

Housing Recharge Policy

October 2022



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Contents

1 Introduction	3
2 Definition of a recharge	3
3 Purpose	3
4 Equality and diversity	4
5 Scope	4
6 Policy	4
7 Appeals.....	5
8 Responsibility.....	5
9 Monitoring and review	5

1 Introduction

1.1 The aim of the Recharge policy is to ensure that costs that arise from South Kesteven District Council carrying out any works which are normally the responsibility of the tenant are recovered through a recharge and that tenants are made aware of this. For example, repairs, pest control, deep cleans and property clearances.

1.2 The Council aims to ensure that as far as is possible all monies due in respect of any work or repairs deemed as rechargeable and payable by the tenant are collected within agreed timescales and tenants are offered an appropriate method of paying the charges due.

1.3 The Council will adopt a caring but firm approach in recovering the amount owed; the tenants will be told of their obligations to pay these recharges and will be kept informed on a regular basis about the amount they are required to pay.

2 Definition of a recharge

2.1 Rechargeable works are those works arising from damage, neglect, abuse or misuse of landlord's property, fixtures and fittings by a tenant, member of the tenant's household, support staff or visitors to the tenant's property. They do not include repairs that arise as a result of normal wear and tear through the duration of a tenancy. All recharges are subject to VAT.

2.2 From time-to-time tenants may ask the Council to undertake work which is their responsibility. In these circumstances the tenant will be informed that the work will be rechargeable and that the Council will require payment in advance (or agreement to a schedule of repayment) before undertaking the work. In emergencies, (e.g., gaining entry when the tenant has lost their keys), the requirement for payment in advance may be waived provided that the tenant agrees that they will meet the cost of the work.

3 Purpose

3.1 The aims of the policy are to:

- Put clear guidance in place to support the Council with the recharge costs for which tenants are responsible
- Link with other strategic documentation and policies such as Tenancy agreement, Void Policy, Aids and Adaptations Policy, Asset Management Strategy, Allocations Policy, Financial Regulations and the Debt Management Policy.
- In order to operate effectively and ensure value for money, the Council needs to ensure that all aspects of the tenancy agreement are enforced by ensuring income from rechargeable works and minimising expenditure in managing and maintaining its properties
- Provide a framework in which a consistent approach is undertaken to the recharge of services, where there have been deliberate actions by the tenant resulting in damage to property or other assets owned by the Council.

4 Equality and diversity

4.1 The policy will be underpinned by the following principles:

- The Council's commitment to delivering a service which is fair, equitable and transparent
- Supported by detailed procedures and agreed practices, which will be consistently applied across the organisation
- Tenants will be made aware of circumstances in which charges may apply.

5 Scope

5.1 All recharges for any work and repairs undertaken at a tenant's property which is outside of any of the Council's contractual obligations. The costs of labour and materials will be recharged to the tenant and is subject to VAT.

6 Policy

6.1 The Council's policy is to recharge tenants for work carried out that is not the Council's responsibility, and as far as is reasonably practicable recover the costs. The costs will be recovered in line with the Council's debt management policy.

6.2 If the Council agrees to carry out work that is beyond the requirements of the Tenancy Agreement or current policy a recharge will usually only be made if the tenant has agreed to the recharge.

6.3 No recharge will be made to the incoming tenant for works as a result of preparing a property for re-letting or sale, except for exceptional works requested by an incoming tenant beyond the existing re-let standard.

6.4 A tenant may be recharged for any of the following work for which the Council is not responsible, including but not limited to:

- replacement and fitting of light bulbs
- supply and replacement of household dustbins including wheelie bins
- replacement plugs and chains on sinks, baths and basins
- replacement of toilet seats, pulls and chains
- fitting of blinds, curtain tracks, coat rails and shelving
- installation of extra security locks
- replacement of lost keys
- changing locks and repairing associated damage after a person has locked themselves out
- adjusting internal doors so they open and close over fitted carpets
- lifting and relaying of wooden or laminate floors or carpets in order to carry out repairs
- unblocking sinks, basins and baths
- repair of damage caused by a tenant, family member or guest

Circumstances in which works give rise to a recharge also include:

- where the health and safety of tenants or others is at risk
- a property has been vacated and left in poor condition
- the Landlord's fixtures and fittings in a property have been changed or modified by the tenant and costs are incurred to remove and restore the original fitting
- situations where the repair is necessary to avoid further damage to the property or other properties

6.5 Where damage is caused by persons other than the tenant, and the name and address of the perpetrator who has undertaken the wilful damage is known, then a criminal damages claim may be pursued. In this instance, a crime reference number will be required prior to raising the request for a recharge.

6.6 Deceased tenants – where a rechargeable repair has been identified from a deceased tenant the case will be referred to Housing Services for the consideration of writing off this debt against the account.

6.7 Discretionary circumstance – there may be times that the tenant will not be recharged as a result of their actions. This may relate to domestic violence, or vulnerabilities including mental health issues. These cases will be raised with the Council and costs waived under specialist circumstances. If a decision cannot be decided upon at this level, then the case will be referred to senior management within housing. The case will be made at Head of Service level and above.

7 Appeals

7.1 Any tenant wishing to appeal about any aspect of the recharge process can contact the Council setting out the reasons for the appeal. The tenant will be notified of the outcome of the appeal and the decision will be final.

8 Responsibility

8.1 The Council's Housing service is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy.

9 Monitoring and review

9.1 The Council will monitor the volume, frequency and nature of tenant recharges and report regularly through the usual councils governance structures. The policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner subject to changes in Policy.

Contact details

Alternative formats are available on request:
audio, large print and Braille

South Kesteven District Council
01476 40 60 80

✉ communications@southkesteven.gov.uk

🌐 www.southkesteven.gov.uk



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL