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DIRECTORATE / DEPARTMENT: Asset Management AUTHOR: Head of Property Services	Issue Date: Feb 2019
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<h2>Decoration Allowance Policy</h2>	

1. Purpose or Aim

- 1.1. saha recognises that there may be occasions when it would be appropriate to offer an allowance to tenants to contribute towards redecoration costs. These circumstances are when new tenants move into a previously empty property, that requires some redecoration or when damage has resulted to a tenant's decoration following an improvement through the planned maintenance and improvement programme. This policy sets out when an allowance will be due and the process for assessing the value attached to that allowance. The allowance will contribute towards the cost of purchasing the decorating materials and equipment required. This allowance is not intended to cover the full cost of any decorating that may be required.

2. The following documentation can be relied on to supplement this policy:

- Void Policy
- Repairs Policy

3. Introduction

- 3.1. This document sets out the associations policy on the decorating allowances provided to Customer. This includes both the new letting of void and occupied properties where decoration has been affected by the actions of the association or its agents

4. Summary

- 4.1. At point of letting, we do not generally redecorate our homes. However if the decoration does not meet the requirements of the 'lettable standard' we will provide assistance for the new customer to redecorate.

- 4.2. We will be consistent and fair in our approach to providing assistance with decorating of our homes.
- 4.3. We will assist through the provision of 'Paint Packs' under the Dulux Decorating Scheme.
- 4.4. Decoration allowances are considered a contribution to decorating costs and are not intended to cover the full costs.
- 4.5. In some circumstances, we may provide a decoration allowance following certain works to the home such as major investment works or damage caused that is not caused by the tenant.

5. Objectives

- 5.1. This policy aims to achieve the following objectives:
 - 5.1.1. Ensure staff are provided with consistent guidance with regard to the provision and monitoring of decorations allowances provided to customers;
 - 5.1.2. Define when decorating allowance will be paid and terms and conditions of these payments;
 - 5.1.3. Ensure that decoration allowances are allocated fairly within the limited resources available;
 - 5.1.4. Maximise the value for money achieved through the provision of decoration allowances.

6. Policy Statement

6.1. New Customers & Lettings

- 6.1.1. The association sometimes provides a decorations allowance to a new tenant moving into a property at point of letting. This can be for a number of reasons:
 - The decoration of some or all of the property is not to the standard that we have agreed with our customers in the 'Lettable Standard' and the association has taken the decision not to redecorate prior to letting;
 - As an incentive for customers - The Association recognises that there may be occasions when it would be appropriate to offer an allowance to tenants to contribute towards redecoration costs. These circumstances are when new tenants move into a previously empty property, that requires some redecoration or when damage has resulted to a tenant's decoration following an improvement through the planned maintenance and improvement programme. This policy sets out when an allowance will be due and the process for assessing the value attached to that allowance. The allowance will contribute towards the cost of purchasing the decorating materials and equipment required. This allowance is not intended to cover the full cost of any decorating that may be required. When deciding to take the property and create it as his or her new home. Particularly where not providing a decoration allowance may deter customers from taking occupancy;

- In recognition of the fact that customer may not have the financial means to purchase decorating materials upon moving into a property. The allocation of a decoration allowance is discretionary by the association.
- 6.1.2. Any decoration allowance is considered a contribution to decorating and is not intended to cover full costs of decoration to the customers own specification. When being offered a tenancy, applicants will be notified of the decoration allowance amount and when it is anticipated the allowance will be received.
 - 6.1.3. All decoration allowances to new customers at letting will be paid in the form of a 'Paint Pack' under the Dulux decorating scheme. At point of provision of the allowance customers will be notified of the eligible product lines. The scheme will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it is providing both value for money and that it is both accessible and suitable for customers.
 - 6.1.4. Customers transferring or undertaking a mutual exchange will not be eligible for a decoration allowance as they are considered to have accepted the property in its current condition. Decoration allowances are not normally provided in short stay services such as Directly Managed Support Services. However schemes developed by Service Managers that encourage the participation of customers in decorating their own room or communal areas will be positively considered by the Director of Asset Management.
 - 6.1.5. It is not the norm for properties to be decorated by the association prior to letting and such actions are at the discretion of the Director of Asset Management.
 - 6.1.6. Any dissatisfaction with an allocated decoration allowance can be raised through the association's complaints procedure.

6.2. Existing Customers Decoration Following Maintenance

- 6.2.1. If the association carries out repairs or other works and as a result damage occurs to a customer's decorations the association will redecorate the affected area. Such redecoration will be carried out on a 'like for like' basis. Where identical materials are no longer available, or the existing decoration has been affected by age, e.g. discolouration, the association will endeavour to achieve a reasonable close match.
- 6.2.2. Alternatively the association may give customers an allowance to cover the cost of materials, if they prefer to do the work themselves; this choice will be offered before any repairs to decoration are undertaken.
- 6.2.3. Exceptions to the above paragraphs are:
 - Where customers have decorated over hatches, access panels or similar, preventing the reasonable access that would otherwise have been available;
 - The customer does not provide reasonable access for such redecoration works to be carried out;
 - The redecoration is necessary as a result of defects or issues emanating from improvements or alterations carried out by the customer, either with or without consent;
 - The level of damage / redecoration has been significantly increased due to the customer not reporting a repair promptly as required by the occupancy agreement.
- 6.2.4. Where major works are being carried out, for example new kitchens and bathrooms, as part of consultations and customer choices regarding fittings,

customers will also be consulted and given choices regarding redecoration of the affected rooms. This consultation may, as part of the contract for the work, be delegated to the contractor involved. We may also decorate properties in exceptional circumstances. This is would be at the discretion of the director of Director of Housing Care & Support Services.

6.3. Communal areas

6.3.1. The Association is responsible for redecorating shared hallways, staircases and other communal areas. This is usually done as part of a scheduled rolling programme. We do not provide any allowances for customers to decorate communal areas themselves due to the need to ensure a consistent quality standard. However customer will be consulted and given choices regarding decoration of communal areas before redecoration starts. Schemes developed by Service Managers that encourage the participation of customer s in decorating their own room or communal areas will be positively considered by the Director of Asset Management.

6.4. Exceptions

6.4.1. In the following general situations a decoration allowance will not be provided:

- To deal with obvious damage that has been caused by an existing customer
- To change the interior decoration of a property if it is up to standard but not to a customer's taste.
- To decorate non-customer properties; e.g. commercial units, garages etc.
- Additional allowances will not be paid for lost allowances / vouchers already provided to the customer

6.4.2. It is not the norm for properties to be decorated by the association the exceptions being:

- Rooms in short stay services that are not deemed to meet the lettable standard:
- Situations where the tenancy obliges us to undertake internal decorating or:
- Situations where someone is, due to severe physical disablement, unable to decorate. In such situations decoration assistance would be considered an aid within the associations aids and adaptations policy and procedure and applications processed accordingly.

6.5. Performance Management, Service Improvement & Scrutiny

6.5.1. To ensure that the decoration allowance scheme offers value for money and is continually improved we will monitor:

- Numbers of, and values of decorating allowances;
- Levels of customer satisfaction
- Equality profile in relation to the above

6.5.2. The Asset Management team will periodically review decoration allowances across a range of void properties to ensure consistency of the policy operation.

6.5.3. We will seek continuous improve its approach to decoration allowances through:

- Review through customer scrutiny / local offers (customer scrutiny of the repairs service will be proactively encouraged by staff)
- Satisfaction surveys and other customer feedback methods

7. Monitoring and Reporting

- 7.1. Decoration allowances are monitored via the decoration requests on void properties and by the monthly budget monitoring process.

8. Implementation

- 8.1. saha will ensure that the implementation of this policy is proactively inclusive across all activities with particular attention towards the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 whilst also being mindful towards the inclusivity of other vulnerable and marginalised groups that may be affected.

9. Roles and Responsibilities.

- 9.1. The specific responsibilities regarding decoration are outlined in the occupancy agreements between the organisation, as landlords and customers as the customers or licensee's. Specific agreements vary however generally, we are responsible for external and communal decorations while customers is responsible for the up keep of internal decoration for the duration of their occupancy. The main exemption to this being short term services such as Lifehouses and Foyers.
- 9.2. The administration of decoration allowances is the responsibility of the Head of customer Services although numerous staff will have responsibilities with associated procedures and the budget remains the responsibility of the Director of Asset Management.
- 9.3. Customers receiving decoration allowances are responsible for the safety and security of the allowance until used and also ensuring that the allowance is used properly for the purpose it is intended.

10. Policy Review

- 10.1. We will review the operation of this policy in consultation with our customers, staff and relevant stakeholders (where appropriate), in light of current best practice, amending the policy where required.

Document History Log

Author	Date			Version	Approval	
	Created	Revised	Expiry		By	Date
HoBSI	2006			1.0	Monitoring Committee	2006
HoBSI		20/10/2011	October 2014	1.1	Monitoring Committee	20/10/2011
HoBSI		23/09/2014	September 2017	1.2	EMT	EMT09/14
BSO – Chapter 1 review		07/03/17		1.3		
HoPS		Nov 2018	Nov 2021	1.4	EMT	

Equalities Monitoring Form

Name of Policy: Decoration Allowance Policy		Carried out by: BSO		Date: Nov 2018	
Protected characteristics	Impact <i>(Positive, Negative, Neutral)</i>	Protected characteristics	Impact <i>(Positive, Negative, Neutral)</i>		
Age	Neutral	Disability	Positive		
Sex (gender)	Neutral	Race	Neutral		
Religion or Belief	Neutral	Sexual Orientation	Neutral		
Marriage / Civil Partnerships	Neutral	Pregnancy / Maternity	Neutral		
Gender Reassignment	Neutral				
<p>If Negative impact is identified, please complete The Full EMF, including mitigations of risks section, and return to BSI Team.</p>					

Privacy Impact Assessment Form

Privacy Data Impacting Policy:	Timescales for Retaining Data:	Notes:
Property maintenance records	6 years	Limitation for legal action.
Customers tenancy Files, including rent payment records, and details of any complaints and harassment cases	In general, for the length of the tenancy up to 6 years post tenancy. There may be occasion to weed very old, but still current, files. Judgement should be used in what to keep and destroy. Any live issues must be kept	Limitations Act 1980 and Best practice with DPA compliance 5th principle. For rent payment details, best practice suggests live system holds 2 years records plus current year.