



## **Decoration Allowance Policy**

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# **ORE VALLEY HOUSING OVHA**

## **Introduction**

This document sets out Ore Valley Housing Association's (OVHA) policy on the decorating allowances paid to tenants.

## **Statement**

OVHA recognises that there are occasions when it would be appropriate to offer an allowance to tenants to contribute towards redecoration costs. These circumstances are when a new tenant moves into a previously empty property that requires decoration or when damage has resulted to a tenant's decoration following an improvement through the planned maintenance 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 decorating materials and equipment. This allowance is not intended to cover the full cost of any decorating or replacement of soft furnishings that may be required.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The overall aim of the Decoration Allowance Policy is to:

- Assist tenants with the cost of decorating their home and, in doing so, to assist in the efficient and effective maintenance of OVHA housing stock.
- Decoration allowances are intended as a contribution towards the cost of materials and equipment needed to carry out internal redecoration work or to contribute towards the replacement or alteration of soft furnishings. Decoration allowances are intended to allow tenants choice in the decoration/soft furnishings in their home. The allowances are not intended to meet the full costs involved.
- The award of a decoration allowance does not remove the need for tenants to adequately insure the contents of their homes from damage.
- The award of a decoration allowance does not remove the need for staff, carrying out work on behalf of OVHA to take adequate care to ensure that damage does not occur.

The specific objectives of the Decoration Allowance Policy are to:

- Give clear guidance on when a decoration allowance will and will not be paid.
- How much will be paid and in what form.
- What can and cannot be purchased with the decoration allowance.

## **Decorating Assessment**

When a property becomes vacant, an inspection will be carried out by a Housing Officer (HO) and arrangements made for any necessary repair work. An assessment of the decorative order of the property will be made by The HO and should decoration be deemed necessary, an allowance will be agreed, currently up to a maximum of £400.00 for a 4 bedroom house.

Similarly, when a major improvement, through planned maintenance, has resulted in damage to a tenant's decoration, alteration or replacement of blinds, an assessment will be made to determine the appropriateness of an allowance.

The allowance is issued in the form of a decoration voucher card which can be redeemed to purchase decorating materials and equipment and the amount issued will be calculated using the table of allowances set out below.

### **Table of Allowance**

| <b>Location</b>                  | <b>Maximum Decorating Allowance</b> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Halls/Stairs/Landing</b>      | £70                                 |
| <b>Bedroom 1</b>                 | £50                                 |
| <b>Bedroom 2</b>                 | £50                                 |
| <b>Bedroom 3</b>                 | £50                                 |
| <b>Bedroom 4</b>                 | £50                                 |
| <b>Living Room / Dining area</b> | £70                                 |
| <b>Kitchen</b>                   | £50                                 |
| <b>Combined Bathroom and WC</b>  | £40                                 |
| <b>Bathroom only</b>             | £40                                 |
| <b>WC only</b>                   | £20                                 |
| <b>Maximum Allowed</b>           | £400                                |

### **Decoration Allowance**

A decoration allowance may be awarded in any of the following circumstances:

- When a new tenant moves into a property where the standard of decoration is below a reasonable standard.
- Following any response repair work carried out by OVHA where the decoration has been extensively damaged at the discretion of the Senior Housing Officer (SHO).
- Following any planned maintenance carried out by OVHA and it is deemed necessary for a decoration or blinds and/or curtains allowance to be given, e.g. following the installation of a new heating system at the discretion of the Senior Housing Officer

For the purpose of awarding any allowance, extensive damage may mean partially stripped rooms, badly torn wallpaper that would prove unacceptable to live with, walls poorly painted where work is required to bring this up to a reasonable standard.

No allowance will be awarded where a tenant has caused damage or has neglected the interior decoration of the property unless this is recommended as part of an agreed tenancy support plan.

A tenant's request for a transfer to another property may be suspended from offers for a maximum period of 3 months if the current standard of decoration is not of a reasonable standard.

### **Decoration allowance for a new tenancy**

It will be at the discretion of the HO while carrying out a void inspection of a property, with reference to the VOID POLICY to determine whether or not the a decoration allowance should be awarded

An allowance may be awarded where:

- The wallpaper is considerably torn; or
- The walls are badly marked or smoke stained; or
- The walls have been cleaned but continue to look dirty; or
- The woodwork has been badly chipped/painted for example; the paint is peeling off the woodwork or has been painted a strong colour that is not easily covered up, and so on.

The above list shows examples only and is not an exhaustive list of circumstances where a decoration allowance may be awarded.

Prospective tenants will be told how much decoration allowance they would be entitled to at their viewing.

The new tenants will be given their decoration allowance in the form of a B&Q Decorating Card when they sign their tenancy agreement.

### **Decoration allowances following repair work**

The SHO may award a decoration allowance following reactive repair work carried out by OVHA where the interior decoration has been damaged.

Where the damage is as a result of neglect of an employee of OVHA, or our Contractor, then this matter will be dealt with on an individual basis through the [Complaints Procedure](#).

Once the repair work has been completed if OVHA are informed of any damage to the decoration, the SHO will carry out an inspection to assess decoration allowance entitlement.

### **Decoration allowance following planned maintenance**

Decoration allowances for planned maintenance or improvement works will be calculated using the table of allowances set out below:

The allowance is issued in the form of a cheque to contribute towards tenants being able to purchase of decorating materials, equipment, replacement or alteration of Blinds and / or Curtains

| <b>Type of Planned Maintenance</b> | <b>Amount payable</b>       |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Kitchen</b>                     | £50.00                      |
| <b>Heating System</b>              | £50.00                      |
| Windows & Doors                    | £50.00                      |
| Blinds and / or Curtains           | £5.00 or £10.00? per window |
| Electrical System                  | £50.00                      |

## **Contractor Responsibilities**

Where a Contractor damages internal decoration as a result of negligence or poor workmanship, they will be held responsible for any reinstatement works required. Tenants wishing to make a claim against a Contractor in connection with this type of damage will be required to submit their claim in writing within 28 days of occurrence.

OVHA will liaise with the Contractor to help resolve the matter satisfactorily but it must be noted that responsibility will rest with the Contractor.

## **Assistance to decorate**

Where a tenant indicates that they will have difficulty carrying out decoration work themselves because of a disability, or physical or mental impairment, OVHA will, in exceptional circumstances, offer a decoration service.

OVHA decoration service is available as an alternative to the decoration allowance and is only available for rooms which have been previously identified as requiring a decoration allowance during a void inspection.

OVHA decoration service will take the form of application of emulsion paint from a limited choice of colours to walls, and white gloss paint to skirting's, fascias, doors and so on. OVHA will not apply a tenant's own wall coverings and will not lay floor covering.

To qualify for this service the tenant(s) must:

- Have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- Be in receipt of benefits such as Disability Living Allowance, Disabled Person's Tax Credit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Attendance Allowance or other similar benefits to persons with physical impairments. Tenants will be required to verify receipt of benefits by showing their Award Letter, payment book etc.
- Be registered blind.
- Have special social or medical reasons to have the decoration work undertaken by OVHA. OVHA will use its discretion to establish eligibility on this ground. Verification may be requested from a GP, Social Worker or other appropriate professional, but may not be required where evidence is clearly visible.
- Have no adult member of the household who could reasonably be expected to carry out the work.
- Have no family members who could reasonably be expected to carry out the work. OVHA will use its discretion to establish eligibility on this ground.

Tenants who qualify for, and wish to use this service must agree that their tenancy will begin on the same date as it would have if they were receiving the decoration allowance. Tenants will be expected to allow OVHA contractor access to the property to carry out the decoration works. Tenants will be expected to move their personal possessions, as far as possible, especially ornaments, and other fragile or valuable items in preparation for the decoration works.

Tenants who qualify for, and wish to use this service should access it through the HM.

## **Exceptions**

Where the condition of the decoration within a room of a void property is deemed to be so poor that it is felt unreasonable to expect a tenant to carry out the work or the deterioration is a result of damage resulting from planned maintenance work that is in the opinion of the HM unacceptable, then OVHA will carry out the re-decorations. In these cases no decoration allowances will be made for these rooms.

## **Performance Monitoring**

OVHA will set performance standards in relation to this policy and will monitor its achievement of these standards.

In order to comply with its service commitments, OVHA will monitor the following:

- The number of tenants who received a decoration allowance when their tenancy began.
- The number of tenants who received a decoration allowance following response repair work carried out by OVHA
- The number of tenants who received a decoration allowance following planned maintenance works carried out by OVHA.

## **Monitoring**

Monitoring of expenditure incurred through the implementation of this policy will be undertaken via the published management accounts. A review of the contents of this policy will be undertaken as part of OVHA's policy review programme.

## **Review of Allowances Paid Per Room**

The Housing Manager will review annually the value of the allowances that may be paid and where appropriate adjust the allowances that are to be paid accordingly.