

Tenants may be asked to pay for damage to houses

Irresponsible tenants who deliberately damage their homes may have to pay for repairs under proposals being considered by The City of Edinburgh Council.

Introducing a Rechargeable Repairs Policy has received strong support from tenants with 88% who took part in a recent survey saying they were in favour of a policy.

Any new system could also be used to identify vulnerable tenants who require additional support.

Focus groups held with the Edinburgh Tenants Federation, neighbourhood housing staff and equalities groups received positive support for the idea.

Councillors will discuss a Rechargeable Repairs Policy, which will see tenants having to pay for repairs out of their own pocket, at next week's meeting of the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee.



Vice-Convener of
Health, Social
Care & Housing –
Cammy Day

Councillor Cammy Day, Housing Leader, said:- “The implementation of a rechargeable repairs policy has received broad support from everyone we’ve spoken to. Where irresponsible tenants damage or neglect their home all other tenants have to pay for it – that’s not fair.

“All tenants are responsible for looking after their own homes and the Capital Coalition gave a commitment to enforcing

tenancy agreements to ensure they fulfil their good conduct responsibilities.

“An added benefit to such a scheme is the potential to identify vulnerable tenants who we can then direct to various support services so they can receive extra help they need.”

Betty Stevenson, chair of the Edinburgh Tenants Federation, said ETF were happy to support the principle of a rechargeable repairs policy.

She said: “Such a policy will ensure repair costs are targeted at repairs to improve homes for tenants who are in genuine need. If implemented correctly this will help to increase tenants’ awareness of their responsibilities.”

Doug Anthoney, from Age Scotland, said:- “We are pleased that the City of Edinburgh Council is looking at robust procedures around their repairs recharging policy to ensure that vulnerable individuals are protected.

“It is reassuring that a flagging system could be established to identify people who may actually be in need of assistance or support to help them cope at home, which should also reduce the risk of them incurring financial penalties in the future.”

The Council carry out about 146,000 repairs every year at a cost of £20m. The majority of these repairs are in response to direct requests from tenants with the rest made up of planned repairs.

Residents surveyed also showed that 66% believed the policy would act as a deterrent to tenants who deliberately cause damage.

It is expected that any Rechargeable Repairs Policy would come into effect in Spring 2013.

The idea will be discussed at the Council’s Health, Social Care and Housing Committee on Tuesday 11 September.