

Pentland Housing Group

Document Type (Policy/Protocol/Procedure)	Policy
No	O13
Name	Decoration Allowance
Group	Pentland Housing Association
Type	Operational
Lead Body	PHA Board
Manager	Senior Housing Officer
Version	5
Original Authorisation by PHA Board	August 1999
Previous Authorised by PHA Board	February 2013
Latest Authorised by PHA Board	February 2013
Review Due Date	February 2018
Reviewed by Audit Committee	
Consultation (Staff) (SC/AC/HSC) (PCE/PEA)	
Electronic Storage	N:\PHG\Policies Procedures Protocols etc\5 Operational\Operational Policies
Website	No
Secure Area of Website	No

Pentland Housing Association Ltd

Decoration Allowance Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the circumstances where PHA will issue a decoration allowance. This policy applies to all new tenants and existing tenants where works have been disrupted existing decorations.
- 1.2 A decoration allowance is described in this policy as the payment by voucher given to assist new tenants where a property has been allocated and it does not meet a reasonable standard of decoration. For the purpose of this policy, a property is said to be in an unreasonable standard of decoration when there is extensive damage to wallpaper, smoke stained walls and so on.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The overall aim of the Decoration Allowance Policy is to assist new tenants with the cost of decorating their home, and in doing so, to assist in the efficient and effective maintenance of PHA's stock.
- 2.2 Assistance with decoration does not remove the need for tenants to adequately insure the contents of their homes from damage.
- 2.3 PHA will implement a procedure for issuing and managing decoration allowances, and will ensure that staff will be given necessary training to support the Decoration Allowance Policy and procedures.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 The specific objectives of the Decoration Allowance Policy are to give clear guidance on when a decoration allowance will or will not be paid; how much will be paid and in what form, and what can and cannot be purchased with the decoration allowance.

4. Legal Framework

- 4.1 Pentland Housing Association will ensure that the Decoration Allowance Policy complies with current legislation and promotes good practice.
- 4.2 Landlord Responsibility to "make good"
 - The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 section 27 states that landlords must carry out necessary work within a reasonable timescale and make good any damage caused by them in carrying out the work.

- Pentland Housing Association requires any contractor to “make good” any damage that they may have caused.
- In many cases Pentland Housing Association will undertake painting repairs prior to letting a property.

4.3 Tenant responsibility for internal decoration

- Section 5.17 of Pentland Housing Association’s Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement states that the tenant is responsible for taking reasonable care of the house and that this responsibility includes carrying out minor repairs and internal decoration.

5. Decoration Allowance for a New Tenancy

5.1 It will be at the discretion of the Property Officer or Maintenance Officer, while carrying out a void inspection of a property to determine whether or not the property warrants a decoration allowance or if it will be re-decorated by the Association prior to letting.

5.3 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 chipped or paint peeling off the woodwork, or painted a strong colour that is not easily covered up.

5.4 Decoration will be carried out prior to letting if:

- The property is painted in strong colours or is in such a state of disrepair that letting would be difficult.
- It is considered unreasonable for the tenant to carry out the work themselves due to the state of the property or due to the fitness of the incoming tenant.
- The property is difficult to let and improving the interior decoration would assist.

5.4 The above list shows examples only and is not an exhaustive list of circumstances where a decoration allowance may be awarded or where the Association would carry out re-decoration.

5.5 PHA will decide how much decoration allowance is to be awarded before any viewings take place. Prospective tenants will be told how much decoration allowance they would be entitled to at their viewing.

5.6 New tenants will be given any decoration allowance when they sign their tenancy agreement.

6 Decoration Allowance Rates

4.5 Decoration Allowance Policy – Version 5

- 6.1 The amount of allowance a property is eligible for will depend on the size/number of rooms that need to be decorated and will be calculated on a room by room basis.

7. Issuing Decoration Allowances

- 7.1 All decoration allowances issued are as a form detailing the amount awarded and the choice of retail outlets available.
- 7.2 The Decoration allowance form is to be signed for by the tenant and a copy kept on the tenant's house file for verification when the retailer invoice is received.

8. Using Decoration Allowances

- 8.1 Decoration allowances can be used in any of the retailers listed on the Decoration Allowance Form.
- 8.2 Where the cost of the tenant's chosen materials exceed the amount of their decoration allowance, s/he will be expected to make up the difference.
- 8.3 The decoration allowance can be used to buy:
- Wallpaper and paste
 - Paints, varnishes and wood care products
 - Sandpaper, fillers, sealants and masking tape
 - Paste table
 - Paint stripper, turpentine and thinners
 - Ceramic wall tiles, tile cement and grout
 - Paint brushes and rollers
- 8.4 The decoration allowance cannot be used to buy:
- Ladders
 - Electrical fittings
 - Bathroom cabinets
 - Floor coverings, including ceramic tiles
 - Mirrors
 - Powered tools
 - Any other product not used for decorating
- 8.5 The decoration allowance cannot be exchanged for cash.
- 8.6 PHA will only reimburse retailers when their invoice is matched and verified with the copy on the tenant's house file.

- 8.7 The Senior Property Officer may wish to inspect the property to confirm that the decoration has been spent appropriately. The inspection will coincide with the tenant's settle-in visit.
- 8.8 If, at the inspection, the decoration of the property is unchanged or the tenant is unable to demonstrate that they have purchased decoration materials, the Senior Property Officer, with the authority of the Property Manager, may recharge the tenant for some or all of the value of the decoration allowance.

9. Lost or Stolen Decoration Allowance Form

- 9.1 Once issued to the tenant, the decoration allowance form becomes the tenant's responsibility. Lost, damaged, defaced or stolen decoration allowance forms will only be replaced at the discretion of the Property Manager, following appropriate enquiries.

10. Review

- 10.1 This policy it will be reviewed every three years unless amendment is prompted by a change in legislation reveals that a change in policy is required sooner.