

**REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 10 MARCH 2014**

**REPORT ON: TENANTS' ALLOWANCES UPDATE**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING**

**REPORT NO: 86-2014**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to upgrade the tenants' allowances in line with previous increases.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Committee agree that the Tenants' Allowances Scheme should be increased in line with inflation (CPI: Consumer Price Index) as detailed in paragraph 3 and the Appendix of this report from 1 April 2014.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. The allowances are increased by the December 2013 General CPI of 2% (rounded to the nearest pound), since the last review in April 2013 and the levels apply to both revenue and capital programmes, starting after 1 April 2014. For decoration allowances the 2% increase has been applied to the maximum allowance per room and multiplied by the number of rooms per dwelling to establish the maximum allowance per dwelling.

The total allowances for 2014/15 will be approximately £315,000 which has been included in the agreed 2014/15 Housing Revenue Account and Capital Plan.

**4. MAIN TEXT - TENANTS' ALLOWANCES**

- 4.1. Reference is made to the report to Housing Committee Tenants' Allowances Update on 11 March 2013 (Report No: 117-2013) which was the last review of the amounts. The purpose of the Tenants Allowances Scheme is to ensure that tenants are not significantly 'out of pocket' as a direct result of works taking place in their home. Payments do not fully cover all costs incurred, as in normal circumstances, tenants are responsible for decoration and an assessment for wear and tear is taken into account. The intention is, therefore, to approach tenants' requirements with flexibility, so that individual needs can be catered for, as well as achieving across the board consistency and fairness in the levels of payments made.
- 4.2. This report recommends that the allowances increase in line with the December 2013 General CPI (excluding mortgage) of 2% inflation over the period from the last review, the details of the allowances follow and the maximum amounts payable are clearly listed in the Appendix 1.
- 4.3. Tenants who are over 65 or who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, or following the implementation of welfare reforms the forthcoming Personal Independence Payment, may qualify for redecoration assistance.

Where tenants qualify for and request assistance to redecorate the appointed contractor will make arrangements to have redecoration carried out as soon as practicably possible.

- 4.4. The only addition to this is where there is a health and safety issue concerning the tenant redecorating, the appointed contractor will also make arrangements to have redecoration carried out as soon as practicably possible. (An example of this is an exceptionally high staircase which would have required a scaffolding to be erected to carry out redecoration work)

#### **TYPES OF ALLOWANCE PROVIDED**

- 4.5. The types of allowances available, the criteria for issuing them and the revised amounts payable are detailed below.

##### **Decoration Allowance**

- 4.6. This is payable to assist with redecoration following remedial or improvement work where the tenant's decoration has been affected.
- 4.7. A pro-rata allowance can also be made to new tenants where the conditions of the relet house merit an allowance and, dependent upon the extent of redecoration, completed by the Council. Properties in very poor condition and sheltered housing, where required, will be decorated. In other properties part decoration and part allowance will be offered to give tenants more choice and allow staff some flexibility in terms of delivering a good quality product within budget.
- 4.8. The appendix details the rooms which qualify for decoration allowance and the maximum allowance for different sizes of property. A standard redecoration and flooring allowance applies to kitchen and bathroom contracts of £340 per dwelling.

##### **Window Blinds**

- 4.9. Where replacement windows have been installed which alter the dimensions so that the existing blinds do not fit, an allowance is authorised to compensate for alterations or contribute to new blinds, as the tenant desires. It is proposed that the value per blind is increased from £28 to £29.

##### **4.10. Floorcovering Allowance**

- 4.10.1. Where floorcoverings need to be uplifted to carry out remedial or improvement work, the tenant is given a choice of:
- a. An allowance as a contribution to lifting and relaying the floorcovering.
  - b. A specialist carpet fitter, employed by the main contractor, to lift and relay carpets etc, which can reasonably be lifted without damage. If this is not possible the matter is referred back to the Assistant Project Officer.

Previously a separate additional allowance up to £122 could be offered to tenants with fitted wooden, laminate or tiled flooring that is unavoidably damaged. To increase flexibility and to ensure fairness, it is recommended that this ceases and that these allowances are combined though the maximum overall allowance would remain the same.

It is therefore proposed that the maximum value of the floorcovering allowance per house is increased from £122 to £248.

- 4.10.2. It is also recommended that, where damage to floorcovering is anticipated as part of the work, eg where new kitchen units are a different size from existing units or a fireplace has to be removed leaving a gap in the carpet, then an additional floorcovering allowance up to the value of £124 can be approved.
- 4.10.3. Where tenants have fitted wooden, laminate or tiled flooring and this is unavoidably damaged as part of a Capital Contract, this will be included in the floor covering allowance detailed at 4.10 .1.
- 4.10.4. For clarification, a tenant can receive a maximum of £372 for floorcovering allowances, where all the criteria above are met.

#### **Urgent Additional Allowance**

- 4.11. This permits an additional payment up to £322 to be made if urgent rehousing is required and where genuine need exists. This is limited to tenants who are either in receipt of Housing Benefit or have particular medical requirements.

Each application will, however, be considered on its own merit. It is proposed to increase this allowance from £322 to £328.

#### **Removal and Storage of Furniture**

- 4.12. The Assistant Project Officer will, where required, arrange removal and storage of tenants' furniture directly with a removal contractor on the tenant's behalf.

#### **Decant Allowance - Tenants Making their own Arrangements for Alternative Accommodation**

- 4.13. This is a payment made to tenants who make their own arrangements for alternative accommodation when they require to be decanted from their home. This allowance in 2013/14 was £132 per week or pro rata per part of week plus a rent abatement for the period that the tenant cannot live in their house. It is proposed that this payment is increased to £135 per week for each adult over 16 years of age in the household. This payment will be made to the tenant of the house.

This allowance will be payable for a maximum of 3 weeks. In any project which is to take longer than 3 weeks, tenants should be offered a decant house from the Council stock as the preferred option.

Where tenants require to be decanted and do not wish to make their own arrangements, varying options are available. The range of options include the use of furnished lets, decant accommodation and hotel/bed and breakfast accommodation which includes evening meal. These options are all less cost effective than tenants making their own arrangements.

#### **Post Flood Allowance**

- 4.14. This is payment made to tenants who are required to use a dehumidifier to assist in drying out property after flood damage. The allowance is a contribution towards costs associated with running costs and is a daily payment made for the duration that the dehumidifier is used. The daily rate for 2014/15 will be £7.00 per dehumidifier.

5. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty and Risk Management.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached to this report.

6. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Democratic and Legal Services, all other Chief Officers and Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations have been consulted on the preparation of this report. No concerns were expressed.

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

**ELAINE ZWIRLEIN**  
**DIRECTOR OF HOUSING**

**FEBRUARY 2014**

**TENANTS' ALLOWANCES FROM 1 APRIL 2014**

**DECORATION ALLOWANCE**

The following rooms can qualify for a decoration allowance, subject to the house size, a **maximum** allowance being applied to the final decoration allowance awarded:

**Maximum Allowance per Room**.....£108

For clarification this is the number of rooms multiplied by the maximum allowance per room.

Kitchen/Hall and Stairs/Bedrooms/Lounge/Bathroom

**Maximum Allowance per Dwelling** **From 1 April 2014**

1-apartment (4 rooms @ £108).....£432

2-apartment (5 rooms @ £108).....£540

3-apartment (6 rooms @ £108).....£648

4-apartment (7 rooms @ £108).....£756

5-apartment (8 rooms @ £108).....£864

6-apartment (9 rooms @ £108).....£972

**URGENT ADDITIONAL ALLOWANCE**.....£328

**STANDARD REDECORATION & FLOORING ALLOWANCE**

**KITCHEN & BATHROOM CONTRACTS**.....£340

**FLOOR COVERING ALLOWANCE**.....£248

**MAXIMUM ALLOWANCE FLOOR COVERING**.....£372

**BLINDS**.....£29

**DEHUMIDIFIER ALLOWANCE** .....£7.00 per day/per unit

**DECANT ALLOWANCE**

Tenants making their own arrangements  
for alternative accommodation .....£135 per week

*(per adult resident in the household over 16 years of age)*

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

### Part 1: Description/Consultation

<b>Is this a Rapid Equality Impact Assessment (RIAT)?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Is this a Full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Date of Assessment: 4 Feb 2014</b>	<b>Committee Report Number:87-2014</b>	
<b>Title of document being assessed: Housing Committee report on Tenants' Allowances Update</b>		
<b>1. This is a new policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed</b>  (If yes please check box) <input type="checkbox"/>	This is an existing policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed? (If yes please check box) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>2. Please give a brief description of the policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed.</b>	Annual update to increase council tenants' allowances following disruptive capital or repair work, and relets.	
<b>3. What is the intended outcome of this policy, procedure, strategy or practice?</b>	To increase allowances by 2% in line with inflation ( Consumer Price Index)	
<b>4. Please list any existing documents which have been used to inform this Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment.</b>	Housing Committee Report on Proposed 2014/15 Rent Increases and Other Charges- Jan 2014	
<b>5. Has any consultation, involvement or research with protected characteristic communities informed this assessment? If yes please give details.</b>	Yes, Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations.	
<b>6. Please give details of council officer involvement in this assessment.</b>  (e.g. names of officers consulted, dates of meetings etc)	Housing Department management Team and all the Council's Chief Officers.	
<b>7. Is there a need to collect further evidence or to involve or consult protected characteristics communities on the</b>	No.	

<p><b>impact of the proposed policy?</b></p> <p>(Example: if the impact on a community is not known what will you do to gather the information needed and when will you do this?)</p>	
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**Part 2: Protected Characteristics**

**Which protected characteristics communities will be positively or negatively affected by this policy, procedure or strategy?**

**NB Please place an X in the box which best describes the "overall" impact. It is possible for an assessment to identify that a positive policy can have some negative impacts and visa versa. When this is the case please identify both positive and negative impacts in Part 3 of this form.**

**If the impact on a protected characteristic communities are not known please state how you will gather evidence of any potential negative impacts in box Part 1 section 7 above.**

	Positively	Negatively	No Impact	Not Known
<b>Race / Ethnic Minorities</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	×	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	×	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	×	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	×	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>People with a disability</b>	×	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Age</b>	×	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	×	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Socio-economic</b>	×	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	×	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other (please state)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Part 3: Impacts/Monitoring**

<p><b>1. Have any positive impacts been identified?</b></p> <p>(We must ensure at this stage that we are not achieving equality for one strand of equality at the expense of another)</p>	<p>Yes, elderly and disabled tenants, who meet the Qualifying criteria, can request additional assistance to redecorate their home following disruptive capital works.</p>
<p><b>2. Have any negative impacts been identified?</b></p> <p>(Based on direct knowledge, published research, community involvement, customer feedback etc. If unsure seek advice from your departmental Equality Champion.)</p>	<p>No .</p>

<p><b>3. What action is proposed to overcome any negative impacts?</b></p> <p>(e.g. involving community groups in the development or delivery of the policy or practice, providing information in community languages etc. See Good Practice on DCC equalities web page)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>4. Is there a justification for continuing with this policy even if it cannot be amended or changed to end or reduce inequality without compromising its intended outcome?</b></p> <p>(If the policy that shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination you must stop and seek legal advice)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>5. Has a 'Full' Equality Impact Assessment been recommended?</b></p> <p>(If the policy is a major one or is likely to have a major impact on protected characteristics communities a Full Equality Impact Assessment may be required. Seek advice from your departmental Equality lead.)</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>6. How will the policy be monitored?</b></p> <p>(How will you know it is doing what it is intended to do? e.g. data collection, customer survey etc.)</p>	<p>Customer Satisfaction Survey results are reported Housing Capital Investment Management Team, Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Cluster, and ultimately the Housing Department Management Team. Relet customer satisfaction surveys are also reported to HDMT.</p>



**Part 4: Contact Information**

<b>Name of Department or Partnership</b>	Housing Department.
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<b>Type of Document</b>	
Human Resource Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
General Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy/Service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change Papers/Local Procedure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guidelines and Protocols	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Manager Responsible</b>	<b>Author Responsible</b>
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<b>Signature of author of the policy:</b>	<b>Eileen Christie</b>	<b>Date:</b> 01.02.14
<b>Signature of Director/Head of Service:</b>	<b>Elaine Zwirlein</b>	<b>Date:</b> 17.02.14
<b>Name of Director/Head of Service:</b>	<b>Elaine Zwirlein.</b>	
<b>Date of Next Policy Review:</b>	<b>This is an annual report and the policy will be reviewed in March 2015</b>	