

CITY BOARD
28 APRIL 2011

ITEM A13

RECHARGING TENANTS FOR MISSED APPOINTMENTS

Report of the Performance Manager

1. SUMMARY

On 24 February 2011 the City Board gave approval for Derby Homes to consult with tenants on the proposal to charge tenants who are not at the property at the time of a pre-arranged appointment and who have not made contact to notify Derby Homes of a cancellation.

2. RECOMMENDATION

To review the consultation exercise undertaken and approve the policy and procedure to charge tenants for missed appointments.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Consultation has been carried out with tenants using a variety of methods. Full detail of the consultation is contained in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 3.2 Comments made by the tenants who responded are also contained in Appendix 1A for City Board to consider.
- 3.3 The policy outlines the aims and objectives of introducing charges for tenants who miss repair appointments and the detail is contained within Appendix 2 of this report.
- 3.4 The procedure outlines criteria and exceptions of applying the charge and the detail is contained in Appendix 3 of this report.

4. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

The consultation provided no clear significant majority decision for or against the proposal.

5. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on the policy and no equalities implications were identified. The assessment is attached to the report as Appendix 4.

6. POLICY REVIEW IMPLICATIONS

This is a key policy of Derby Homes and will be included in the Key Policy Review Schedule. In accordance with minute 10/51 this policy will be reviewed no later than 3 years from the date of this meeting.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

- Financial and Business Plan
- Legal and Confidentiality
- Personnel
- Environmental
- Equalities Impact Assessment
- Health & Safety
- Risk
- Policy Review

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or Phil Davies, Chief Executive, phil.davies@derbyhomes.org – Phone: 01332 888528

Author: Julie Eyre/ Performance Manager/ 01332 888393 / julie.eyre@derbyhomes.org

Background Information: None
Supporting Information: None



Charging Tenants for Missed Repair Appointments Consultation Results

Derby Homes recently carried out a tenant consultation on the topic of introducing a charge for tenants in the event that they missed a repair appointment.

The methods of consultation were:

- Open discussion at Housing Focus Groups
- Consultation with the Derby Association of Community Partners
- An open comments web page on the Derby Homes website
- Text messaging using the new Contact system
- Use of the DACP's Twitter

Results

The results for each section are detailed below.

Website / Twitter

These methods gained no response.

Housing Focus Groups

We consulted at four of the five Housing Focus Groups on the possibility of charging tenants for missed appointments. We saw 31 people and all were in favour of the policy, as long as we take into account individual circumstances.

Derby Association of Community Partners

Harry Margatt, Chair of the DACP, said he would provide full support to the project on condition that Derby Homes provided tenants with two hour time slots for repairs instead of the current AM / PM system.

Text Messaging

6227 text messages were sent to tenants asking if Derby Homes should charge tenants for missing appointments.

We received 600 replies, a response rate of 9.6%.

252 (42%) agreed with the proposed charge, 348 (48%) did not.

Comments
What are you on about ,and who are you? No credit so plz ring me !
F.T.A.O. Poll.What are you on about ,and who are you? No credit so plz ring me !! I also aint reported any repairs
NO I DIDNT IT WAS CANCELLED I SUGGEST U SORT IT OUT AT YOUR END
You missed an appointment on Friday with an electrician. How do I get my tenner?
You had missed appoitmens many times but never pay me
How much do you owe me for waiting months for work you didnt turn up to do
Ive not missed an appointment. Ive reported repairs and not recieved any appointment dates yet. People have pushed a card through my door when ive been out even though ive not had an appointment for that day.
You never paid last time you missed an appointment i was told it was contractors fault
U missed appointments with me and never paid me
To Chgyes or Chgno yeah sorry had to go in to work last min and I forgot to inform you I apologies inconvenience I ve caused you .Regards Richard T .
You can f**k off u pr**ks
Chg yes as i stayed in the other day 4 2 apportments and no one came still waiting carnt phone about it yet no credit on phone
If that is the case then you o we me 20 you missed 2 last month
Only as long as the workmen turn up at the time speciefied. Also not to let the client wait in all day without a phone call saying you are going to be late. If it is a am appointment do not arrive late into the afternoon
Hah they come when ever they please and leave a note through the door that sorry we missed you even when we've been in!!! I've NEVER been paid 💎10 for them not coming; instead I've been given explanations (ie lies!) that the time was totally for an other day or similar... Really makes one wonder how much does council really in the end of day care for their properties ... :-)
Depeneds what the sercomstances R
Wel dentists do if u dont give them 24 hours notice
CHGno but can you come and finish my repairs and can i charge you a 10er a day sincr you were meant to come on the 1st of march
Chgno. It took me nearly a year to get one window fitted from you and you didn't pay me nothing plus sometimes you turn up to do jobs without makin an appointment

Comments
U av never made a repair appointment on time at this address n never had ten pound either so pointless poll
C h g no
Who the hell are you? I have never made an appointment with you.
Only if you agree a time frame of either am or pm like other organisations do.
C h g yes, but depends on the circumstance.
Because we pay enough
Didnt miss apointment
No could be anytime of day you come, if you have a exact time then that's different
Did we miss an appointment?
Some people do work like myself
Stop
Chgno.but yes if missed more than twice.thats a funny one that.shocked.
It depends on the circumstances - if we jus missed it then YES but if it was circumstances out if ur control then NO
No no one turned up last nov to do repair s to my kitchen and its now april 2011 still waiting not the only time iv been let down either
For what it's worth, I don't think Derby Homes should be charged for missing appointments.
Cant get bloody repair done
You would owe me a fortune
Witch repair is it
Yes if we know the date of the appiontment

Comments
Yes i think u should it works both ways
Yes if informed when calling
I'm not a derby homes tennent
I am not a bis u r
Yes i think you should,my kichen is not finsh its been 3 months
Why should any one pay ?
Chgno, how do I miss an appointment if I don't know when you are meant to arrive.
Remove my number. Thank you
Repair appointment missed 2day by the contractors
Ho because tou just turn up and we do not get told that you r coming
Although, I have had an appointment missed when a workman failed to attend my shower riser. Can I now claim the 💎10?
What?
No because sometimes u come on spec
Not first missed appointment but maybe second missed appointment
Chgno reason being when i first moved in i had an engineer mark a card 12.05 for a 12 till 5pm appt and he was 10 mins earlier at 5 to 12 as my neighbou day n still didnt fix it
Yes if the appointment has been agreed by both sides. But not if u just send a letter and turn up with no confirmation there going to be in.
What the hell is this about?
You never pay me when you have not turn up
Ch only if its a proper agreed time,not a spontaneous appointment! Also do u think u should pay 4 two mnth wait 4 aplasterer on the kitchen modernisation

Comments
Where r all the 10.00 s you owe me for all missed appointment over the past 8 years
Please cane i have new streamline systeam in my establishmem nt and cane you chaked our tranjacktion some time not pulling[2]
only for people that miss more than two, and Derby homes should only pay if more that two are missed. Has to be fare, as things in life do sometimes get missed
U never turn up 4 appointments ,u cum 4 days after the arrangd time ,so u owe me at least 💎50 ,cya
You dont pay at all.
What you toking abolujt?
Yes unless tenent as 2 go out in emergency.
CHGNO Am not Derby homes tenant.
I didnt miss apointment . I report derby home yasterday
No you shouldnt charge us as (life is unpradictable) ! also the rents are suposed to cover it they are almost double in price over the past 7 years, itachael Lambert 35 Brentford drive.
You have mist lots of aportments. I am still waiting for my window fram up stairs to be plasted.
I have been away.i will be avalible from the 17th
JUST BUY ME YELLOW TOMATO PLANTS PLEASE!
Chgno because half the time u dont inform us when you.re coming and people who work full time cant be in between 8am and 4pm
The difference there is , how many peep actually claim it . Yet im sure the council would :) think u would be worse out of pocket . But yes why not try .
Is this how decisions are going to be made? Asking the masses whether a subjective punitive payment is acceptable from a fiscally diminished tenant? I qu[2]
Depending on the reason why u miss the app. If there was a family crisis someone ill and u had 2 go 2 hosp i dont think u shud.
If times were more specific then yes but for people who have jobs and other commitments it's hard to wait in all day
I apologise submit another appointment please

Comments

i have never bin paid 💎10 4 a misssd appointment

Chg no we pay enough in rent as it is

No i dont want ur mony if u miss a repaeear and u will not get anything from me if i say i will be in i will be there

You have never paid me 10 pound so no

Hello , wich days ?

Yes it costs to send men out a good reason no charge no reason must charge

Hi hows ur day been? Been lovely again hasnt it? Im shattered n not fin yet :-(x x

Dont know

Never missed one

When u coming 2 my house

Just asking u is there any chance for me to get my path done at the front of the house i ask and wrote befor of and on al last year and stil waiteing of it couse it geting worse than ever with holes in the concrete and stons cameing out of it am constantly sweeping it up of stones dust of the concrete and i haue walking stick couse i had bad toes and

Who this?



Charging Tenants for Missed Repair Appointments Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out guidelines for employees on the charging of tenants for missed repair appointments. The purpose of charging tenants for missed appointments is to reduce the number of appointments missed and not to provide Derby Homes with an income stream.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 Derby Homes' ultimate aim is to gain access to properties when a repair appointment is made.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all properties managed by Derby Homes. All tenants will be made aware they must allow access to complete repairs where appointments are made and for emergency repairs.
- 2.3 Derby Homes will publish this information in different formats to meet individual requirements.
- 2.4 Derby Homes will require all tenants who have made an appointment to allow us access to their property. We understand that due to emergencies this may not always be possible. This is included in our tenancy conditions.
- 2.5 Derby Homes approach to charging tenants for missed appointments will be to:
 - advise tenants of the missed appointment charge at every opportunity when they call to report it.
 - be proactive by focusing on preventing the charge.
 - act in a sensitive and sympathetic way to genuine emergencies relating to a missed appointment.
 - act in a fair but firm manner.

3. Charging Tenants for Missed Repair Appointments Current Procedure

- 3.1 There are times when tenants have a genuine reason for not being available to allow access to their property following the report of a repair. Tenants are advised to contact us straight away should they not be able to allow access to our contractors to avoid the missed repair appointment charge being applied.

- 3.2 We will apply a missed appointment charge if the tenant does not contact us within 24 hours of the start of the repair appointment.
- 3.3 We will ensure that we provide the tenant with every opportunity to contact us and provide them with adequate opportunity to ensure the charge is avoided.
- 3.4 We will look at each dispute by the tenant to the charge individually.
- 3.5 The charge will be applied if the tenant fails to provide access to the property or does not provide arrangements to allow access without prior notice or good reason.



Charging Tenants for Missed Repair Appointments - Procedure

1. Introduction

This procedure should be followed to charge a tenant if they miss a repair appointment.

2. Criteria

In order to determine whether a missed repair appointment charge is payable by the tenant, the following criteria must apply:

- The contractor must have followed the procedure below.
- The contractor must have attended the repair appointment on the correct date and within the time notified to the tenant on the repair appointment letter / text.
- The tenant has not allowed the contractor access to their property or has not made arrangements for access by the contractor on the date and time slot notified by Derby Homes.
- The repair appointment letter and text must have a Plain English explanation detailing the missed repair appointment charge.

Exceptions

If **any** of the following apply the missed repair appointment charge should not be applied to the tenants rent account.

- The tenant or nominated person authorised by the tenant has contacted us at least 24 hours prior to the earliest start time of the repair to inform us that no access will be possible. The earliest start times for each slot will be defined as:
 - 0800 for an AM (Monday – Friday) appointment
 - 1200 for a PM (Monday – Friday) appointment
 - 0900 for an AM (Saturday) appointment
- The tenant can prove that the reason for no access was due to reasons of an emergency. Each case will be individually investigated.
- The repair is a communal repair.

Charging Tenants for Missed Repair Appointments - Procedure



3. Procedure

- a. The tenant will report the repair in the usual ways available to them. The person arranging the repair on behalf of the tenant must make the tenant aware that there will be a £10 charge should no access be given to the contractor.
- b. All contact telephone numbers must be checked and a mobile telephone number taken from the tenant should none be recorded on the Capita Housing system.
- c. These details must be checked against Capita Housing and updated where necessary during every repair appointment call.
- d. When the contractor arrives to carry out the repair they must make every attempt to gain the attention of the tenant and also allow time should the tenant be disabled and need time to allow them access.
- e. If no response is received then the contractor **MUST** call a scheduler to inform them of this. This stage must be carried out while the contractor is still at the property.
- f. The scheduler must then call the tenant using the nominated repair number on Capita Housing. A message must be left on any answer phone facility. If no contact is made then the scheduler can authorise the contractor to leave a missed repair appointment card and be re-assigned. The telephone call, the outcome of the call and the instructions must then be placed on the Capita Housing notes.
- g. If contact is made with the tenant and they are able to allow access to the property within 10 minutes then the contractor must wait. Should access have not been allowed within 10 minutes, then the contractor must be reassigned.

4. Charge Procedure

- a. All missed repair appointments will be added to rent sub-account (5).
- b. The Schedulers must provide a list of chargeable tenants each Friday for the previous week to the repairs liaison officer. Details should include repair reference, name and address.
- c. The repair liaison officer should check each repair to ensure that the procedure has been followed and that no notification was received by the tenant to cancel or re-arrange the repair.
- d. The repair liaison officer must ensure that all sections of the Tenants Missed Appointment Charge form are filled in.

Charging Tenants for Missed Repair Appointments - Procedure



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- e. The missed appointment form is to be sent to the Accounts Clerk in Business Processing.
 - f. The Accounts Clerk will write to the tenant / person responsible indicating that unless they dispute the recharge the charge of £10 will be applied after the date indicated on the letter. If the tenant / person responsible disputes the charge the accounts clerk will request written confirmation from the tenant of the dispute. The account clerk will then forward a copy of the letter to the Repairs Manager. The Repairs Manager is to respond to the tenant and send a copy to the account clerk outline the decision.
 - g. The charge will be applied to rent sub-account (5).

5. Payment of Debt

- a. Tenants wishing to be rehoused must make arrangements to repay outstanding debts prior to being offered a property.
- b. The charge will be deducted from any claims for compensation prior to the payment being made.
- c. Should the Income Management team find it necessary to contact the tenant then the charge must be included as part of the overall debt.

If no further missed appointments charges are made to the tenants account within 12 months and their rent account is up to date and no money is owed to Derby Homes, then the charge may be removed from the rent sub-account.

Equality impact, needs and requirements assessment form

Please use this form to record your findings, proposed actions, equality objectives and targets. Use the guidance notes to help you do the assessment or contact the Equality Standard Project Manager if you need some advice

About the policy, practice, service or function you are assessing

Name of policy, practice, service or function: Charging Tenants for Missed Appointments

Assessment team leader name: Julie Eyre

Date of assessment: 14 April 2011

Department responsible: Performance Team

Service Area: Repairs

Other members of assessment team:

Name	Position	Area of expertise	Comments
Brett Harrison-Doyle	Quality Monitoring Officer		
Annabelle Barwick	Change Manager	Equalities	

Question	Response/ findings
What are the main aims and objectives or purpose of the policy, practice, service or function that you are assessing?	Making sure that tenants are at home for repair appointments.
Who implements, carries out or delivers the policy, practice, service or function? Please state where this is more than one person, team, department, or body – and include any outside organisations who deliver under procurement arrangements	Repairs Team, Enquiry Centre and Finance Team.
Who is affected by the policy, practice, service or function, or by how it is delivered? Such as, who are the external and internal customers, groups, or communities?	All tenants.
What outcomes do we want to achieve, why and for whom? For example, what do you want to be providing, how well, what changes or improvements, and what should the benefits be for customers, groups or communities?	We want to complete repairs to properties in an efficient and cost effective manner by attending all appointments and gaining access.
<p>What existing or previous inspections of the policy, practice, service or function are there? For example, Best Value Inspections, policy reviews, research into the effects of a policy or practice.</p> <p>What did they tell you?</p>	This is a new policy.

Identifying potential equality issues and factors

Question	Response/ findings
What do you already know about the equality impact or need? For example, from research, feedback, consultation or any performance monitoring	We have a diverse customer base and communicating can present barriers. Where diverse and individual needs are identified we tailor the service accordingly.
Is there any evidence of higher or lower take up under the policy or practice, or of the service or function for any particular groups? For example, who uses the service, who doesn't and why not?	New Policy
Have there been any important demographic changes or trends locally? For example is the population changing, and if so, how and what might that mean for the service or function?	Derby is a diverse city and has diverse communities.
Is there an indication that any of the policies or practices involved with the service or function creates particular problems or difficulties for any groups of customers or communities?	<p>There is a difficulty for people whose first language is not English. We use language line to overcome this barrier. The enquiry centre is the first point of contact for reporting a repair.</p> <p>There are a variety of different ways people can contact us, website, e-mail, face to face.</p> <p>We can communicate by text, verbally, in writing and electronically.</p>

Question	Response/ findings
What information or data exists? For example, statistics, customer feedback, complaints, research, monitoring – who keeps it and can you get hold of it?	Statistics are available from the hand held equipment used by operatives. The repairs team keep the statistics and they can be shared or made available on request.
Does any equality or diversity objectives already exist? If so, what are they and what is current performance like against them?	No
Is the service having a positive or negative effect on particular people in the community, or particular groups or communities?	The policy should have a positive effect on all tenants.

Collecting the information and data about how the policy, practice, service or function, impacts on communities

Please record your information and data in this table and think about:

- what information or data you will need
- using both quantitative and qualitative data
- making sure that where possible there is information that allows all perspectives to be considered
- identifying any gaps in the information/ data and what it can tell you

Data or information	When and how was it collected?	Where is it from?	What does it tell you? You need to consider all six equality strands where you can	Gaps in information
Customer feedback and complaints				
Consultation and community involvement				
Performance information including Best Value				
Take up and usage data				

Data or information	When and how was it collected?	Where is it from?	What does it tell you? You need to consider all six equality strands where you can	Gaps in information
Comparative information or data where no local information				
Census, national or regional statistics				
Access audits or assessments such as DDA assessments				
Workforce profile				
Where service delivered under procurement arrangements – workforce profile for deliverers				
Monitoring and scrutiny outcomes				

Analysing the information and data and setting equality objectives and targets

Please give your detailed findings in this table

Service or function	Policy or practice	Findings	Which groups are affected and how	Whose needs are not being met and how?

Objectives - process, impact or outcome based

Please give your proposed objectives/ targets in this table

Objective/Target:	
Specific	
Measurable	
Achievable	
Relevant	
Timed	

Objective/Target:	
Specific	
Measurable	
Achievable	
Relevant	
Timed	

Objective/Target:	
Specific	
Measurable	
Achievable	
Relevant	
Timed	

Monitoring and reviewing - incorporating into performance management

Please summarise your objectives and targets in this table with your proposed monitoring and reporting arrangements

Objective	Planned action	Target performance			Responsible lead officer	Reporting cycle, for example, quarterly
		2005/6	2006/7	2007/8		