



Recharge Guidelines



Paying for chargeable repairs
to your home

Sandbourne Housing Association
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What is a recharge?

Sandbourne's repairs and maintenance service helps residents keep their homes in good order. However, there are some circumstances where repair or maintenance work is the responsibility of the resident and, whilst we may carry out this work, the cost is rechargeable to the resident.

Why does Sandbourne have Recharge Guidelines?

We are committed to communicating clearly with residents about what work we are responsible for, and what work residents are responsible for. By making consistent decisions about recharging residents for work, we can be both fair to you and maximise the repairs and maintenance budget that comes out of everyone's rent so it can be spent on looking after and improving all residents' homes.

The service is paid for from all tenants' rents and leaseholders' service charges. While the majority of residents look after their homes, a small minority may cause deliberate damage or neglect their home or do not keep their homes in reasonable condition or lose items such as keys. These Guidelines seek to ensure that residents neglecting their homes or causing damage etc are recharged, and avoids other residents having to meet the cost through everyone's rent.

Who do these Guidelines apply to?

All tenants and leaseholders in properties managed by Sandbourne.

What can I expect when I have rechargeable work carried out?

- We will tell you whether you are responsible for paying the costs of the work, wherever possible, at the time you order it.
- When you request a repair, we will try to give you an estimate of the cost at the time. For all rechargeable work we will provide you with an estimate of the cost within 7 working days.
- All work must be carried out to our standard.

When will Sandbourne recharge for a repair?

You will be recharged if the work is needed because of damage and/or loss, caused either deliberately, accidentally, as a result of neglect or the actions of a member of your household or visitors to your home.

Some common examples of repairs needed as a result of damage, neglect or loss are:

- Damage to internal and external doors.
- Damage to kitchen units and worktops.
- Broken windows or window locks.
- Blocked toilet or drainage.
- Replacement locks and/or additional keys.
- Replacement or additional fobs for the alarm system.

You may also be charged if:

- You miss an appointment that you have agreed with our contactor.
- You fit any type of installation or fixed appliance requiring repair or maintenance that we did not give you our written agreement to install. [Where you have mutually exchanged (swapped home with someone else), this includes any installation of fixed appliances made by the previous tenant and not by Sandbourne, like built-in cookers or electric showers.]
- You have altered the property without our written agreement and have not re-instated the property to its original condition.
- Having obtained prior written permission and agreed to maintain it, the installation was poorly fitted by you, or somebody employed by you to fit it. We will be happy to offer you advice before you install an appliance or fixture. Please ask us about this.
- **We later discover that you are responsible for works that we have already carried out, eg it was not a break-in but it was your partner who caused the damage.**

These circumstances can apply while you are living in a property or if you are moving out of a property managed by Sandbourne, including if you are exchanging properties with another resident.

What if it wasn't my fault?

Should any damage and/or loss be caused by a member of your household, an invited or uninvited visitor to your

home, or any communal areas if you live in a block of flats, then as the tenant or leaseholder you are still responsible for paying for the damage or loss to be put right. Where the damage or loss has been caused by someone not invited to your home and you feel the damage is deliberate or a result of vandalism, you should report the matter to the Police to investigate and ask for the Crime Reference number. Where a Crime Reference number is given to Sandbourne, we may decide not to recharge the cost of the work to you.

Does Sandbourne consider individual circumstances when deciding whether to recharge work?

Unless the rechargeable work is an emergency (see overleaf), you will normally need to pay before it is carried out.

However, we will consider the individual circumstances of residents. This includes the nature of the work in relation to whether there are any factors that make the resident particularly vulnerable, such as:

- The physical health and well-being of the resident.
- Any support provided to the resident to maintain their tenancy by another agency.

We may require supporting evidence of this, but will discuss this with you. We may be able to make an arrangement to pay by instalments. This is discussed later in these Guidelines.

What is the difference between emergency and non-urgent rechargeable work?

Examples of emergency work include:

- Work to make the property secure.
- Work to re-instate services such as water, sewage, gas and electricity.
- Lost keys or damaged locks, especially if you only have one external door.
- Additional keys or replacement pendants for the emergency call system.

Examples of non-urgent work include:

- Cracked windows.
- Repairs to internal doors and walls.
- Damage to kitchen or bathroom fittings.
- Blocked toilet, if you have more than one.

How much will rechargeable work cost?

Please ask us for the current charges, which gives an approximate cost for the most common rechargeable work. Wherever possible, we will provide you with an accurate cost for any rechargeable works. The rates are based on the actual cost to Sandbourne of carrying out the work. Where a cost is based on information you provide and we later find that additional work is required,

we will inform you promptly of any additional cost you may be responsible for.

At what stage do I actually have to pay for the work?

- You can choose to pay for the work before it is carried out, or pay the invoice within 28 days of it being sent to you, using the allpay repairs payment card which will be issued to you.
- All non-urgent repairs must be paid for before work commences.

How do I pay Sandbourne for the recharge?

- Via 'allpay' (repairs card) at any post office or shop displaying the PayPoint sign. 
- Via 'allpay' over the phone or via their website - telephone 0330 041 6497 (24 hours a day) or go to www.allpayments.net. You will need your Sandbourne 'Repairs' payment card and a valid debit or credit card to hand. 
- By bank transfer (please ask us for our bank details).
- By cheque payable to Sandbourne Housing Association and sent to the registered office, giving your name and address and what it is for on the back.

Please also see our leaflet 'Payments (Ways to Pay)'.

What if I can't afford to pay for the work in one payment?

If you can't afford to pay for the cost of the recharge in one payment, please talk to our housing team who will agree a payment plan with you based on your individual circumstances. This will enable you to pay an agreed amount over a set period of time.

To help prevent you getting into too much debt, we will not let you order any other non-urgent rechargeable work until you have finished paying for the first one.

What will happen if I don't pay for the recharge?

If you don't pay for rechargeable works carried out, we will seek to recover the money through our income recovery procedures. This could ultimately result in a summons to appear in court. If actions in court are successful, then you will incur the court costs and your credit rating and ability to obtain credit will also be affected.

Sandbourne may also refuse any further repairs works and you will be entitled to emergency repairs only. You may also be excluded from any planned improvements, for example a new kitchen or bathroom, or put to the end of any such programme.

In addition, we do not allow residents with outstanding debts to mutually exchange with another resident or to transfer to another Sandbourne home.

What if I don't want the work to be carried out?

On rare occasions we have to carry out essential work and recharge you in order to keep the property safe and in good order, even if you do not want the work carried out. We have the right to do this under the terms of the tenancy or lease conditions that you signed when you moved into your home. If this situation arises we will always discuss it with you first and explain what will happen if we cannot reach an agreement about getting the work done.

How will Sandbourne deal with deliberate damage caused by a tenant or leaseholder or their household?

This only happens in a small minority of households. However, in cases where it is clear that deliberate and wilful damage has been caused by a tenant or leaseholder or their household, then we may report the damage to the Police for investigation. Where a resident is in breach of their tenancy or lease conditions, we will consider whether it is appropriate to begin possession proceedings against them. This could ultimately result in the person being evicted and losing their home.

What do I do if I'm not happy with the way Sandbourne has handled recharging work to me?

If you are unhappy about the way in which we have recharged work to you, you may wish to follow our Complaints Policy. Please ask us for our leaflet or policy about making a complaint, for full details, or look on our website (www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk). You could also contact the Citizens' Advice Bureau for independent legal advice on your circumstances.

How will we ensure these Guidelines meet the needs of both residents and Sandbourne?

We will:

- Consult with a random selection of residents who have had rechargeable work carried out to assess if they were satisfied with the work we completed and the way in which we dealt with it. We will consider the results of this to make sure we take forward any lessons learnt and to improve the way in which we carry out rechargeable work in the future.
- Monitor our performance against the service standards and any complaints received (given earlier) to make sure we are keeping the promises we make to you when you have some rechargeable work done.

Can I get someone else to do repair or maintenance works in my home?

Yes, **but only if it is not** something that Sandbourne are responsible for doing then we do allow residents to employ reputable contractors to undertake repair or maintenance work to their homes. The works must be carried out by an appropriately qualified contractor, be to Sandbourne's satisfaction, and be in line with reasonable specifications for materials and workmanship. Sandbourne will **not** be responsible for paying for the work and putting anything right afterwards, unless it is unsafe in which case you will be recharged.

Any contractors employed must be appropriately qualified or accredited and we recommend that they belong to the appropriate trade organisation for the works that they are carrying out.

Reputable local tradespersons may be able to complete works at a lower cost than the contractors used by Sandbourne. If you request non-emergency work from us, you will also need to pay an additional administration fee.

Remember, all necessary statutory permissions must be sought and paid for by you from the appropriate bodies, such as Building Control, and those permissions granted before works are carried out. On completion of the work, all necessary legislative certificates, such as an Electrical Part P Certificate, for example, should be provided to Sandbourne for inspection.

Information and advice about repairing and maintaining your home is provided in your Tenancy Agreement or

Lease. You can also call and ask to speak to one of our maintenance team at the registered office.

Can Sandbourne recommend anyone to carry out maintenance works?

We are sorry but we are not able to make any recommendations as this would go against advice given to us by our insurers in the event of you being unhappy with a contractor's work and deciding to make a claim against us.

Need more information?

You can:

Write to us at our registered office:

Beech House, 28-30 Wimborne Road, Poole, BH15 2BU

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Website: www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk

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Please note that telephone calls to the registered office number above may be recorded for information and training purposes.

In addition, we do have a range of other leaflets on specific topics, available on our website or upon request from our office.

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