

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

Housing Services

Rent and Income Collection Service Standard

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This document is available on request in alternative formats (e.g. Large print type / Braille / on tape).

**Powys County Council - Housing Services
Rent and Income Collection service standard**

We will provide an effective rent and service charge collection service that maximises income. We will support tenants and leaseholders who have difficulty paying their rent and service charges.

To achieve this we will:

- 1. provide you with information about your rent and service charges, by:**
 - a. explaining how much rent and other charges you have to pay. If you claim benefits we will tell you how much rent you are likely to have to pay each week
 - b. advising you immediately if your account falls into arrears, by letter and/or e-mail and/or SMS
 - c. writing all our rents and arrears correspondence in plain language. These letters/e-mails/SMS messages will be approved by the Tenant Liaison Forum before they are used
 - d. offering to send you a rent statement periodically
 - e. sending you a 12 month rent statement within one working day of you asking for one
 - f. giving you four weeks' notice in writing of any change to your rent (other than Housing Benefit changes)
 - g. giving you secure on-line access to your rent account (this service is yet to be developed)
 - h. contacting you in the event of a change to your circumstances that affects the amount of rent you will have to pay (such as a bereavement). We will arrange to visit you to discuss your changed circumstances if you want us to
 - i. explaining the service charges you have to pay if you are a leaseholder

- 2. provide you with ways of paying your rent and service charges which are convenient to you, by:**
 - a. offering you the opportunity to pay your rent in one of the following ways:
 - I. Direct Debit
 - II. Paypoint
 - III. Post Office
 - IV. by debit or credit card
 - V. via our website
 - VI. by telephone
 - b. where we have collected too much rent or service charge income from you we will inform you and where requested we will repay you within 21 days

- 3. taking a firm but fair approach to recovering rent and service charge arrears and other debts which are outstanding, by:**
 - a. intervening at an early stage to prevent rent or service charge arrears from building up, by making personal contact with you, arranging affordable repayment agreements and offering or sign-posting you to support and advice to enable you to maintain payments

- b. We will take clear and transparent enforcement action in the case of consistent non-payers, this action can lead to tenants being taken to court and ultimately losing their home.
- c. helping you to claim housing benefit and council tax benefit and providing you with information about other benefits you may be entitled to
- d. directing you to specialist agencies who provide benefits and money management advice
- e. striving to collect monies owed to us and telling you how we perform
- f. making effective use of a range of legal remedies to recover unpaid rent and service charges, where other methods have not proved successful.

To keep you informed about how well we are doing we will publish the following performance measures each year:

- 1. % of rental income collected
- 2. % of former tenant rent income collected
- 3. % of rechargeable repair income collected
- 4. % of leaseholder service charge income collected.

The performance will be discussed with the Tenant Liaison Forum.