

EastendHomes

RENT COLLECTION POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

1.1 EastendHomes will seek to collect all rent properly due from all of its tenants and any other parties from which rent is contractually due.

1.2 EastendHomes will offer its tenants every reasonable assistance to ensure that their rent is paid when it is due. To help achieve this EastendHomes will:-

- (i) Notify prospective tenants of the gross rent including services charges and water rates as part of the advertisement against which housing applicants can express an interest.
- (ii) Vulnerability and potential referral to tenancy sustainment agencies discussed with ingoing tenant at sign up.
- (iii) Assist with the completion of housing benefit forms where required.
- (iv) Consider appropriateness of direct debit payments with new tenants on sign up, and other tenants routinely.
- (v) Set up payment arrangements early on and monitor performance
- (vi) Advise tenants when they sign up for their tenancies of the importance of meeting their obligations to pay their rent on time and the importance of prompt liaison with the Council's Housing Benefit Service where information is required
- (vii) Give tenants regular, accurate and clear information about their rent accounts;
- (viii) Offer face to face review of rent account history and options to resolve payment difficulties on request.
- (ix) Provide tenants with advice on their eligibility for housing benefit and encourage tenants in receipt of housing benefit to arrange for the benefit to be paid directly to EastendHomes;
- (x) Liaise with the Council's housing benefit service to resolve issues which are preventing the assessment of claims on behalf of residents who have been unable to do so themselves.

1.2 In considering the range of rent payment methods it develops, EastendHomes will take account of the needs of different groups within the community.

2. DETAIL

2.1 Methods of payment will include:

- (i) Payment by cash using a rent payment card at local post offices and paypoint outlets free of charge;
- (ii) Payment by direct debit or standing order;

- (iii) Callpay - payments made over the telephone to the central rents team using a debit card.
 - (iv) Over the internet via a secure connection to the Allpay website
 - (v) Payment over the telephone to the Allpay contact centre twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.
 - (vi) Cheques
 - (vii) Payment by deduction from salaries where tenants are also employees of EastendHomes.
- 2.2 The use of direct debits will be encouraged, and may be incentivised as they are a simple, cost-efficient and reliable method of rent payment. Bank mandates will be readily available at EastendHomes offices to encourage the use of this method of rent payment and the direct debit scheme will be operated flexibly to allow weekly, monthly or periodic payment to fit in with the resident's requirements.
- 2.3 EastendHomes will from time to time seek the views of tenants on the rent payment methods made available to them, and on the information provided to them about their rent accounts to monitor their satisfaction with the service.
- 2.4 EastendHomes will also seek to assess satisfaction with the quality of assistance being given to residents who are in arrears.
- 2.5 Any other charges will be due at the same time as the rent is charged, including heating and hot water; water rates; charges for garages; sheds and parking spaces.
- 2.6 EastendHomes will encourage all residents to take out appropriate contents insurance and will engage with a suitable insurer to provide a value for money policy for residents which is payable with their rent. Residents will be made aware that non-payment of rent will void the policy.
- 2.6 Because of the potential impact of non payment of water rates within a financially pressured customer base, EastendHomes will collect water rates on behalf of the Water Board except where water meters are present.