



Former Residents / Tenants Arrears – Policy Overview

Purpose

YMCA Black Country Group has a responsibility to manage and recover rent arrears owed by former residents or tenants, while acting fairly, proportionately and in line with best practice. This policy explains how we recover outstanding rent arrears, agree repayment arrangements where possible and write off debts when recovery is no longer reasonable or viable. Our approach aims to balance financial responsibility with fairness and compassion toward former residents.

Our Approach – Person Centred, Co-Produced, Strengths Based and Trauma Informed

All staff must work in a trauma-informed and fair way when dealing with former residents who owe arrears. Staff should:

- Treat all individuals fairly, respectfully and without bias
- Communicate clearly and without jargon
- Consider the individual's personal circumstances
- Listen to and respond to queries promptly
- Work to find reasonable and mutually agreeable repayment solutions where possible

Key Principles

YMCA Black Country Group will:

- Take reasonable and proportionate action to recover arrears owed by former residents
- Ensure all recovery processes are consistent, lawful and transparent
- Keep clear records of all communication and actions
- Consider the cost and practicality of recovery action
- Write off debts where recovery is impossible, impractical or uneconomical

Applications for future accommodation may be declined if former arrears remain unpaid.

Recovering Former Resident Arrears

Where arrears exist after a resident has left YMCA accommodation, staff will attempt to recover the debt through reasonable and proportionate steps. This may include:

- Contacting the former resident to request payment
- Attempting to trace individuals who have left without contact
- Offering repayment arrangements or instalment plans
- Agreeing payment methods such as direct debit, bank transfer or card payment
- Using Money Claim Online (MCOL) through the County Court where recovery action is necessary

Where appropriate, repayment arrangements can be agreed based on the individual's financial circumstances.

Payment Arrangements

Where a former resident is unable to repay the full debt immediately:

- Repayment plans may be agreed
- Payments may be made weekly or monthly
- Direct debit is the preferred payment method

When Debts May Be Written Off

Before writing off any debt, all reasonable recovery action must be considered. Debts may be written off where recovery is no longer possible or reasonable. Examples include:

- The debtor is deceased with no estate
- The debtor is formally insolvent
- The individual cannot be traced
- The debtor lives outside the UK and recovery is impractical
- Recovery action would be uneconomical compared to the value of the debt



- Recovery would cause extreme hardship
- The debt is too old or legally unrecoverable
- The court has not ruled in YMCA's favour

Where appropriate, negotiated settlements may also be agreed.

If the debtor is later traced or circumstances change, recovery action may recommence.

Authorisation and Oversight

Decisions regarding debt recovery and write-offs must be properly authorised and documented.

Write-offs are authorised by:

- Chief Officer for Places
- Group Finance Manager

All actions must comply with YMCA Finance Policies and Procedures. Debts written off are reviewed and reported regularly to ensure appropriate oversight.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff involved in the arrears recovery process must:

- Respond to debtors promptly and professionally
- Maintain accurate records of communication
- Ensure actions are properly authorised and documented
- Consider equality and diversity in all decisions
- Take steps to trace debtors where possible
- Follow YMCA finance and governance procedures

Staff must declare any conflict of interest if they have a personal connection to a debtor.

Key Message for Staff

Our role is to:

- ✓ Recover outstanding rent arrears where reasonable and appropriate
- ✓ Treat former residents fairly and respectfully
- ✓ Consider personal circumstances when agreeing repayment plans
- ✓ Ensure all recovery actions are lawful, proportionate and documented
- ✓ Write off debts where recovery is no longer practical or appropriate

By managing arrears responsibly, we help ensure YMCA can continue providing safe and supportive accommodation to those who need it.