

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

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Specialist equipment includes items such as stairlifts, custom doors, or mobility aids installed to meet specific needs.

Fair wear and tear covers the expected deterioration from normal use, such as faded paint, worn carpets, or minor scuffing.

WHAT DOES 'NO MEANS TO PAY' ENTAIL?

'No means to pay' refers to situations where a customer genuinely cannot afford to pay a recharge immediately. In these cases, colleagues will work with the customer to explore repayment options, financial support, or reasonable payment plans. No customer will face enforcement action without first being offered affordable repayment arrangements.

HOW ARE 'NON EMERGENCY CALLS' DEFINED?

We've provided examples to help customers and colleagues distinguish between emergency and non-emergency issues.

Emergency calls involve immediate health, safety, or security risks - for example, a gas leak, total loss of power, or an unsecure property.

HOW ARE LOST FOBS OR KEYS HANDLED?

A new 'three-strike' approach has been introduced.

- The first two lost keys or fobs within a 12-month period will be replaced free of charge.
- The third and subsequent replacements will incur a standard recharge.

This approach balances fairness and accountability, recognising that occasional loss can happen.

WHAT IS THE REASONABLE NOTICE PERIOD FOR NOT BEING IN TO PROVIDE ACCESS?

We have clarified that a minimum of 24 to 48 hours' notice is required if a customer cannot provide access for scheduled works or inspections.

If less notice is given without good reason, a recharge may apply. However, exceptions will be made for emergencies or unavoidable circumstances.

WHAT ARE ACCEPTABLE EXCEPTIONS FOR LACK OF ACCESS?

Examples include:

- Medical emergencies
- Job Centre or similar compulsory appointments
- Bereavement or unexpected family emergencies

These examples are provided to ensure compassionate and consistent application of the policy.

HOW SHOULD MISUSE OF COMMUNAL AREAS BE HANDLED?

A stepped approach is now embedded in the policy to promote fairness and engagement before applying charges:

1. Informal reminder - a reminder of expected standards.
2. Formal warning - a written notice if misuse continues.
3. Recharge - applied only if previous steps have not resolved the issue.

This ensures customers have opportunities to correct behaviour before any charge is made.

HOW WILL CUSTOMERS BE NOTIFIED ABOUT RECHARGES?

Customers will now receive a verbal notification from a colleague before a formal recharge letter is issued.

This gives customers a chance to ask questions or raise concerns early.

The written letter will clearly outline:

- Why the recharge is being applied
- How to appeal the decisions
- Who to contact for support

This approach ensures fairness, transparency, and open communication.

HOW ARE EMERGENCY DAMAGES TREATED?

If damage occurs during a verified emergency situation, such as a medical emergency or fire evacuation, the customer will not be recharged.

For example, if a window is broken as the only exit during a fire, the cost will be waived.

This exemption now sits alongside existing crime-related exemptions (where a police reference number is provided).

HOW WILL PAYMENT PLANS BE HANDLED?

- Payment plans will always be based on the customer's ability to pay.
- Agreements will be discussed and confirmed with a staff member.
- The policy ensures customers can continue to afford essential living costs such as food and utilities. This ensures our recharge process is both fair and supportive.