



City of London Corporation
Department of Community & Children's Services
Housing Service

Income Recovery Policy

Approved by:	<i>Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee</i>
Approval Date:	
Version	<i>1.0</i>
Next Review Date:	<i>+3 years</i>

1. Purpose and scope

- 1.1 We have this policy because we want our residents and service users to know our approach to the recovery of rent and service charge arrears, or other charges due to the City of London's Housing Service. It sets out what we will do to prevent arrears and other debts and the action we will take when rent or other charges are not paid.
- 1.2 This policy includes our approach to any debts arising from a breach of a current tenancy, lease or licence. It applies to all homes managed by the City Corporation's Housing Division, including the City of London and Gresham Almshouses. It also applies to any non-residents who are required to pay a charge to us for a service we provide, for example parking, storage or hall hire.

2. Policy aims and objectives

- 2.1 Our aim is to minimise any loss of income from missed or unpaid rent or other charges. By doing this we will help our residents and secure the income we need to provide services and invest in our homes.
- 2.2 We expect all residents and service users to pay their rent and other charges. However, we recognise that for a variety of reasons, individuals encounter financial hardship and as a social landlord we are committed to providing appropriate support when this is needed.

3. Service standards

- 3.1 We will provide a high-quality income recovery service that will:

- Provide residents and service users with a range of payment options
- Encourage and promote automatic payments
- Provide residents and service users with periodic statements of their accounts
- Assist residents in the completion of claims for benefits, offer advice and signpost to appropriate support agencies
- Develop links with local agencies that will assist residents with managing their debts
- Tell residents and service users promptly about any debts they may have and agree repayment

4.0 Legislation and regulation obligations

4.1 This policy will have regard to the following requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing:

- Tenancy Standard – We shall develop and provide services that will support tenants to maintain their tenancy and prevent unnecessary evictions.

4.2 The policy will ensure that we comply with current legislation, the Civil Procedure Rules, in particular the Pre-action Protocol for Possession Claims by Social Landlord, plus any interim court rules introduced in relation to residential possession proceedings.

5. Our approach to income recovery

5.1 General principles

We will promote a culture where residents or service users appreciate the importance of paying rent and other charges on time and their obligations under the terms of their tenancy, lease, or licence. We require rent and/or service charge accounts to be maintained in credit.

We will offer a variety of payment methods and encourage residents and service users to tell us before they get into difficulty with their payments. Our approach to debt recovery will be firm but supportive.

We will off-set any debt owed to us against any money that we may be required to pay to a resident or service user.

5.2 Early intervention

We will be proactive and use technology and customer intelligence to target early intervention. We will take prompt steps to avoid and minimise the build-up of arrears. We will contact residents and service users as soon as they go into arrears and attempt to identify potential problems at an early stage.

5.3 Information and support

We recognise that some residents and service users will need help and support to maintain their obligations. Assistance and information will be given on the range of benefits available using a variety of methods.

We will develop and maintain good links with the Department of Work and Pensions and other agencies in order to assist residents to resolve claims as quickly as possible.

We will signpost residents to our partners and other agencies so that they can access good quality debt and budgeting advice. We may run campaigns from time to time promoting the payment of rent and other charges, targeting those in arrears.

5.4 Vulnerable residents and service users

Any action to recover arrears will take account of a resident's or service user's individual needs and circumstances. We will attempt to assist residents in arrears, or experiencing financial hardship, to access any services able to help them sustain their tenancies, leases or licences.

We may use new technology and information gathered through the collection of resident profiles to target support and intervention where a resident may be at risk of falling into arrears.

5.5 Enforcement

We will operate a staged recovery process and attempt to reach agreements with individuals to repay arrears and other debts, which are both manageable for the resident or service user and acceptable to us.

If arrears persist or a resident or service user is unwilling to make an agreement, we may take legal action which could lead to eviction. Residents with arrears or subject to enforcement action will not normally be able to transfer to another City of London home, or obtain parking, garage or storage facilities.

6. Responsibilities, monitoring and performance

- 6.1 Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation rests with the Head of Housing Management. The Head of Housing Management will ensure that staff receive the appropriate training and support to achieve the aims of this policy. Where needed we may establish appropriate operational procedures.
- 6.2 Monitoring of the implementation of this policy and our performance in recovering arrears and other charges will be the responsibility of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee.

7. **Associated policies**

- Former Customer Debt Recovery Policy
- Rent Policy
- Shared Ownership and Leaseholder Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Lettings and Transfer Policy
- Recharges Policy

8. **Document Management**

Policy title	Income Recovery Policy
Date created	
Policy owner	Head of Housing Management
Authorised by	Housing Management and Almhouses Sub-Committee
Date authorised	
Review period	3 years
Date of next review	

Consultation and assessment	
Customer consultation	
Equality Analysis	
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required. Minimal risk of data breaches. Use of personal data covered by Privacy Notice.

Document review history			
Version	Date amended	Date approved	Key changes
1.0			Original document