

Policy on :	Service Charge Policy
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Compliant with Performance Standard :	GS1.2 Policies and Procedures GS1.3 Commitment to Continuous Improvement
Compliant with Tenant Participation Strategy:	Yes
Compliant with Equal Opportunities :	Yes
Compliant with Internal Management Plan :	Yes

Date Approved :	29th November, 2008
Date for Review :	November 2011

Responsible Officer:	Dougie McIntyre, Property Manager
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*This leaflet can be made available in different languages
and alternative formats*

1. Definition

Service charges are charges added to the basic rent of a house for additional services and benefits provided by the Association.

2. Scottish Housing Regulator

The Performance Standard states the 'we provide the service to our tenants and recover costs in a fair and accountable manner'.

3. Services

The Association will levy charges to tenants for the provision of the following services or supplies in its developments where these services are provided:

- Communal stair cleaning
- Communal window cleaning
- Landscape maintenance
- lift maintenance

These are the more common service charges however there are other services which may be applied to individual tenancies or developments and charges made. These can include the following:

- Provision and maintenance of furniture or white goods
- Gas and electrical supplies to common areas

The above lists are not exhaustive.

Service charges which are currently applied to the Sheltered Housing Complex include the following:

- Common area cleaning
- Close cleaning
- Electrical supplies to common areas
- Gas supplies to common areas
- Provision and maintenance of furniture and white goods
- Open ground maintenance
- Security of the dwelling
- Emergency alarm system
- Re-settlement activity
- Welfare checks

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4. Service Delivery

All contractors providing services to Barrhead Association customers are appointed in accordance with the Association's Financial Regulations and are registered on the Association's list of Approved Contractors.

Service delivery is monitored as with other services by inspection and customer feedback.

5. Application of Service Charges

Where services are provided the costs are pooled and a service charge levied to each property within the development receiving the service. Service charges are generally the same for all properties receiving those services.

6. Service Charge Calculation and Review

The principal objective in determining the level of service charges is the recovery of all costs incurred in the provision of the services, including any previous deficits. Only the cost of the service is recharged and there are no additional administrative charges.

Service charges will be reviewed annually and the charge for the forthcoming year will be calculated on the basis of the cost of providing that service for the previous year taking account of any cost variances.

7. Notification of Service Charges

Details of all services and charges to be applied to a property are detailed in the Tenancy Agreement for tenants and the Occupancy Agreement for sharing owners.

A minimum of 4 weeks notice will be given for any change in service charges and details of these are normally included along with any notification of rent/occupancy charge changes at the beginning of each financial year.

8. Payment of Service Charges

For those tenants paying rent or in receipt of housing benefit, service charges are normally recovered with rent payment.

For sharing owners, the service charges are recovered **within the occupancy charge. ???**

9. Factored Owners

All service charged to owners are covered by the Terms and Conditions in place for Factored owners.

10. Equal Opportunities

Barrhead Housing Association is committed to providing fair and equal treatment to all our customers.

The Association will not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of civil partnerships, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital status, civil partnerships, family circumstances, employment status or physical ability.

We will offer customers a range of options for communicating with us, since requiring to contact us may have to be in writing and this may be a deterrent, for example for people with poor literacy skills, visual impairment, or where first language is not English. We will monitor use of our Neighbour Dispute/ Anti-Social Behaviour policy and procedure for ethnic origin and disability to ensure that our procedures deliver fair outcomes for different groups of customers.

11. Complaints Policy

Barrhead Housing Association operates a complaints policy that is open and transparent. Should any customer or service user feel the need to make a complaint against an individual or the organisation, the complaints policy and procedure will be implemented. This is covered by a separate policy and you should request a copy if you wish to make a complaint.

In keeping records about complaints and in allowing access to our files we will comply with the legislative requirements including, Access to Files Act 1987 and Data Protection Act 1998.

12. Policy Review

The association will review the Service Charge Policy at least every three years. However, improvements in performance and service delivery may be made on a regular basis to reflect change and in light of various factors such as:

- New or revised legislation
- Changes in good practice
- Organisational change, e.g. revision of operational practices
- Views of tenants and other service users

- Auditing practices
- Resource requirements