Handling Payment and Transaction Policy

# Introduction

* 1. Medway Council Housing Services endeavour to ensure the well-being and safety of both residents living in our Homes for Independent Living schemes and its employees. In order to safeguard and support residents and protect Medway Council employees against any allegations of mismanagement this policy gives guidance on handling payments and transactions within the Homes for Independent Living schemes.

# Purpose

* 1. This policy sets out the circumstances and ways in which Scheme Support Officers should handle payment and transactions in Homes for Independent Living schemes.

# Scope

* 1. This policy applies to Medway Council Staff and residents of Medway Council owned Homes for Independent Living schemes. This policy will be communicated to both staff and residents, and it will be highlighted that the contents of this policy are in everyone’s interest.

# Legislation and Guidance

* 1. Internal
     1. Employee Code of Conduct
     2. Homes for Independent Living A Handbook for Residents
     3. Tenancy sign up procedures
     4. Handling money procedure
     5. TV Licence procedure
     6. Guest Room booking policy and procedure

# Policy

* 1. Scheme Support Officers are NOT allowed to handle resident’s monies in any circumstances, other than where this forms part of their support role (see 5.3).
  2. Scheme Support Officers cannot cash cheques, access residents’ finances, pay bills or collect money for events or raffles on the behalf of residents.
  3. The only occasion where Scheme Support Officers will be required to handle payments from residents on behalf of the Council is where this forms part of their support role and this includes:
     1. Concessionary TV licences
     2. Guest room payments
     3. Hire of communal facilities
     4. New tenants’ advance rent payment
     5. Service charges in relation to tenant support
     6. In any case where there is no next of kin, family/friend, the Scheme Support Officer is allowed to undertake emergency provision, chaperoned by another Scheme Support Officer with line manager approval.
     7. In the event of a resident needing to access their finances where they are unable to do this themselves, the Scheme Support Officer needs to highlight the situation as soon as possible to their line manager, only with senior management approval will this be authorised. The resident to provide written permission and Scheme Support Officer to take copy of the transaction. Permission will be required for every transaction that maybe required. This is on the basis the referrals to the agencies have already been made informing them of the situation, such as, Adult Social Care, Care agencies, Client Financial Affairs etc.
  4. Scheme Support Officer must ensure payments / transactions are made in the following ways:
     1. Large payments e.g. rent in advance – cheque, card payments or direct debt.
     2. Guest Rooms – A Scheme AllPay card to be issued to resident, family/ friend for them to make the payment at the nearest PayPoint and return the card along with the receipt to the Scheme Support Officer.
     3. TV licence – A Scheme Allpay card to be issued to the resident to allow them to pay the fee at the nearest PayPoint and return the card along with the receipt to the Scheme Support Officer. The Resident can alternatively telephone Gun Wharf to speak with a Housing Officer to pay the tv licence fee with a bank card. Resident to notify Scheme Support Officer of the ref no. All payments made to be added to the Cash Accounts Spreadsheet on the V drive. Copies of the receipts given to be scanned onto the v drive (Cash Accounts)
     4. Where possible telephone payments to be made only with the resident being present.
  5. In situations where cheques and receipts are handed to Scheme Support Officers, documented records will be kept showing all details of the transaction. These details will be recorded in the official receipt books provided which should be signed by the payee and Scheme Support Officer.
  6. In all cases a receipt from the scheme receipt book will be completed and a copy given to the payee, and the other copies maintained for records.
  7. Any cheques will be held securely in the locked scheme cash box and banked as soon as feasibly possible.
  8. Social clubs and associated funds are NOT the responsibility of the Scheme Support Officer. Scheme Support Officers must not be responsible for the running of bank accounts or holding money relating to social clubs that may exist within the schemes

# Role, responsibilities and authority

* 1. The Assistant Director RCET retains the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
  2. Chief Housing Officer is responsible for the operational delivery of this policy and the associated procedures. This includes responsibility for monitoring and review, staff awareness and training, policy development and communication to customers.

# Monitoring, review and evaluation

* 1. This policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis or in line with legislative or regulatory changes.

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