



Furniture Renewal - White Goods Policy

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Introduction

This Policy details how Empower Housing Association (EHA) manages the furniture element of our part-furnished tenancies. Tenancies which are part-furnished are provided with white goods only, which are replaced/repaired by EHA when required.

The white goods are not gifted to our tenants and will remain the ownership of EHA throughout the tenancy.

EHA will maintain an inventory of white goods for each of our part-furnished tenancies.

Replacement Cycle

In the calculation of service charges for furniture replacement, EHA has based the expected life span of each appliance being 3 years and will include:

- Extractor hoods
- Hobs
- Ovens
- Fridge or Fridge/freezers
- Washing machines
- Tumble Dryers
- Dishwashers – where applicable

During this 3-year period EHA will cover the costs incurred for full replacement of each item plus any repairs required. If any of the white goods listed above has surpassed the expected lifecycle but is still in good condition and the tenant(s) are happy to retain it, it will not be replaced. However, in exceptional circumstances, EHA may consider replacement of items within shorter timescales, dependant on the allowance accrued by housing benefit. Any requests for replacement within shorter timescales will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

EHA will only replace the above listed items and will not replace any other items of furniture on behalf of the tenants, e.g. soft furnishings, TV stands, dining room tables, sofas etc.

New Tenancies

It may be necessary on occasion to create a part-furnished tenancy in a property that has previously been an unfurnished let. As these will involve additional expenditure they will be dealt with on an ad-hoc basis, following approval by the Buildings Quality Manager and Chief Executive.

When a new part-furnished tenancy starts, whether in a previously part-furnished or unfurnished property, the Maintenance Officers will compile an inventory of the white goods purchased and add onto the Housing Management Software.

Replacement Budget

EHA will hold a budget for the replacement of white goods which reflects the amount of income received through housing benefit since the previous replacement of the item, less any expenditure on white goods during that period.

EHA is under no obligation to make a contribution over and above the budget allowance to meet the cost of white goods.

On occasions where white goods need to be replaced due to tenant damage, EHA will consider making a contribution to replace but is under no obligation to do so.

Repairs to White Goods

If a repair is needed to an appliance the tenant must contact EHA to provide a full detail of the repair needed and access arrangements.

EHA will arrange for a contractor to attend the property within 7 working days to assess the problem and/or carry out the repair where possible. The contractor will advise the tenant should parts have to be ordered and how long they will have to wait.

Where an item is still under guarantee, EHA will be bound by its terms and cannot influence the timescale in which a contractor visit takes place.

Where there have been a number of previous repairs carried out to the same piece of equipment, EHA will assess the job and decide whether it is cost effective to carry out another repair or replace the item.

Replacement of existing White Goods

If an appliance is reported as needing a repair and it is subsequently decided that it is beyond economic repair, then EHA will check:

- How long it is since the appliance was last replaced
- The previous history of repairs to that appliance

Whilst arrangements will be made to replace the appliance, the above checks will help EHA to assess whether any further action is needed. For example, the current appliance may not be sufficiently robust for the tenant's needs, or an appliance may be misused in some way.

When appliances are being replaced, the tenant and/or their support provider will be required to advise if the item is to be replaced 'like-for-like' or if a more robust model is required. It may be that a tenant's needs have changed since the original purchase was made.

Responsibility for Disposing of existing Appliances

Where an appliance provided by EHA is replaced, we will cover the reasonable costs to dispose of the surplus appliance. However, EHA will not make arrangements for the disposal of any furniture items.

Tenants must arrange with the local authority refuse collection service to remove and dispose of any unwanted items such as soft furnishings, TV stands, dining room tables, sofas etc. which do not fall the responsibility of EHA.

Responsibility

The designated officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of this policy will be the Chief Executive.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to respecting diversity in all aspects of our work and we will not tolerate any form of discrimination.

Commitment and Review

EHA will formally review this policy every three year. EHA will consult with tenants if material changes to this policy are proposed.