

Recharge Policy

Paying for chargeable repairs to your home



Quality Homes In Strong Communities

What is a recharge?

PHP'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 while PHP can carry out this work, the cost is rechargeable to the resident.

Why does PHP have a Recharge Policy?

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 re-charging residents for work, we can maximise the repairs and maintenance budget that can then be spent on looking after and improving all residents' homes.

The service is paid for from all tenants rents. While the majority of residents look after their homes, a small minority cause deliberate damage or do not keep their homes in reasonable condition. This policy seeks to ensure that residents neglecting their homes or causing damage are recharged, and avoids other residents having to meet the cost.

Who does this policy apply to?

All tenants and leaseholders in properties managed by PHP.

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 at the time you order it.
- When you request a repair listed on the Recharge Schedule we will give you an estimate of the cost at the time. For all other rechargeable work we will provide you with an estimate of the cost within 7 working days.
- All work will be carried out to 'The Poole Standard' which describes the quality of materials workmanship to be employed when works are carried out on behalf of PHP.

When will PHP recharge for a repair?

You will be recharged if the work is needed because of damage, 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 or neglect are:

- Damage to internal and external doors.
- Damage to kitchen units and worktops.
- Broken windows or window locks.
- Blocked toilet or drainage.

You may also be charged if:

- You miss an appointment with our contractor.
- 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, this includes any installation of fixed appliances made by the previous tenant and not by PHP, like built-in cookers or electric showers.)
- You have altered the property without our written agreement and have not reinstated the property to its original condition.
- Having obtained prior written permission and agreed to maintain, 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.

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

What if it wasn't my fault?

Should any damage 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 you are still responsible for paying for the damage to be put right. Where the damage 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 PHP we may not recharge the cost of the work to you.

Does PHP consider individual circumstances when deciding whether to re-charge 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 residents' individual circumstances. This includes the nature of the work in relation to whether there are any factors that make the resident vulnerable, such as:

- The physical health and well-being of the resident.
- Any support provided to the resident to maintain their tenancy by PHP's tenancy support team, or other 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 this policy.

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

Examples of emergency work include:

- Work to make the property secure.
- Work to reinstate services such as water, sewage and electricity.
- Lost keys or damaged locks.

Examples of non-urgent work include:

- Cracked windows.
- Repairs to internal doors and walls.
- Damage to kitchen or bathroom fittings.

How much will rechargeable work cost?

Please ask us for the current Recharge Schedule 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 PHP 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

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

- If you choose to pay for the work before it is carried out, or pay the invoice in full within 28 days, you will be entitled to a 25% discount on the cost. This will be shown on the invoice.
- Please note that the 25% discount is only available for the routine work listed on the Recharge Schedule, and not for any works where we have quoted a specific price.
- All non-urgent repairs must be paid for before work commences.

How do I pay PHP for the recharge?

If you already pay your rent or service charge by Direct Debit, the cost of the recharge will simply be added to this. If you prefer, you can make alternative arrangements to pay when you order the rechargeable repair.

You can pay by debit card either by:

- Following the 'pay for it' link at www.yourphp.org.uk. You will need your Rent Account Number, Rent Account Name, Address and Postcode.
- Phoning 01202 672932 and following the instructions. You can do this 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you have a swipe card, you can pay at any Post Office or outlet displaying the Payzone or PayPoint in the same way as you pay your rent. Please ask us if you would like more information about getting or paying by swipecard, or would like to know about local Payzone or PayPoint outlets.

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 re-charge in one payment, please talk to our Income Recovery Team, who will negotiate a payment plan with you, based on your individual circumstances. This will enable you to pay an agreed amount over a period of time.

If you arrange to make your payments by Direct Debit and do not miss any payments you can also receive the 25% discount on the cost of the work.

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 work to be carried out, we will seek to recover the money through PHP's income recovery procedures. This could ultimately result in a summons to appear in Court. If actions in Court are successful then you will incur Court costs and your credit rating will be affected.

PHP will also refuse any further repairs work 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 the programme.

In addition, we do not allow residents with outstanding debts to mutually exchange with another resident or to transfer to another PHP 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 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 condition 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 PHP deal with deliberate damage caused by a tenant?

This only happens in a minority of households, however in cases where it is clear that deliberate and wilful damage has been caused by a tenant, then we may report the damage to the Police for investigation. Where a tenant is in breach of their tenancy conditions, we will consider whether it is appropriate to begin Possession Proceedings against the tenant. This could ultimately result in the tenant losing their home.

What do I do if I am not happy with the way PHP 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 procedure. Please ask us for our leaflet about making a complaint, or refer to your Tenant Handbook for full details. You could also contact the Citizens Advice Bureau on 01202 680838 for independent legal advice on your circumstances.

How will we ensure this policy meets the needs of both residents and PHP?

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 work in my home?

Yes, 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 PHP's satisfaction, and be in line with the Poole Standard Specification for materials and workmanship.

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 PHP. If you request non-emergency work from us, you will also need to pay an additional 10% administration fee.

Remember, all necessary statutory permissions must be sought 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 PHP for inspection.

Information and advice about repairing and maintaining your home is provided in your tenancy agreement and in your Tenant Handbook. You can also call our Customer Services Team on 0800 652 3900 and ask to speak to one of our Property Surveyors.

We can supply this information in large print, on audio tape or in your language. Please call 01202 264444 to discuss your requirements.

Printed February 2013

www.yourphp.org.uk