

Disruption & Compensation Payments

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Scottish Social Housing Charter expects social landlords to manage their business so that 'tenants' homes are well-maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required' and that 'tenants' homes...when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair' – *Charter Outcome 4: Quality of Housing*. Glen Oaks Housing Association ('the Association') is committed to these expectations, and in particular that the Association '... should meet [the] statutory duty on repairs and provide repairs, maintenance and improvement services that safeguard the value of [our] assets and take account of the wishes and preferences of [our] tenants' - *Charter Outcome 5: Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements*.
- 1.2 To address Charter Outcome 4, the Association has in place a Lettable Standard for void properties before they are re-let to new tenants. Decoration of the property forms a part of this standard. Where decoration in void properties is meeting the minimum lettable standards or properties are being refused due to the cost of decoration required it is considered good practice to offer an incentive to prospective tenants. This policy will detail when these incentives will be given and what levels of payment or incentive is appropriate.
- 1.3 To address Charter Outcome 5, the Association has in place a continuing programme of planned works and improvements. Many of these works involve upgrading or replacement of internal fittings (e.g. kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, rewiring, etc.). In accordance with good practice, where décor is unavoidably damaged as a result of these works, the Association will offer décor packs in respect of such situations, to assist with re-decoration. The purpose of this policy is to state how this will be done and what levels of payment will apply.
- 1.4 In addition, we aim to provide customers with an excellent service, but we know that sometimes things can go wrong. A discretionary compensation payment can be made outwith the other disruption payment categories, where we have judged it necessary to recompense someone and made a decision about what and how the payment should be made. It is applicable to tenants, shared owners and owners who may be entitled to compensation due to our service failure.

2.0 Void Property Decoration Allowance

2.1 Glen Oaks wants to make sure that all properties are of a similar standard when tenants move into the property. In relation to decoration, the Lettable Standard says that '*obvious damage to plasterwork will be repairs. Wallpaper that is badly damaged or soiled will be removed. In exceptional circumstances, where the decoration is deemed to be poor and would affect the likelihood of acceptance, the property will be decorated to a good standard using neutral colours*'.

2.2 In many cases, repair works to the property, i.e. filling holes in the walls, will result in damage to the decorative standard of the house. This may be in one or multiple rooms of the house. These would not be deemed exceptional circumstances requiring the house to be decorated however it is good practice to offer an incentive to prospective tenants to assist them with decoration when moving into the property.

2.3 The Internal decoration of the property must be to an acceptable standard. 'Acceptable' is hard to judge with decoration, however, the guidelines at Appendix 1 will be used by Technical Staff to make a decision on what rooms in the property would qualify for a decoration incentive.

2.4 The Association will offer a décor pack in conjunction with a paint manufacturer which will provide the residents with all essential accessories (i.e. brushes / rollers) and paint required to paint the room or house. The manufacturer will offer different levels of décor pack depending on the number of rooms which qualify for the decoration incentive. The manufacturer will deliver the pack to the tenant's address at a convenient time.

3.0 Disruption at Planned Maintenance Works

3.1 The Association will not offer automatic payment to tenants following the completion of planned maintenance works. Instead, where levels of décor spoil are thought to be of sufficient scale as to justify a degree of recompense to tenants on completion of works, a décor pack will be offered. This will be done on a case-by-case basis in the same way a décor pack would be offered to a new tenant at re-letting stage.

3.2 For some works, where it is expected that there will be an unavoidably high level of disruption to décor, such as replacement of pipework or re-wiring, a

decision will be made in advance of the contract commencement to offer a décor pack or Housing Perks voucher for a floor covering to tenants on completion of the works. This would be paid for out of the planned maintenance budget.

4.0 Décor Spoil resulting from Mould & Dampness

- 4.1 Condensation mould and dampness often causes spoil to decoration in a property. Technical staff will follow an agreed process to identify and deal with the cause of damp and mould which may include repair work by contractors along with appropriate cleaning and damp-proof staining / redecoration work to the property.
- 4.2 Where further decoration work is required, or it is considered appropriate to assist tenants to carry out further decoration a decoration pack may also be issued. The size of the decoration pack will be allocated on a room-by-room basis in the same way it is assessed for void properties at item 2 above.
- 4.3 A decoration pack will only be issued to deal with mould & dampness décor spoil when Technical staff are satisfied that the issues causing the mould & dampness are rectified and will never be issued as an alternative to comprehensively investigating and rectifying the cause.

5.0 Compensation Payments

- 5.1 Compensation payments are given as a reparation i.e., in recognition of a failure or lack of service received where an apology and resolution of a complaint is not enough. Compensation for time and effort in pursuing a complaint, for example, may warrant a goodwill gesture such as flowers or vouchers or recompense for distress and inconvenience experienced.
- 5.2 Staff at senior officer level have the authority to make decisions about awarding of compensation payments as outlined in the table in Appendix 2. All payments for gestures of goodwill should be recorded and coded to the correct budget code. Tenants should sign a declaration accepting the compensation and agreeing that the matter is now concluded and will not be taken further.

6.0 Our People

6.1 The Association's Entitlements, Payments & Benefits policy advises that where one of our people, i.e. a Board or staff member (or someone connected to one of our people) is also a tenant and receives a disruption payment, the payment must be made in accordance with the Association's policies and procedures and recorded in the appropriate Register within five days of receipt.

7.0 Equality & Diversity Testing

7.1 In accordance with the Association's Equality & Diversity Policy, this policy has been consciously considered to judge whether there is any likelihood that its presentation or operation could in any way lead, no matter how inadvertently, to discrimination. The conclusion of this exercise is that it is believed that the policy should operate in a non-discriminatory way.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless an earlier update is required.

Appendix 1

Guidelines to when decoration packs / vouchers should be given to a room in a void property.

Internal decoration of the property must be to an acceptable standard. 'Acceptable' is hard to judge with decoration, however, the following guidelines will be used by Technical Staff to make a decision:

Area	Action / Condition	Décor Pack	Comments
<i>Wall Condition</i>	Holes filled with filler or plaster	Yes	
	Full Walls Plastered	Yes	
<i>Wallpaper</i>	No major holes or rips. All paper stuck to walls.	No	Wallpaper will be lined by GOHA
	Lining Paper to one wall and remaining room is in good condition	No	
	Lining Paper to one section of a wall	Yes	
	Holes filled with filler or plaster	Yes	
	Tobacco Staining	Yes	
	Excessive soiling	Yes	
	Minor Soiling	TBC	Wall should be cleaned and assessed after cleaning

<i>Paint Finishes - wood work and walls</i>	Sticker Damage to Walls	TBC	If damage to wall it should be lined by GOHA / if outlines remain should be cleaned then assessed
	Sticker Damage to Woodwork	TBC	Woodwork should be cleaned and assessed after cleaning
	Excessive soiling	Yes	
	Minor Soiling	TBC	Woodwork should be cleaned and assessed after cleaning
	Tobacco Staining	Yes	
	Holes filled with filler or plaster	No	Unless filler is a different colour to the door.

Appendix 2

Type of payment/Compensation	Calculation/Amounts	Authorisation
Service falling short of expected standard either picked up from a complaint or frontline officer	Flowers, gift voucher or payment up to £100	Customer Services/Assets Officer
Payments arising as a result of a Stage 2 complaint or goodwill payment or where a staff member has picked up that our service has fallen short and the tenant has been inconvenienced. *	Up to £300	CMT/Senior Officer

NB If the tenant is in arrears, the payment will be offset against their arrears balance.

*When considering compensation, the following should be taken into account:

- The level of inconvenience and distress caused to the customer (no compensation is given for loss of Income)
- How seriously or consistently has our service failed
- The amount of unreasonable time and effort the customer has spent in pursuing the complaint
- The length of time Glen Oaks has taken to resolve the complaint