



Places to live. Space to grow.

Recharge Policy

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1 Introduction: the purpose of this policy

- 1.1 At West Kent, we want all residents to have a positive experience regardless of who they are, where they live, or how and when they interact with us. Occasionally, we need to recover costs for repairs, services, or damage. When this happens, it's important these charges are identified early, clearly explained, and fairly applied.
- 1.2 A recharge is the process of recovering costs from a resident for a repair or a service that would normally be their responsibility.
- 1.3 Policy ownership:
 - The Policy is owned by the Repairs Team.
 - Potential recharges are validated by the Neighbourhood Housing Officer.
 - The Finance Team will collect recharges.
- 1.4 This policy sets out our approach to identifying and recovering rechargeable costs, ensuring consistency, fairness, and transparency.
- 1.5 A recharge is the recovery of money that West Kent has spent or will need to spend to complete a repair or service. It is not a fine or penalty.
- 1.6 Recharging for certain costs helps us protect rental income from being used to fund damage, neglect or tenancy breaches. This allows us to invest more in maintaining and improving homes and neighbourhoods for everyone. This ensures that all residents rent is protected and recharges are applied fairly and transparently.

2 Policy statement

- 2.1 When we identify a rechargeable item that the resident is able to complete themselves, such as reinstating alterations, carrying out minor repairs or clearing belongings, we will inform the resident in writing that a recharge may apply and offer them the opportunity to carry out the work. The written notification will set out a reasonable timescale, normally 14 days, with longer allowed for more complex tasks if needed. If the work is not completed within this timeframe, and no agreed extension has been requested and approved in writing, we will proceed with the recharge process.
- 2.2 Where a recharge is appropriate, we will consider the individual circumstances of the resident before deciding whether to proceed and on what terms.
- 2.3 We will consider any known vulnerabilities or support needs when deciding whether to apply a recharge, and if so, how it is communicated and recovered.
- 2.4 We will consider abuse when deciding whether to apply a recharge and if so, how it is communicated and recovered. Please find the Safeguarding Adults and a Domestic Abuse policies on the West Kent website: www.westkent.org
- 2.5 When a disability, or disability equipment may have contributed to property damage, we will interpret "fair wear and tear" more generously.

2.6 Residents living in a Kent Excellent Homes For All (KEHFA) home have their repairs carried out by Galliford Try Facilities Management (GTFM), who may interpret wear and tear differently from West Kent.

2.7 We also recognise that residents with vulnerability or young families may face additional hardship if works are delayed. In these cases, we will consider proceeding with works before full payment and offering a repayment plan where appropriate.

3 Recharge reasons

3.1 Recharges may apply in the following categories:

Repairs

3.2 When we carry out repairs to an individual property or communal area as a result of:

- Wilful damage, neglect, or misuse
- Damage not caused by fair wear and tear
- Resident responsibility where the repair hasn't been completed by the resident
- Damage resulting from the resident failing to report a repair or allow access (such as a water leak)
- Emergency works to rectify issues caused by unauthorised improvements.

Home improvements

3.3 Home improvement recharges can include:

- Reinstating a home to its original condition following unsafe or unauthorised alterations
- Making safe or correcting poor quality DIY works (such as electrical or plumbing modifications).

3.4 Where home improvements don't meet the standards set out in our home improvement policy, residents may be asked to:

- Carry out remedial work within a set timeframe
- Or, if not done, we may complete the work and recharge the cost.

Services

3.5 Recharges for services apply when:

- The resident has requested a chargeable service (like a key replacement or pest control)

- The resident has asked us to complete a task they are responsible for.

Clearance

3.6 Recharges for clearance apply when:

- We clear out a property during or after a tenancy (this includes garages, sheds, gardens and lofts)
- We remove items left in communal areas or on West Kent owned land.

3.7 Recharges may also apply where damage or misuse is caused by a member of the household, a visitor, or (where relevant) emergency services.

4 Recharge recovery

4.1 Residents are normally expected to pay in full before we carry out any rechargeable works. However, where a repair is urgent or poses a health and safety risk (for example a lock change, leak, or dangerous electrical fault), we will proceed in advance of payment.

4.2 Sometimes, the rechargeable work will be carried out before the resident has paid. An example of this is an empty property where the resident is no longer living. In these cases, the recharge will be processed after the work has been completed.

4.3 All recharges will be supported by clear communication and, where relevant, photographic or contractor evidence.

4.4 We will issue the invoice to the resident within one month of the completion of the work or service.

4.5 Payment for repairs and services will be expected in full within 28 days of the invoice being issued. Where appropriate, we will offer repayment arrangements based on individual financial circumstances.

4.6 We will not offer repayment agreements to residents with a poor repayment history.

4.7 Any outstanding recharge should be cleared within 12 months.

4.8 The cost of any recharge may include:

- Labour and materials
- Third-party contractor fees
- An administration fee
- VAT, where applicable.

- 4.9 A decision to waive or reduce a recharge, or to write off a debt, will be made by the appropriate team or authority. This will consider known vulnerabilities, available evidence, and previous payment history.
- 4.10 Our Finance Team is responsible for collecting recharges.
- 4.11 As stated in our Income Collection Policy, we will ensure that all reasonable steps have been exhausted before considering legal steps. If the resident still fails to co-operate in reducing arrears we may be left with no option but to commence legal action to recover the debt.

5 Recording and reporting

- 5.1 We will record and manage recharges consistently using our internal systems. We will:
- Save all correspondence, letters and supporting evidence, including any decision to waive or reduce a recharge
 - Log all recharges and financial data
 - Regularly review and monitor recharge trends to inform our performance and policy review.

6 Right to appeal

- 6.1 If a resident does not agree with a recharge, they can contact us within 14 days of receiving the invoice to appeal. We will consider the evidence and review the decision.

7 Consultation

- 7.1 This policy was developed in consultation with our Resident Scrutiny Panel. Feedback was gathered through a structured questionnaire and open comment submissions.

8 Communication

- 8.1 This policy will be published on [our website](#) and available to all residents. Internally, it will be available on our staff intranet.

9 Related policies and procedures

- 9.1 This policy should be used in conjunction with our other relevant policies and procedures, including:
- [Compensation Policy](#)
 - [Complaints Policy](#)
 - [Domestic Abuse Policy](#)
 - [Home Improvement Policy](#)
 - [Income Collection Policy](#)
 - [Maintaining Your Home Policy](#)
 - [Safeguarding Adults Policy](#)
 - [Tenancy Agreement](#)
 - [Vulnerability and Safeguarding Procedures](#)