

Introduction and Overview

In accordance with the terms of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement and Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, the responsibility for the internal decoration of properties lies with the tenant. However, to assist with the allocation of void properties it is recognised that, in certain circumstances, it may be beneficial for the Association to carry out internal decoration to a property or, if appropriate, pay a decoration allowance to the incoming tenant as a contribution towards the cost of re-decoration. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Association's Void Management Policy and Procedures.

Decoration Allowance Procedures

This procedure outlines the processes that should be followed when deciding whether to re-decorate a void property or pay a decoration allowance to an incoming tenant.

The document outlines the Association's procedures in relation to the following sections:

1. Responsibilities towards Internal Decoration;
2. Criteria for Re-decoration by the Association;
3. Criteria for a Decoration Allowance;
4. Decoration Allowances;
5. Awarding a Decoration Allowance.

1. Responsibilities towards Internal Decoration

Section 5 of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement and Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement confirms that tenants are fully responsible for carrying out internal decoration to their property. Given this responsibility, the majority of properties will be let in their existing condition.

Once keys are returned by an outgoing tenant, the property will be inspected by Maintenance staff. Where Maintenance staff have concerns that the internal decoration may adversely affect the Association's ability to re-let the property then a joint inspection with Housing management and Maintenance staff should be carried out. During this inspection, photographs of the property should be taken and subsequently saved in the tenants scheme file under the Maintenance Directory.

Once the joint inspection has taken place, the staff members that were present will decide on one of the following:

- To re-let the property in its existing condition;
- To re-decorate all or part of the house prior to re-letting the property; or
- To offer the incoming tenant a decoration allowance.

Where the appropriate decision would be to offer the incoming tenant a decoration allowance, but that individual has medical or social needs, the Association may carry out some re-decoration works rather than awarding the decoration allowance. Housing Management and Maintenance staff must jointly agree to carrying out the re-decoration works rather than awarding the decoration allowance.

2. Criteria for Re-decoration by the Association

The re-decoration of the property should be considered in the following circumstances:

- The property is in such a poor state of decoration that Housing Management and Maintenance considers the house to be difficult to let; or
- Substantial repairs have been carried out to the extent that it would be unreasonable to expect the incoming tenant to re-decorate.

2. Criteria for Re-decoration by the Association (Continued)

When considering whether or not the property is in such a poor state of decoration that it would be difficult to let, staff should consider the following:

- The property is extremely dirty;
- The internal decoration is poor as a result of fire damage;
- The internal decoration is poor as a result of widespread water damage / dampness / condensation; or
- The internal decoration is poor as a result of bodily fluids (animal and human).

The list above is not exhaustive and the Association may consider it appropriate to re-decorate for other reasons not listed.

When considering what constitutes substantial repair, staff should consider the following:

- Building works such as the replacement of a ceiling or substantial works to walls; or
- Widespread plaster repairs to the property.

The list above is not exhaustive and the Association may consider it appropriate to re-decorate following repair works to the property that are not listed.

In addition to deciding whether or not re-decoration is appropriate, Housing Management and Maintenance staff must jointly decide whether the all or part of the house is to be re-decorated.

3. Criteria for a Decoration Allowance

Staff should consider offering a decoration allowance in the following circumstances:

- The property is decorated to a particularly poor standard, however, it is considered reasonable to expect the incoming tenant to re-decorate; or
- Basic repairs have been carried out, however, it is considered reasonable for the incoming tenant to re-decorate.

When considering whether or not the property is decorated to a particularly poor standard, staff should consider the following:

- Internal decoration that is poor as a result of damage caused by pets;
- Internal decoration that is poor as a result of significant nicotine staining; or
- Internal decoration that is poor as a result of some water penetration / dampness / condensation.

The list above is not exhaustive and the Association may consider it appropriate to offer a decoration allowance for other reasons not listed.

When considering what constitutes basic repairs, staff should consider the following:

- Plaster repairs that have resulted in damage to the internal decoration; or
- Repairs carried out for water penetration / dampness / condensation that have damaged the internal decoration.

The list above is not exhaustive and the Association may consider it appropriate to offer a decoration allowance following repairs works to the property that are not listed.

4. Decoration Allowances

Where staff agree that a decoration allowance should be granted, Housing Management and Maintenance staff must jointly agree on the amount that should be paid to the incoming tenant.

The amount will be based on the number of rooms and the type of apartment that the allowance applies to. Staff must use the table published in the current Decoration Allowance Policy. If it is considered reasonable, staff can agree to an allowance for an apartment which is lower than the maximum for that apartment type shown in the table above.

5. Awarding a Decoration Allowance

Where staff agree that a decoration allowance should be awarded and the amount has been confirmed, Housing Management staff must write to the incoming tenant using the 'Award Notice to Tenant' advising him / her of the allowance. If the incoming tenant refuses the tenancy then the Decoration Allowance will be transferred to the next applicant.

Housing Management staff should then create a new form in the Decoration Allowance Register by creating a new tab and naming the new tab as the incoming tenants surname and property address.

Once the new tab has been created, Housing Management staff should enter the incoming tenant's name, property address, date and ground(s) for the allowance being granted. Housing Management staff must then complete the table on this form marking the apartments where an allowance has been granted. Once this has been completed the form should be printed and signed by a member of Housing Management staff and a member of Maintenance staff involved in deciding the award.

Once the form has been signed, Housing Management staff should collect the tenants bank account details and then complete a BACS requisition form and submit this to Finance attaching the signed decoration allowance schedule form to the rear of the BACS requisition.

Where the tenant requests payment via cheque, Housing Management staff should complete a BACS requisition form and submit this to Finance attaching the signed decoration allowance schedule form to the rear of the BACS requisition. One receipt of the cheque, Housing Management staff will arrange for the cheque to be posted or hand delivered to the tenant.