

SCHEDULE 6

CASH HANDLING GUIDANCE NOTE

COLLECTION AND BANKING OF RENT

This note sets out recommended practice for the safe and secure collection of allotment rents. It should be read and adopted by all Allotment Association committee members with responsibility for these functions. Any new members carrying out these functions will be expected to attend a training workshop with Allotment Officers.

The aim of these recommendations is to minimise the risk to individuals and to the security of rents. These are more specific to the main rent collection period but the principles also apply to cash handling at other times of the year.

Pre-collection

- Notices advertising rent collection arrangements setting out dates and times should not be on public view (e.g. on site gates or fences).
- Collection days and times should be kept to the minimum considered necessary to provide a fair and reasonable timescale for tenants to pay. Tenants should, wherever possible, pay by cheque or postal order as the preferred method and should receive clear guidance given on whether payment is to the Association or the City Council.
- Site gates should be kept locked during collection times to prevent casual access to site.

Collection

- At least **two** people (one of whom must be a Committee Officer) should be present to administer collection. If other Association business is being conducted at the same time this should be assigned to other committee members and kept separate from the rent process.
- A record should be kept of cheque payments indicating name, sort code, cheque number and value. In the event of loss, this will help identify which cheques have been lost.
- Plotolders should be excluded when cash and cheques are being reconciled.

Storage

- Cash /cheques should **NOT** be left on site unless it is in a safe that meets the Council's audit specification.
- If rent has to be kept at home overnight, every precaution should be taken to ensure that it is secure (e.g. locked away and/or hidden from view). Avoid keeping large amounts and bank monies as soon after collection as possible.
- Keep receipt books separate to cash / cheques.

Cash in transit

- Where cash/cheques cannot be banked immediately they should be deposited on the next working day.
- When cash/ cheques are taken from site or taken to the bank (or Post Office) it should be taken by **two** people and, ideally, transported by vehicle rather than on foot or by public transport. Car doors should be kept locked and cash/cheques kept out of sight.
- The routes used should be varied and, where possible, different branches or post offices used. Areas of known crime, quiet streets and alleyways should be avoided - keep to busy areas.
- Park close to Banks or Post Offices. Do not use bags that would obviously indicate the contents and carry a mobile phone that can be used to contact the Police in the event of attempted or actual robbery.
- If there is any suspicion that the vehicle is being followed, drive to the nearest police station or busy area and report the incident.

Theft, loss

- In the event of robbery, Association members are not expected to resist but should endeavour to note any details of the person that might help subsequent police enquiries.
- Report any incident to the police immediately and obtain a crime number. Notify the Allotments Team with details of the incident, the crime number and details of the payments involved. Contact tenants whose cheques have been stolen.

Training

- Those committee members involved in rent collection and banking functions **must** attend a training workshop with Allotment Officers.