CHIPPENHAM HOUSING CO-OP RENT ARREARS POLICY

Please read carefully:

The following rent arrears policy is in operation and is strictly adhered to by this Co-operative.

HOUSING BENEFIT:

- If claiming Housing Benefit, it is the responsibility of the tenant to inform the Housing Benefit of any changes to your rent and rent must be paid in full.
- If receiving Universal Credit which contains an amount for your housing costs, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are paying us the full rent.
- It is important that everyone pays their rent on time. Housing Benefit is paid four weeks in arrears and this should be taken into account when deciding what arrears recovery action to take.

LETTER 1: (4 weeks)

Any member with rent arrears amounting to a total of four weeks or more shall receive a letter from Co-op Home Services reminding them that they are in arrears and asking them to pay the outstanding amount if they have not already done so.

LETTER 2: (6 weeks)

If no payment is received by the sixth week a second letter will be sent inviting them to contact the office within seven days and arrange to clear the debt, by stage payments if necessary.

NOTICE TO QUIT: (8 weeks)

A notice will be issued in the in the following circumstances:

a. In the event that a member has made an agreement to clear a debt and the agreement is not adhered to

b. In the event that no response has been made to Letters 1 & 2 and a visit either by a Committee Member or member of staff has proved unsuccessful

LEGAL ACTION: (12 weeks)

Legal action is the last stage in the rent arrears process and will only be instructed when tenants are not complying with repayment arrangements to reduce their rent arrears and all reasonable arrears recovery have been exhausted.

Making a fair and effective repayment arrangement: It is essential that the amount agreed to pay back rent arrears is the maximum the tenant can reasonably afford based on an assessment of income and expenditure.

When there are been a reasonable resolution to the arrears, for example a large payment and/or agreed repayment arrangement, the Housing Co-op may suspend the legal action and monitor the payments.

If rent arrears reoccur and payment or arrangement is not agreed, a notice to quit will be served again to the tenant and the Housing Co-op may take legal action to recover the debts.

On expiry of a Notice to Quit, if no agreement has been made or an agreement has been broken, Co-op Home Services is authorised to start legal action for possession of the property through the County Court in such circumstances where Co-op Home Services deems such action appropriate.

BAILIFF'S WARRANT:

A Bailiff's Warrant for Possession shall be sought, if the Court Order has been broken, only with the Committee's approval, as recorded by a specific resolution in the minutes.

Court costs will be charged to the member who has caused the Co-op to apply to the County Court for a Hearing.

POLICY REVIEW

The Rent Arrears policy will be reviewed every 5 years and submitted to Management Committee for approval every five years, or sooner if considered necessary, due to changes in legislation or best practice guidance.

<u>NO MEMBER CAN BE CONSIDERED FOR A TRANSFER OR MUTUAL EXHANGE UNLESS THEIR RENT ACCOUNT IS CLEAR OF ALL ARREARS</u>

<u>Reviewed January 2026</u>