



# LEASEHOLDER SERVICE CHARGES



## ABOUT SERVICE CHARGES

When you buy a flat in a council owned building you have to pay part of the running and management costs of your block. These costs are your service charges.

## YOUR BILL

We will send you an estimated bill in April for the coming year (April 1st - March 31st). This is broken down into two sections:

- Estimated costs (i.e. lighting and repairs)
- Known costs (i.e. management fee and buildings insurance)

In October we write to you and tell you the actual cost of the services provided in the last financial year. If this is different to the estimate we sent to you the previous year, we adjust your charges from the following April.

## HOW WE WORK OUT THE CHARGES FOR YOUR FLAT

We only charge you for the communal services that you receive. You do not pay for services provided just for council tenants.

## GROUND RENT

Ground Rent is payable in accordance with the terms of your lease. This has to be paid in addition to your service charges, and we bill you separately for this.

## WHAT WE CHARGE YOU FOR

When you get a shared service in a block, we divide the cost by the number of residents who benefit from it. This applies to services such as cleaning, grounds maintenance, block repairs and window cleaning.

## MANAGEMENT FEE

This is what it costs Colchester Borough Homes to manage your home. It includes preparing invoices and statements and newsletters, general administration, organising and supervising building work and collecting your service charges. There are three levels of charge, depending on the amount of services we provide your block.

## GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

You may have communal grounds outside flats which we look after. We take care of lawns, borders, shrubs, and hedges. We also sweep and weed parking areas, and other paved areas.

## BUILDING INSURANCE

There is a blanket policy for all leasehold properties provided by Zurich Municipal.

## BLOCK REPAIRS

This is for minor repairs to things such as doors, roofs, and gutters.

## COMMUNAL ELECTRICITY

This is for lighting for communal hallways, stairs, corridors and outside lights.

## COMMUNAL CLEANING (INCLUDING WINDOW CLEANING AND BIN CHUTE CLEANING)

We clean all communal areas and communal windows, of two and three storey blocks of flats Bin Chutes along with bin stores in three storey blocks are also cleaned.

## COMMUNITY CARETAKERS

Community Caretakers help make neighbourhoods cleaner and safer. They remove rubbish and graffiti, inspect estates, and carry out minor repairs.

## COMMUNAL DIGITAL TV AERIALS

This is for the installation of Communal Digital TV aerials and includes maintenance and replacement costs.

## FIRE ALARMS AND EMERGENCY LIGHTING

We undertake inspections and servicing of Fire Alarm systems and Emergency lighting in communal areas.

## HEATING AND HEATING SYSTEM SERVICING

A few properties are serviced by communal boiler and heating systems these are charged for the heating costs, servicing costs for elements of the heating system.

## LEGIONELLA TESTING

The cost of water analysis, cleaning and disinfection of tanks, water temperature and visual inspection of tanks serving communal facilities.

## COMMUNAL LIFTS

A few properties benefit from the use of a communal lift. These properties are charged a portion of the cost of maintenance and servicing of the lift.

## WATER

A few properties are supplied water through a communal supply shared with others. These properties pay a portion of the costs that relate to their property.

## DOOR ENTRY SERVICING

A few properties benefit from a door entry system that is serviced annually.

## MAJOR WORKS

We will formally consult with you if we are to carry out major works. You will be invoiced for these separately, so it will not form part of your service charges.

## WHEN YOU SHOULD PAY YOUR SERVICE CHARGES

We send you a bill in April, which you must pay within 21 days. You can arrange to pay in monthly instalments over 10 months by direct debit. You can set this up by visiting [www.cbhomes.org.uk/directdebit](http://www.cbhomes.org.uk/directdebit) or call 01206 282514.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T PAY

You will be breaking the terms of your lease and we will take action to recover the debt from you. This could result in you losing your home. If you have problems paying, please contact us immediately and we will always try to help. You may be entitled to benefits or a loan.

CONTACT CUSTOMER SERVICES IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT SERVICE CHARGES

Email info@cbhomes.org.uk  
Phone 01206 282514  
Post Freepost RSST-TJJX-EGAB, Colchester Borough Homes, Rowan House, Sheepen Road,  
Colchester, CO3 3WG

FIRST TIER TRIBUNAL (FORMERLY LEASEHOLD VALUATION TRIBUNAL)

If you think that your service charges are unreasonable, or that the service we provide is inadequate, you may be able to take your case to a First Tier Tribunal.

For advice on how to appeal to a First Tier Tribunal please visit [www.lease-advice.org](http://www.lease-advice.org)

If you would like this information in a different way, such as in Braille or in large print, please let us know.