



DECORATION ALLOWANCE POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Erimus Housing aims to provide a high level of service, and exercise due care and attention when carrying out the investment works, or major one off repairs to tenant's homes.
- 1.2 However, the Board of Erimus Housing acknowledge that after undertaking certain types of investment or major one off repair works, the need for financial assistance towards redecoration is necessary.
- 1.3 Erimus Housing will ensure that where disturbance does occur to decoration, there is fair and transparent way of making a compensation payment for this.
- 1.4 Erimus Housing's staff, Board Members and contractors will be expected to adhere to the principles laid down in this policy and have an individual and collective responsibility to ensure that this policy is actively applied in practice.

2. REFERENCES

Legal requirements – There is no legal responsibility to provide a decoration allowance following a repair or an improvement, however, Erimus Housing are responsible for assisting tenants where decoration has been disturbed following programmed/improvement work.

3. DEFINITION

- 3.1 Programmed/Investment Works – Work undertaken to achieve the Decent Homes Standard in Erimus properties.
- 3.2 Major repair work – The legal definition of what is a repair or a major improvement is not always straight forward, for example, work to eradicate damp could be a repair, whereas replacing or installing a damp proof course, where there previously wasn't one, will be an improvement.
- 3.3 Decoration allowance – An allowance to assist tenants to undertake redecoration of their property.
- 3.4 Eligibility - Decoration allowance is for one of the following reasons:
 - following planned investment work;

- following one off major repair work;
- In certain circumstances, new tenants moving into their new home.

4. POLICY CONTENT

4.1 This policy covers all areas of the Investment Plan and major repair work where damage to decoration actually occurs (except where redecoration is included as part of the work being undertaken i.e. full kitchen replacement).

4.2 Potential scenarios where a decoration allowance payment may be required could include, (but are not limited to), the following examples:

- Where a full or partial electrical rewire has been undertaken;
- Where a Damp Proof Course has been installed;
- Partial or whole renewal of concrete floors;
- Where a full or partial heating system has been replaced;
- Any other major one off repair.

4.3 Disturbance to decoration is always possible when work of the type categorised above is carried out, but if no damage occurs, or if redecoration is included in the scheme of work (i.e. full kitchen/bathroom replacement), then there will be no payment to the tenant. Each case must be assessed individually and on its own merits to ensure that the appropriate level of allowance is paid where appropriate.

4.4 Where damage to a tenant's decoration has occurred, an assessment will be undertaken by an Erimus officer within 14 days and an appropriate, reasonable allowance towards the cost of redecoration will be made to the tenant within a further 28 days, (following the guidelines set out in this policy).

4.5 Level of compensation

4.5.1 The level of "allowance" towards redecoration will depend on the extent of damage to decoration in each room/location. Payment is based on a room by room allowance depending on whether the extent of damage is assessed as 'limited or 'extensive' following the completion of investment schemes, improvements and any major one off repairs works.

4.5.2 The decoration allowance for new schemes commencing from the 1st April 2008 will be as follows:

| Room | Extend of damage to decorations | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| | Limited | Extensive |
| Lounge | £15 | £40 |
| Dining Room | £10 | £30 |
| Hall | £15 | £30 |

| | | |
|-----------|-------|-----|
| Landing | £15 | £20 |
| Bedroom 1 | £15 | £40 |
| Bedroom 2 | £10 | £30 |
| Bedroom 3 | £10 | £20 |
| Bedroom 4 | £10 | £20 |
| Kitchen | £15 | N/A |
| Bathroom | £15 * | N/A |

* *Discretionary dependent upon extreme circumstances e.g. bathroom flooring disturbed*

4.5.3 The decision on whether decoration allowance is paid at the limited or the extensive rate is illustrated by the following examples.

- If only one wall in a room is damaged, the decoration allowance is up to £15.00 for the redecoration of that wall;
- If two or more walls are damaged, a full room allowance of up to £40 is payable.

4.5.4 The total amount payable towards the cost of redecoration will be the allowance per room multiplied by the number of rooms affected. The window and door replacement programmes do not normally qualify for disturbance payments unless extensive work to the window reveals is required.

4.5.6 Each case will be assessed by the Investment or Repairs and Maintenance team, following the completion of work, in accordance with the allowance payable per room (detailed in section 3.5.2 above).

4.6 Rent Arrears

4.6.1 If a tenant has rent arrears the decoration allowance payment will be off-set against the rent account. If any outstanding allowance remains, this will be paid to the tenant.

4.6.2 A letter will be sent to the tenant advising them of this situation.

4.7 Implementation

4.7.1 Erimus Housing will delegate to the Managing Director responsibility for ensuring that this policy is communicated and implemented.

4.7.2 Erimus Housing will develop procedures, which ensure effective implementation of this policy.

4.7.3 Erimus Housing will provide training for staff required to implement this policy.

5. RIGHT TO APPEAL

- 5.1 If a tenant is unhappy with an offer of a decoration allowance, they have the right to appeal in writing (or other appropriate formats) within 14 days of the decision.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 6.1 Erimus Housing recognises that it operates within communities where there is wide social diversity, and Erimus Housing is committed to providing equal opportunities and valuing diversity.
- 6.2 A partial Impact Assessment has been undertaken on this policy to ensure that the policy applies equally and fairly to all our tenants, regardless of their gender, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation and marital status.
- 6.3 To enable all residents to have clear information and equal access to this policy, Erimus Housing will make this policy available in a range of languages and formats if requested to do so. We will also accept feedback and comments through a variety of different routes to reflect individual customer's preferences or needs.
- 6.4 Full details of our approach are set out in our Equality and Diversity Strategy.

7. CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Consultation with the Residents Panel, the Regeneration Focus Group and the four Area Forums was undertaken in 2007. The views of officers delivering both the regeneration investment plan and the Housing Management void decoration scheme have been included in this policy to ensure consistency between the two processes.
- 7.2 In developing this policy, Erimus Housing has also taken into consideration Good Practice Guidance issued by the Housing Corporation, National Housing Federation and the Chartered Institute of Housing.

8 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 8.1 Monitoring
- 8.1.1 This policy will be monitored following its introduction in April 2008 to assess the impact of the scheme on tenants. The impact of the policy will also be monitored to ensure appropriate and consistent application on a scheme-by-scheme basis and to ensure consistency with the payment of decoration allowances to tenants moving into void properties where redecoration is required.

9.2 Review

- 9.2.1 Erimus Housing will undertake a review of this policy on a three yearly basis to ensure that payments made are in line with any good practice guidance available.
- 9.2.2 The Managing Director of Erimus Housing will be responsible for ensuring that reviews of this policy are carried out.
- 9.2.3 Tenant representative groups will be involved and consulted in any review of this policy in line with Erimus Housing's policy on tenant participation and consultation.

10. RESPONSIBILITY

- 10.1 It is the responsibility of the Managing Director and senior officers to ensure that:
- All staff are aware of Erimus Housing's policies;
 - All staff are trained on the policies;
 - Monitoring records are maintained in accordance with Erimus Housing's corporate and legal responsibilities
 - Customers are adequately informed of the policies;
 - Appropriate action is taken against employees whose actions are inconsistent with this policy.