

Loreburn Group

# Furniture and Equipment Policy



**Creating Great Places to Live**

<b>Policy</b>	Furniture & Equipment Policy											
<b>Version Reference</b>	1											
<b>Approved by</b>	MC			LET				MT				
<b>Date of Approval</b>	February 2021											
<b>Review Period</b>	Every 3 Years <b>or</b> as legislation or substantive changes occur											
<b>Review Due</b>	February 2024											
<b>Policy Champion</b>	Service Charge Officer											
<b>Who this policy affects</b>	Staff		Customers	x	Contractors		Members of the Public					
<b>Where this policy affects</b>	General needs		x	Later Living		x	Supported		x	Offices/ staff base	Leased Properties	x

## 1. Purpose of this Policy

- 1.1 To detail Loreburn's policy on the provision and replacement of furnishings and equipment (appliances).
- 1.2 The Policy specifies which type of properties are eligible to have furnishings provided by Loreburn and how often they will be replaced.
- 1.3 This policy is accompanied by the Furniture Procedural Guide.

## 2. Legislative Background

In preparing this policy we have taken account of:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 requires landlords to provide Portable Appliance Tests (PAT) for all electrical appliances provided by them. The PATs are valid for a maximum of 5 years.
- Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988/1989, 1993 and 2010 States that furniture must meet specified ignition resistance levels and be suitably labelled.
- The Equal Opportunity Act 2010. This Act legally protects people from discrimination.
- The Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 requires that all appliances are safe when first supplied.

## 3. Associated Policies

- 3.1 Service Charge Policy
- 3.2 Waste Management Policy
- 3.3 Loreburn Treasury Management Policy March 2018
- 3.4 Procurement and Value for Money Policy
- 3.5 Electrical Safety Policy

## 4. Aims & Outcomes of this Policy

- 4.1 To set out Loreburn's approach to the provision of furniture and equipment
- 4.2 To ensure compliance with legislation
- 4.3 To ensure all furnishings purchased comply with Loreburn's Financial Regulations
- 4.4 To ensure furnishings are maintained to a satisfactory standard
- 4.5 To ensure a planned programme of replacements is operated

## 5. Properties & Services where Furniture & Equipment is Provided

Loreburn provides the following types of furniture and equipment packages detailed below and in Appendix 1:

- 5.1 Communal furnishings and equipment in 'Later Living' older person's developments, accommodation for young people, supported living accommodation and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) properties.
- 5.2 Integrated appliances in –properties designed for wheelchair users which have adapted or specially designed kitchens.
- 5.3 Furniture and equipment in self-contained flats within a Foyer.
- 5.4 Furniture and equipment in leased properties of a specialist nature. The inventory is based around the customer group, intended use of the property and requirements of the Leasee. (With Loreburn having discretion as to what may or may not be provided).
- 5.5 Flooring and carpets may form part of the furniture and equipment package and are therefore chargeable via a furniture charge. Wet room and safety flooring are considered fixed items within the property and are not included in the furniture and equipment replacement programme. These items are replaced by Loreburn when required or as part of a planned replacement programme.
- 5.6 All furniture and equipment supplied is subject to a furniture service charge and all items supplied will remain the property of Loreburn. Consideration will be given to ensure that the furniture service charges will be eligible for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit if this is applicable.

## 6. Inventories

- 6.1 Inventories detailing each item and purchase dates will be held and maintained by the Service Charge Officer (SCO).
- 6.2 The SCO will update the data following a new purchase.

## 7. Procurement and Best Value

- 7.1 Any purchases of furniture and/or equipment will be made in accordance with Loreburn's Procurement and Value for Money policy and procedure.
- 7.2 In certain circumstances there may be a need for more robust furniture or equipment that may be for heavy domestic or commercial use. In these instances, it may be appropriate to use specialist providers for supplies.
- 7.3 All items should be competitively priced, and 2 quotes obtained if the cost exceeds £5,000. (These figures are subject to any changing requirements contained within the Procurement & Value for Money Policy requirements).

- 7.4 Furniture charges are reviewed annually, at the same time as service charges and are included in the consultation letter issued to the tenants.

## 8. Repairs

- 8.1 Loreburn have a responsibility to carry out repairs within the published timeframes either by an approved contractor or Loreburn's In-house Repairs Team, whichever is most appropriate.
- 8.2 Where repairs cannot be carried out or are considered uneconomical given the age and expected lifespan of the equipment, replacement furniture/equipment is arranged. The furniture charge is reviewed upon the next annual review, taking into account any potential under recovery of the original costs of equipment.

## 9. PAT Testing

- 9.1 As a minimum, Loreburn will arrange for an annual inspection of all electrical items and carry out Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) for the items supplied. Larger electrical items that may be hard wired (eg. cookers) will be subject to periodic testing in accordance with legislation and/or good practice. This is currently every five years. Commercial laundry equipment supplied is subject to servicing in line with recommended schedules.

Where portable appliances are provided, a separate service charge is applied to rent accounts to meet the associated costs of annual appliance testing.

## 10. Costing, Life Cycle & Replacements

- 10.1 A weekly furniture service charge is calculated and applied to the tenancy based on the cost and notional life of each item supplied.
- 10.2 Loreburn will normally replace items on a five yearly cycle but will consider requests for replacement due to wear and tear more often in exceptional circumstances and when repairs are not economically viable. Any requests for replacement of this nature need to be approved by the SCO. The furniture charge will be re-calculated at the next scheduled review to take account of the replacement costs and any under recovery of the costs incurred to date.
- 10.3 Contract furnishings in Later Living developments will be costed over 10 years.
- 10.4 Bespoke furniture or flooring provided in specialist leased properties will be costed over the anticipated life cycle and may fall outwith a 5 year or 10 year lifecycle: either due to the anticipated wear and tear given the use of the property, or in some cases, an extended lifespan might be envisaged if commercial/heavy domestic furniture, flooring or equipment is provided.

- 10.5 Neighbourhood Officers, Later Living Development Managers and Supported Housing Advisors will inspect furniture and equipment where supplied in a communal setting during routine Estate Management Inspections, checking that the condition remains fit for purpose. Equipment provided within individual homes is electrical or mechanical only and this too will be subject to routine inspection in accordance with Loreburn's policy and procedure for the testing of Portable Appliances, periodic testing in line with regulations, or manufacturers recommended testing/service regime, where applicable.
- 10.6 Loreburn will consult and involve customers in the choosing of furniture and equipment, wherever possible, providing these are not considered excessive and beyond what might be considered a suitable specification to meet the household or development's requirements. (In some cases, eg. Specialist accommodation, more robust furniture and equipment may be required).
- 10.7 A planned programme of replacements will be overseen by the SCO.

## **11. Disposal of Furniture**

- 11.1 When furniture and other items supplied have reached the end of their notional life, Loreburn (via the Responsible Officer, ie. Neighbourhood Officer, Later Living Development Manager or Supported Housing Advisor) will assess the condition to determine their future use and will arrange the removal from the property. Loreburn works with furniture re-cycling projects (eg. SHAX in Dumfries) to re-use any equipment where this is possible.
- 11.2 All furniture will be safely disposed of in accordance with Loreburn's Waste Management Policy and the requirements of the Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment Regulations (WEEE) 2006 – as amended and the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 - Amended 1993.

## **12. Complaints**

- 12.1 Loreburn has a commitment to valuing complaints and ensures the organisation benefits from feedback to identify areas for change or improvement.
- 12.2 Loreburn has a Complaints Policy which ensures there are robust and effective procedures in place for complaints to be properly managed and acted upon.
- 12.3 Anyone dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint having exhausted Loreburn's complaints procedure has the right to refer the matter to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

## **13. Equality & Human Rights**

- 13.1 Loreburn aims to ensure that equality, fairness, dignity and respect are central to the way we work and how we treat our customers. We support

diversity and uphold equal opportunities in all areas of our work as an employer and service provider.

- 13.2 Loreburn will not discriminate against tenants, staff, visitors, suppliers or others based on their age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion or belief, marital status, pregnancy and maternity or gender reassignment (collectively referred to as 'protected characteristics' in the Equality Act 2010).

#### **14. Risk Management**

- 14.1 Loreburn has a Risk Management Strategy, Policy and Procedure. These documents set out how the organisation will manage risk as an integral part of its governance and management systems, ensuring risks are identified, evaluated, and controlled effectively.
- 14.2 Identifiable risks arising from this policy will be monitored and managed by the internal processes set out herein and by regular review of this and all other associated policies and procedures, ensuring risks are mitigated and Loreburn complies with all legislative requirements and regulatory and best practice guidance.

#### **15. Responsibilities Chart**

The below chart illustrates the responsibilities of all staff pertaining to this policy:

<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Service Charge Officer</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Officer</b>	<b>Later Living Devt Manager &amp; Supported Housing Advisor</b>	<b>Asset Management Team</b>
Policy Champion	✓			
Updating inventories and data	✓			
Regular inspections of furniture and equipment		✓	✓	
Consultation with Customers over renewals		✓	✓	
Annual consultation with Customers regarding charges	✓			
Organising Repairs, purchasing replacement items and raising associated works and purchase orders		✓	✓	
Organising disposal of old equipment		✓	✓	
Arranging PAT Testing of electrical items or other testing and servicing required				✓
Authorising of invoices	✓			
Amending charges	✓			

## 16. Policy Review

The Policy Champion is the Service Charge Officer

16.1 The Policy Champion is responsible for completing the Health and Safety Assessment and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Assessment Checklist.

16.2 This policy will be reviewed by the Policy Champion every 3 years or sooner as required due to legislative or substantive change.

### Policy Assessment Checklist

#### Health & Safety Assessment

**Does this policy have the potential to affect:**

Lone Working  
Safety and/or wellbeing of staff

No  
No



Safety and/or wellbeing of customers Yes  
**Have the above items been considered in the preparation of this policy?** Yes

**Comments:**

**Health and safety considerations and compliance with testing regimes are sufficiently covered by this and other Loreburn policies and practices.**

**Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Assessment**

**Does this policy have the potential to affect:**

Staff's rights to equal opportunities No  
Tenants' / Customer's rights to equal opportunities Yes  
Tenants' / Customer's ability to access to homes and/or services Yes  
**Have the above items been considered in the preparation of this policy?** Yes

**Comments:**

**Equality, diversity, inclusion and customer choice have all been considered in the preparation of this policy and associated procedure.**

**Agile Working Assessment**

**Agile working requirements have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this policy:** Yes / No

**This policy does not affect any Agile Working requirements.**