

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.

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