

Rent Collection Policy

Date written: July 2010

Date(s) reviewed: July 2012; July 2015; August 2017; September 2018

Purpose: To set out our policy with regard to rent and the collection of rent across the Bernicia Group.

Scope: All Bernicia Assured, Assured Shorthold and Protected Tenancies, License Agreements.

Definitions: None

Associated documents:

Rent Arrears Recovery Policy

Tenancy Agreements

Date for review: September 2021

Responsibility: Head of Housing

Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is important that we are successful in collecting rents to meet our current and future business and financial commitments.
- 1.2 We will seek to maximise the collection of rent and service charges by ensuring that all tenants receive the appropriate support and advice to enable them to deal with their financial affairs.
- 1.3 This policy sets out the facilities and services available to tenants to assist them with meeting their obligations to pay rent and related charges.
- 1.4 It is our policy, when dealing with tenants who are experiencing difficulty in paying their rent, to adopt a sympathetic but firm approach and to display flexibility in dealing with tenants in an individualistic manner, whilst having regard to the overall recovery procedure.
- 1.5 We believe personal contact with tenants is an important part of the rent recovery process and will visit those experiencing difficulty in paying rent at an early stage to ascertain the reasons for non-payment in accordance with our rent recovery procedure.
- 1.6 The ultimate sanction against those in arrears is repossession of the property. However, we will only consider this action when we are satisfied that all possible steps to assist the tenant have been taken to avert the action.

2. Policy statements

- 2.1 We will endeavour to offer tenants as many different ways to pay their rent as possible, these will include:
 - Payment by post
 - Swipe card payment at a local post office
 - Direct Debits
 - Standing order payments
 - Recurring card transactions
 - Payment Online via www.allpay.net
 - Swipe Card payment at any Pay-point outlet
 - Payment by telephone using All-pay's automated facility
- 2.2 We will continually publicise all the payment methods available to our tenants and seek to implement new rent payment methods as they are developed.
- 2.3 We will encourage our tenants to pay their rent regularly in advance and will regularly review payment methods offered to ensure that they are accessible, efficient and effective.

- 2.4 We will review our rent collection process on a regular basis in accordance with customer feedback.
- 2.5 We will send each tenant a statement of their rent account on a quarterly basis.

3. Responsibility for implementation

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Head of Service (North & South), Retirement Housing Manager and the Assistant Director (Care & Support) to ensure that this policy is carried out effectively with the support of the Service Coordinators/Team Leaders.

4. Actioning the policy

- 4.1 This policy will be actioned in all instances where rent or service charges are levied to tenants.

5. Monitoring the policy

- 5.1 This policy will be monitored using a series of key performance indicators which are detailed in the Bernicia Performance Management Framework. These include analysis of current arrears; percentage of rent collected, and voids rent loss, as well as other indicators.
- 5.2 In addition, we will also consider more localised indicators to monitor specific elements of this policy, such as how people pay and access to ensure that we can continually improve the service.

6. Resources

- 6.1 There should be no additional resources required in order to fulfil the commitments in this policy.

7. Equality and Diversity

7.1 An equality and diversity impact assessment has been undertaken on this policy. In carrying out its services, we are committed to:

- Treating all customers and employees positively regardless of any personal characteristics including gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, gender reassignment or religion.
- Taking seriously all complaints and investigating and responding accordingly.
- Using plain language and providing information in other languages, large print, audio and Braille on request.

Uncontrolled if printed – This may not be the latest version of the policy

All policies must be printed from Connect only – please make sure it is the latest version.

Policy Planning Document (PPD)

***ALL sections must be completed with every review or any creation of a new policy. For anything that doesn't apply, state N/A.**

ALL sections must be completed with a review or any creation of a new, policy. For anything that doesn't apply, please state N/A. Anything left blank will be returned to you.

1. Policy Title*	Rent and Rent Collection Policy
2. Staff/Departments that must be tested*	Housing Services, Finance
3. Staff/Departments for mandatory read*	All Housing Services staff
4. Supporting documents, procedures & process maps*	Rent Arrears Recovery Procedures, Tenancy Agreement
5. Associated Policies*	Rent Arrears Recovery Policy
6. Completed E&D Submitted:*	Yes
7. Reason for review (scheduled/non-scheduled)*	Scheduled
8. Minor or Significant change?*	Minor
9. Details of Changes (if any)*	Minor changes to wording, the addition of extra payment options and deletion of paragraph in Section 2.
10. What good practice and ext. learning sources have been used?*	Policy is based on sector good practice models.
11. Who has been consulted?*	Service Managers, Heads of Service and Director of Housing
12. Does this Policy need to go to Board for approval?*	No
13. If any significant change, who has approved this?*	N/A
14. Have all legal implications been considered in the policy?*	Yes
15. Does this policy meet regulatory requirements?*	Yes
16. How is the impact of this policy measured?*	Effect will be measured by recording and monitoring the impact of the implementation of this policy by using Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)
17. How will training be offered to support these changes?*	N/A
18. How will the distribution of knowledge be tested?*	N/A
19. Any other information	N/A

Please confirm details below

Policy Holder	Head of Housing
Next Review Date	September 2021

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

Policy Name: Rent Collection Policy

Date: September 2018

Names of those undertaking the assessment: Steven Adey

Question 1: Please delete as appropriate.

Are there concerns that this policy or practice could have a positive or negative impact on any of the following?							
Race	Gender	Age	Sexual Orientation	Disability	Religion	Gender Reassignment	Other
N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y

Question 2: Please complete all fields, detailing any supporting knowledge you have for your assertions. Please note, the term N/A should not be used, and all field should be completed.

Please describe the positive and negative impacts for each group as identified above, and what supporting knowledge you have for identifying these impacts:		
Race	Impact	Neutral – No positive or negative impacts identified
	Support knowledge	The nature of our rent collection service means that there is unlikely to be a positive or negative impact on any individual group as a result of their personal characteristics, including race
Gender	Impact	Neutral – No positive or negative impacts identified
	Support knowledge	The nature of our rent collection service means that there is unlikely to be a positive or negative impact on any individual group as a result of their personal characteristics, including gender

Age	Impact	Neutral – No positive or negative impacts identified
	Support knowledge	The nature of our rent collection service means that there is unlikely to be a positive or negative impact on any individual group as a result of their personal characteristics, including age
Sexual Orientation	Impact	Neutral – No positive or negative impacts identified
	Support knowledge	The nature of our rent collection service means that there is unlikely to be a positive or negative impact on any individual group as a result of their personal characteristics, including sexual orientation
Disability	Impact	There may be difficulties in paying their rent for people who have disabilities, and many of our tenants do consider themselves to have a disability
	Support knowledge	Profiling tells us that a high proportion of our tenants consider themselves to have a disability
Religion	Impact	Neutral – No positive or negative impacts identified
	Support knowledge	The nature of our rent collection service means that there is unlikely to be a positive or negative impact on any individual group as a result of their personal characteristics, including religion
Gender Reassignment	Impact	Neutral – No positive or negative impacts identified
	Support knowledge	The nature of our rent collection service means that there is unlikely to be a positive or negative impact on any individual group as a result of their personal characteristics, including any gender reassignment
Other	Impact	Within the rent collection policy there is a requirement for letters and documents which may have an impact for tenants with literacy issues – which are a common problem for our tenants
	Support knowledge	We know from previous studies and statistical information that the reading age in the areas we operate does have a tendency to be low (even in adults) and that this can cause people significant difficulty in the reading and understanding of information

Question 3: Please complete all fields.

Can any of the above impacts be justified? Please describe how and why.	
Race	N/A
Gender	N/A
Age	N/A
Sexual Orientation	N/A
Disability	This impact cannot be justified. To ensure that it does not become a barrier, we tailor our rent collection service to the needs of the individual wherever possible and that we offer a wide range of ways to pay rent including Online, telephone payments, and the facility to set up Direct Debits on the telephone
Religion	N/A
Gender Reassignment	N/A
Other	This cannot be justified, and to ensure it is not, letters are not the only method of distributing information/informing tenants, and our rent collection procedure clearly stipulates that visits, telephone calls and interviews also form a large part of the way our rent service operates
How do you feel that you can minimise any of the negative impacts identified? Please describe what actions you will take to do so, and undertake or escalate these as appropriate.	
<p>Provide information in additional ways, beyond letters. In addition, where letters are required (for example for legal action) keep letters and information as simple as possible, avoiding jargon and adhering to the organisations commitment to using plain English.</p> <p>Ensuring that we aim to tailor our rent service as much as possible to the needs of individuals and that we do not discriminate people who may consider themselves to have a disability.</p> <p>We offer a range of payment methods accessible to tenants with a range of disabilities.</p>	

Does this policy require a fuller impact assessment?

Please delete as appropriate

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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