



DECORATIONS ALLOWANCE POLICY

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Service Area: Housing Services
Job Title: Repairs & Servicing Manager
Version: 1
Issued Date: 01 December 2023
Review Date: 01 December 2024

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1.0 Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this policy is to

- Set out West Lancashire Borough Council's (WLBC) approach to granting payments for decoration.
- Ensure there are clear guidelines for staff, and tenants.
- Ensure that tenants have a home that they are proud of, enjoy, and that helps them to live a health and fulfilled lifestyle.

The Decoration Allowance Scheme has been created to ensure that the Council:

- Has an equitable decoration allowance standard for empty homes.
- Contributes towards damaged decoration following major improvement works.
- Meets its legal duty to make good any damage to decorations following repair or else pay compensation for failing to make good decorations.

Its aim is to ensure that both existing and prospective tenants are dealt with fairly and consistently across the borough.

2.0 Associated Documents & Policies

- Repairs Policy
- Goodwill and Discretionary Payment Policy
- Tenancy Agreement
- Decant Policy
- Insurance Claims Process

3.0 Insurance

A decoration allowance does not remove the need for staff and contractors, carrying out work on behalf of the Council, to take adequate care to ensure that damage does not occur.

If Council staff, agents, or contractors damage a tenant's home or personal property whilst carrying out repairs this will be dealt with under the Council's insurance procedure with the tenant being required to submit a claim form to the Council's insurance team. If the damage was caused by a contractor, then the tenant's claim should be directed to the Contractor as all Council contractors are required to have the appropriate insurances in place to cover such instances.

It also does not remove the need for tenants to adequately insure the contents of their homes from damage. There are various low cost options available, but tenants of WLBC do have the opportunity to purchase exclusive household Contents Insurance, Further information can be found at <https://www.westlancs.gov.uk/housing/i-am-a-council-tenant/home-contents-insurance.aspx>.

4.0 When an allowance will be awarded.

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

- The new tenant has not previously held a tenancy with the Council, and this has been deemed appropriate by a relevant Council officer in accordance with Section 7 and 9.
- Following any planned maintenance or improvement work carried out by the Council where it is deemed necessary for a decoration allowance to be given.

5.0 When an allowance will not be awarded.

A decoration allowance will not be awarded in the following circumstances:

- Where a tenant, family member, or visitor has caused the damage.
- Where the tenant has neglected the interior decoration of their home.
- To change the interior decoration of a home because it is not to the new tenant's personal taste (unless a new tenancy and the decoration is a strong colour, as assessed by an appropriate Council Officer, which would prove costly to change, for example black).
- To act as payment following an incident which the tenant should have been insured for.
- Where the tenant has carried out a mutual exchange.
- Where the Council, or its contractor, has completed decoration.

6.0 The Process – New Tenancy

For tenants new to the Council, we may provide a Paint Pack to assist them with the cost redecoration needed to their home. The Paint Pack is intended to cover some of the costs of bringing their home up to a basic standard of decoration.

Whether or not the decorative condition of a home warrants a Paint Pack will be at the discretion of the appropriate Officer.

If a Paint Pack is to be awarded this will be discussed at the viewing of the home, tenants do not need to make a request.

The Paint Pack will be determined by the size of the home and the decorative condition, including whether all or only part of the home is in poor decorative condition.

Each pack will include white and coloured paint and decorating materials such as brushes, rollers, and trays. New tenants will be given the option to choose their preferred paint colours.

The Paint Pack will be delivered direct to the tenant by our supplier.

7.0 The Process – Major and Improvement Work

Tenants undergoing major works (most commonly electrical re-wires, installation/complete replacement of central heating systems or substantial internal damp works) will automatically be awarded a decoration allowance on completion of the work. This list is not exhaustive, and the Council reserves the right to define other works.

Once the work has been completed, a decoration allowance will be awarded to the tenant to compensate for the damage caused to their home's decoration as part of the major works process.

This award will be calculated depending on which rooms within the home require decoration. Amounts are capped at:

Living Room	£53
Dining Room	£41
Main Bedroom	£47
Other Bedrooms	£35
Hall	£39
Hall, Stairs and Landing	£55
Ground Floor Toilet	£27
Upstairs Separate Toilet	£27
Bathroom	£35
Kitchen	£39

For improvement works, such as a kitchen or bathroom replacement, basic decoration works to the appropriate room only shall be completed by the Council or contractors working on their behalf.

The Council's decoration service will take the form of application of magnolia emulsion paint to walls, white emulsion to the ceiling, and white gloss paint to woodwork.

8.0 How allowance will be provided.

Tenants will be provided the decoration allowance in the form of a bank transfer. If a tenant does not have a bank account, then an appropriate method will be arranged.

Tenants will be asked to sign the form detailed at Appendix A agreeing the total amount they are to receive. The form will also be signed by an authorised WLBC officer.

If a tenant owes any debt to the Council, then Officers will discuss with the tenant the option of paying some or all of the allowance off their debt.

9.0 Additional Considerations

The Council may, at their discretion, wish to inspect a tenant's home to confirm that the decoration allowance/Paint Pack has been used appropriately. If this is the case, tenants will be given adequate notice at a time that suits them.

If at such an inspection, the allowance has been spent or the Paint Pack delivered and the decoration of their home is unchanged; or the tenant is unable to demonstrate that they have purchased decoration materials, either through their presence or relevant receipts, the Council may look to recharge the tenant for some or all the value of the decoration allowance/paint pack.

The Council will use its discretion in assisting vulnerable tenants.

10.0 Complaints Procedure

A tenant who is not satisfied with a responsive repair, damage caused to internal decoration through this process, or the way in which the Council, or its contractor has dealt with any aspect of this service can go through the Council's Customer Feedback Process.

11.0 Equality and Diversity

The Council will implement this policy fairly and equally and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (as amended).

12.0 Our Approach

In writing this policy we have carried out assessments to ensure that we are considering:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Privacy & Data Protection

13.0 Monitor & Review

This policy statement will be reviewed periodically every 12 months to ensure that the financial amounts cited within it remain appropriate, considering inflation.

14.0 Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version



Appendix A

DECORATION ALLOWANCE FORM

Tenant Name:

Address:

Room	Amount of Allowance Offered	Required Yes / No (WLBC representative to add Yes to the column if required)
Living Room	£53	
Dining Room	£41	
Main Bedroom	£47	
Other Bedrooms	£35	
Hall	£39	
Hall, Stairs, and Landing	£55	
Ground Floor Toilet	£27	
Upstairs Separate Toilet	£27	
Bathroom	£35	
Kitchen	£39	

TOTAL ALLOWANCE £ _____

TENANTS SIGNATURE

DATE

WLBC AUTHORISED OFFICERS SIGNATURE

DATE

Privacy Notice

For more information on how West Lancashire Borough Council processes personal information or data in general please visit our corporate privacy policy, which is available under Section 3: What has the Council done about GDPR on West Lancashire Borough Council's website: <https://www.westlancs.gov.uk/about-the-council/access-to-information/general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr.aspx>. Hard copies are also available upon request.