

**QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY,
4th NOVEMBER 2003 BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER**

Question 1

As the Committee makes charges for redecoration/repair over and above “fair wear and tear” for States tenants when they move, would the President inform members -

- (a) when these charges were first introduced?
- (b) how many tenants were billed for such charges for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002 –
 - (i) as total number?
 - (ii) as a proportion of those who moved?
- (c) what the total amount charged was in each year?
- (d) what proportion of the sums were eventually added to rent arrears for the tenant?
- (e) how many tenants have been prosecuted for non-payment of such charges?

Answer

- (a) Recharges to tenants for redecoration/repair over and above ‘fair wear and tear’ have been applied for well over 20 years but not always particularly strictly.
- (b) I do not have figures for 2000 but for 2001, 2002 and to date in 2003 the following applies:-
 - 2001 - a total of 222 were recharged for works, whether moving or not. It is estimated that about one third (74) were moving out of the accommodation subject to repair.
 - 2002 - 55 tenants, about one tenth of the total who moved, were recharged for repairs.
 - 2003 to end September - 33 tenants, about one fourteenth of the total who moved, have been recharged.
- (c) The total amount charged in each year for those moving was as follows:-

2001 (estimated)	£27,268
2002	£31,131
2003 to end September	£24,822.
- (d) I am unable to report what proportion of the sums recharged for those moving becomes rent arrears. Recharges for repairs are added to tenants’ rent accounts. If the charge puts their account into arrears they can either pay it off immediately or make arrangements with the Rents Section for a managed repayment over time at a rate appropriate to their income. If a tenant is moving on from their accommodation and they are recharged for work to the property, they must either pay the charge immediately, or it is added to their rent account and this will be carried forward to their rent account for their new accommodation. If the tenant is leaving States property they will be invoiced for any outstanding charges, such as rent and repairs, still owed.
- (e) One case is pending but the Committee has not in the last three years prosecuted anybody specifically for non-payment of this type of charge.

Question 2

Would the President inform members whether the Committee is satisfied that such charges do not cause distress or hardship to the tenants concerned?

Answer

The tenant is responsible under the terms of the tenancy agreement to keep the interior of the property in a reasonable state of repair, fair wear and tear accepted. Where the tenant has failed to comply with the terms of the agreement the Committee has the right to carry out any necessary repairs and to recharge the tenant. Tenants faced with re-charges for not meeting their responsibilities may be distressed but the Committee's view is that they are the authors of their own misfortune. However, in cases of genuine hardship and where damage has not been caused wilfully the Committee has the discretion to write off the debt.