeable repairs. It covers how we will deal with tenants 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 must 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	

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 Our core purpose and vision and priorities

Our core purpose is to provide safe and decent homes for our customers of today and tomorrow.

Our vision is to provide great homes, strong communities, and inspired people for Sunderland.

The safety of our customers and colleagues will always be our number one priority.

We have identified six further priorities which will guide the delivery of our services.

We live our values in everything we do from the boardroom to the front room, to deliver our priorities for our customers.

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- We know our customers.
- We provide great homes.
- We help communities to thrive.
- We are a great place to work.
- We spend our money wisely.
- We are well governed.

Our values are what we stand for and what we want to be known for. They are what makes us, us.

- We care about people.
- We take accountability.
- We shape the future.
- We bring leadership.
- We deliver.

### **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 benchmarked against other Registered Providers.

#### **4.0 Our Policy Statement**

- 4.1 Most of our tenants take great pride in their homes, but there are a minority who cause damage either deliberately or through lack of care. Responsible tenants 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” tenants towards taking care, by charging those who cause damage deliberately or by neglect. Our Chargeable Repairs Policy means most tenants who look after their homes are not penalised by paying an inflated rent that includes the cost of ‘chargeable repairs’.
- 4.2 Tenants 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 willful neglect, misuse, malicious damage, lack of care, or repetitive damage by the tenant, other household members, or legitimate visitors to the property. This applies where the tenant 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 tenants who misuse the Emergency Repairs Service, leave refuse, furniture, personal belongings in empty properties where relevant and where lock changes are carried out during ‘forced entry’ to meet our compliance requirements.
- 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 tenants
  - 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 tenants will be treated as individuals and with fairness and respect. An Equality Assessment has been completed regarding this Policy and is attached in Appendix 1.

## 5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Executive Director (Housing)	Is accountable for ensuring effective implementation of this policy
Associate Director (Housing)	Is responsible for adequate resourcing and having effective processes in place to implement this policy
Head of Neighbourhoods	Is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to and that all staff are appropriately trained
Property 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 identifying potential chargeable repairs, for deciding whether to charge tenants, and for administering the charge and chasing the debt

5.1 For information on tenant 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 (Housing) and the overall responsibility lies with the Associate Director.

6.4 This Policy is Grade 3 and changes will need the approval of the Executive Director (Housing).

6.5 Neighbourhood teams will monitor debts weekly and pursue those where there is no other debt higher in the 'pecking order'.

## **7.0 Policy Outcomes**

7.1 Our Chargeable Repairs Policy aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Protect our assets by encouraging tenants to take care of their home, and by charging those who cause damage by willful 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 tenants quickly in line with the Income Management Procedure and having 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 MRI. A weekly report by area, neighbourhood and patch shows any arrears outstanding, as well as debt collected.



# Appendix 1 Equality Assessment

## Equality Assessment

### 1. What is this Equality Assessment being completed on?

*Specify a clearly defined service area – too big becomes too hard to complete.*

Chargeable Repairs - repairs that are the customer's responsibility due to neglect, and deliberate and/or accidental damage.

### 2. Does the policy/service/project/process/function outlined above have an impact on people? Please tick relevant box ✓

*People means staff, customers and other stakeholders who are either involved in it, in receipt of it or affected by it, either directly or indirectly.*

✓	<b>Yes – High impact</b> (reasonable or significant level of direct impact/ contact, requiring a reasonable or significant level of knowledge and understanding of diverse groups)
	<b>Yes – Low impact -</b> (infrequent contact which involves minimal interaction at a level which requires only basic awareness)
	<b>No -</b> If you select “no”, add an explanation below to justify your assessment.

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

*If you have selected “no”, then subject to your justification above being validated, there will be no need to complete this Equality Assessment further.*

*If you have selected “yes”, please continue....*

### 3. Which groups of people\* (“protected characteristics”) is it impacting? Please tick ✓ relevant box (See notes)

✓	<b>All groups</b>
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	<b>Only specific groups</b>
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*\*The “protected characteristics” are specified by equality legislation. They are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. If you are selecting “All”, you still need to think about whether the “service” may be of greater relevance/ have greater impact for any one or more of those groups and include details.*

### **Please detail which groups and why**

Although all groups are potentially impacted by the service, it is likely to have a greater impact on some groups. For example, those experiencing domestic abuse may contact us to report damage to their home that has been carried out by abusive perpetrators.

#### **4. Please justify how you can be confident that this policy/service/project/ process/function it's tailored and sensitive to individual needs, that it doesn't discriminate, and that it promotes equality of opportunity / levels the playing field? (See notes.)**

*Remember within every group there will be individual and different needs. See attached guidance/things to think about. Please list the measures you have in place to give you confidence.*

All reports of damage to property will be investigated sensitively by staff before any charge is made to the customer. We will ensure that where damage occurs in households where domestic abuse is prevalent, no charge will be applied and the person experiencing abuse will be offered support. We will also assess all damage that has occurred as a result of a person's vulnerability and will decide whether to charge on a case by case basis.

#### **5. Please detail the checks and balances that you have in place which give you confidence that the above measures are in place and being implemented effectively. (See notes)**

*If you are unsure about effectiveness, or if as part of completing this assessment you have identified further work that is required in order for you to feel confident, please detail this in section 8 below.*

Any reports of damage to property, including requests for lock changes, will be received by CSC or area office staff. They will ask the customer how the damage was caused and cross check this information with that held on our IT management systems and by the local NC. Any cases of abusive behaviour towards the customer

will not be charged, likewise any cases concerning a vulnerability will be thoroughly investigated before any charge is applied.

**6. The duty to foster good relations is about tackling prejudice and promoting awareness and understanding between those who share a protected characteristic and those who don't share it. Is this duty relevant to this "service"? Please tick ✓ relevant box. (See guidance notes)**

*This question will not be relevant to all assessments. See notes.*

✓	<b>No</b> - This duty is <b>not</b> relevant to this "service".
	<b>Yes</b> - This duty <b>is</b> relevant to this service. *

\*If this duty is relevant, please detail below how the "service" is fostering good relations.

*If you identify further work that is required to comply with this duty, add actions in section 8 below.*

**7. Are you confident that the checks and balances that you have in place, effectively mitigate the equality and diversity risk to the Group? Please tick ✓ relevant box.**

<b>Level of confidence that checks and balances mitigate risks in respect of.....</b>	<b>Very confident</b>	<b>Confident but more work required*</b>	<b>Not confident /More work required*</b>
Legislation/legal action in relation to equality & diversity (e.g. harassment or discrimination, or failure to give due regard to all elements of the Public Sector Equality Duty)	✓		
RSH Regulation in relation to E&D	✓		
Reputation in relation to E&D	✓		

(\* Use Q.8 to specify your proposed actions to remedy your lack of confidence)

## 8. Actions to be completed following this EA:

*Please detail the actions you will put in place following this EA and the timescales for your next review.*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Briefing of relevant staff in relation to any policy and procedure changes	Head of Neighbourhoods	By end of November 2022
Regular review of procedures and the policy, including customer surveys/feedback.	Head of Neighbourhoods	Each procedural change and every 3 years from October 2022

## Version Control

Version	Reason	Issuer	Date
2.0	Amended format	Alexandra Gibson	19/2/2018
3.0	Refreshed following policy review	Kirsty Collins	14/10/2019
4.0	Refreshed policy following review	Alan Duffy	1/11/2022
4.1	Updated core purpose and vision and priorities	Catherine Loftus	31/08/2023