

# Service charges

Here is a full list of the services that the Trust provides.

You will find the details for the services you are receiving on your service charge statement and/or rent and service charge letter.

The service charges are split into two sections, property-related service charges and personal service charges.

## Section 1: Property-related charges

Property-related service charges refer to services that are provided by the Trust to your property and the surrounding area.

Service charge	Service charge description
Communal Electric	These costs relate to the electricity supply to communal areas. The electricity supply powers communal items such as lighting, lifts, CCTV cameras and controlled door entry systems.
External Lighting	External lighting relates to street lighting, which has not been adopted by the local authority and is the Trust's responsibility to provide.
Emergency Light Testing	Emergency lighting is a legal requirement under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. When a fire occurs, the electrical circuits are quite often affected, and this could mean the loss of lighting in a building. It is essential that anyone leaving a building can easily see their way out. Emergency lights are designed with a battery backup so that if the power fails in a building, the emergency lights switch over to that battery power supply and provide lighting for up to three hours. These must be serviced once a year and tested every month to ensure that the batteries are in good working order and that the lights operate as they should.
Communal Heating	Cost of Utilities (gas or electric) to heat communal areas i.e. communal stairwells and lounges
Communal Water	Costs of water supplied to communal areas i.e. kitchens and bathrooms
Communal Caretaking	Caretakers attend sites regularly to identify any fly tipping, graffiti and damage. Where schemes have any communal taps, these are turned on to ensure the pipes are free from any bacteria. This includes internal taps such as kitchen and

	<p>toilet areas and also external taps. For schemes with fire alarms, these are also tested.</p> <p>A small number of schemes have an in-house caretaker who also does communal cleaning as part of the role.</p>
Communal Cleaning	<p>Properties with internal and external communal spaces are kept clean and safe as part of the regular visits to the scheme by our cleaners. Their role includes general cleaning of stairwells and corridors, entrance areas and bin stores if applicable.</p>
Communal Window Cleaning	<p>This charge covers the cleaning of the glass for communal windows.</p>
Ground Maintenance	<p>As your landlord, we have a responsibility to maintain our estates. This charge in general covers maintenance of all 'green areas'. This includes grass cutting, weed spraying, maintenance of shrubs etc.</p>
Third Party (Estate) Fees	<p>On estates where we do not own all the freehold, a third-party managing agent normally provides some or all the services. The freeholder of the estate employs this managing agent, and they charge us for the services supplied.</p>
Door Entry Service	<p>Where there are power assisted doors within communal areas the Trust will service these bi-annually to ensure that they are in good working order and are safe and compliant with current regulations. Alternative door entry systems are serviced annually.</p>
Roller Door Service	<p>Roller shutter doors are serviced annually to ensure that they are safe for continued use.</p>
Gate/Barrier Service	<p>Electric gates and barriers are serviced bi-annually to ensure that they are safe for continued use.</p>
CCTV Service	<p>Some schemes and estates have CCTV cameras installed to assist with the security of the area. Where this CCTV is present it is necessary to service and maintain it to keep it in working order.</p>
Lift Servicing	<p>To comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act, and also Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER), it is necessary for us to service, inspect and maintain the passenger lifts. We service our passenger lifts monthly, and complete a Thorough Examination every 6 months</p>
Engineering Inspection	<p>The Trust must ensure that machinery and equipment in communal areas is in full working order so that it is safe to use. Passenger Lifts are examined twice per year and pressure vessels are inspected annually. It is a statutory requirement that certain items of equipment and plant are inspected.</p>

Fixed Wire Testing	In order to comply with Health and Safety law, the Trust is obliged to ensure that the electrical fixed wiring around communal parts of the building is safe for continued use.
Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)	Where the Trust has provided Portable Appliances within communal areas, we will test these annually to ensure they are safe for continued use.
Lightning Protection	The Trust has Lightning Protection installed on some of our blocks, as determined by their unique situation and composition. We service these installations annually to ensure that they continue to provide effective protection.
Water Monitoring	The Trust periodically monitors the temperature and levels of bacteria within stored water, infrequently used outlets and other outlets on a communal water supply so that we can constantly track to ensure that the water is kept in optimal conditions to prevent the growth of bacteria that can cause Legionella. We take temperatures monthly, clean and disinfect storage tanks annually and monitor their temperatures twice a year.
Water Boost	Where blocks of flats are over a certain height it is necessary to boost the incoming water supply to ensure that all of the flats in the block receive water at a suitable pressure. The Trust must service and maintain these booster systems bi-annually to ensure they continue to work effectively but also to comply with the Pressure Equipment Regulations.
Wastewater Service	Where addresses are not on a mains drainage system the Trust has to provide and maintain a suitable system to deal with waste water. These systems include pumps and filters, and it is necessary to service and maintain these to keep them working effectively. In addition, it is necessary to clean and empty the storage tanks, and test the discharge into local water courses to ensure levels do not exceed a maximum acceptable level. The Trust services treatment plants twice a year, empties them typically three times a year and tests at the outfall once a year.
Legionella Risk Assessment (LRA)	In order to meet our responsibilities, set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act, COSHH and the L8 Approved Code of Practice the Trust must carry out a Legionella Risk Assessment on every premises. For our larger more complex sites where we have stored water and infrequently used outlets, we meet this requirement by utilising a skilled and experienced external Risk Assessor to complete the LRA and provide us with details of their findings and any recommendations which we then implement. We complete this task every 2 years.

Fire Monitoring

Fire Monitoring Charges vary dependent on where you live and what is required to keep residents safe. Below are a range of services covered in this charge.

**Fire Alarms**

Fire alarms in communal areas are not required in all buildings, but where there is an increased risk to residents, then a fire alarm is a legal requirement, and it must be installed and maintained in accordance with the British Standard. The maintenance of a fire alarm consists of at least two services a year (this can be four services in a larger building)

**Mechanical Smoke Ventilation Systems**

An extraction system which is installed at the top of the stairwell and it's purpose is to keep the stairs free from smoke in the event of a fire so that anyone evacuating the building will be able to do so safely. These automatically operate when the communal fire alarm sounds. These are a legal requirement for high rise buildings and need to be serviced every six months.

**Smoke Detectors**

All buildings where there is a fire alarm will have detectors and they need to be serviced once a year to ensure that the detectors operate as they should and that they are in date. Each detector has a 10 year life. In buildings where there are a large number of detectors, half will be serviced in the first six months and half will be serviced in the second six months.

**Automatic Opening Vents (AOVs)**

AOVs are found in the communal areas of buildings and are linked to the fire alarm. When the fire alarm activates, the vents which can be either windows or roof lights, will open so that any smoke that is present in the communal areas will be automatically vented via an open window. This will then leave the escape route clear from smoke so that any resident needing to evacuate the building can do so safely. These are tested as part of the fire alarm weekly test but they also require servicing once a year.

**Dry Risers**

Dry risers are installed to assist the fire service in buildings where the access to water supplies may be more difficult. This is usually in buildings where there are more than three

	<p>floors and always in high rise buildings. They are a series of pipes that the fire service can connect their hoses to on each floor level. When not in use, they contain no water so this prevents leaks and they only fill up with water when the fire service switches it on for their own use. These are serviced every six months to ensure that they operate as they should and they are a legal requirement in the buildings where they are installed.</p> <p><b>Sprinklers</b></p> <p>An automatic system that will operate in response to a fire. If a fire starts, there is a small glass bulb in the sprinkler head that will break at a certain temperature. Once the bulb breaks, water is released from the affected sprinkler head(s) only. This water will stop the fire from growing and in some instances put the fire out, and allow people to escape safely. It also protects property and reduces the amount of damage that can be caused by a fire and water used to put a fire out. The sprinkler system and water tank need to be serviced every six months.</p> <p><b>Fire Monitoring and Subscription</b></p> <p>Some of the fire alarms are linked directly to an automatic receiving center (ARC). This means that if the fire alarm operates for any reason at all, the ARC will contact the fire service directly to attend. The benefits of this is that a call is always made and does not rely on a single person to make the call, and also that the fire service response is faster. When a fire alarm operates, whether it be a false alarm or in response to a fire, a keyholding company will also turn up to reset the alarm and any equipment attached to the alarm, to make sure that it remains operational. If the alarm has been caused by a fault, they will also arrange for the fire alarm company to attend straight away to deal with the fault.</p>
Bin Chute Service	<p>Where refuse chutes are installed in buildings, these have to be fire rated and have to operate in a specific way. If there was a fire in a bin or bin room, there is a tray at the bottom of the bin chute which will close shut when it detects a heat source. This will stop any smoke, flames or heat from passing from the bin room to any other part of the building. If a fire starts in the bin chute itself, then the hopper doors are designed to self-close and will keep a fire and smoke out of a communal area for up to two hours.</p>

	The refuse chutes need to be serviced every six months to ensure that they operate effectively.
Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)	Fire risk assessments are carried out in all buildings where there is a communal area no matter how small that area may be. It is a legal requirement under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and it assesses all the fire risks in a building. In some buildings where the risks are higher these are carried out every year. This includes sheltered schemes and high-rise buildings. In other blocks of flats a full fire risk assessment is carried out every two years but the in-house fire team will assess the building after twelve months to ensure that there have been no changes to the building or residents that may affect the validity of the original fire risk assessment.
Communal White Goods	The Trust provides communal washing machines and tumble dryers into our schemes where typically residents may not have space for these items within their apartments. These machines are provided on a fully comprehensive lease basis.
Repair/Replacement	Repair or replacement of fixtures and fittings within additional communal spaces such as communal lounge area. This service charge predominantly for residents living in sheltered accommodation.
Sheltered Management Charge	Floating support service to residents living in sheltered accommodation.
Administration Fee (15%)	We charge a fee for administering your service charges. This amounts to 15% of the total service charge. This fee covers staff and office running costs incurred in relation to the administration of service charges and related service contracts.
Communal Repairs (Shared Ownership and Leasehold homes only)	This covers repairs to the communal area or repair to the exterior of your block e.g. paving, windows, communal lighting, door entry systems, roofing, lifts, drainage gutters etc
Sinking fund (Shared Ownership and Leasehold homes only)	A Sinking fund contribution is an amount of money set aside to cover any major work which is needed on a property in the future, for example; replacing the roof, replacing boundary walls or communal redecoration. This money has to be kept in a separate account and is not used to subsidise day to day service charge expenditure.
Buildings Insurance (Shared Ownership and Leasehold homes only)	We are obliged to insure the buildings that leaseholders and shared owners live in and you pay us for providing this cover.
Examination Fee (Shared Ownership and Leasehold homes only)	Previously referred to as 'Assurance Fee'. This refers to the cost of an External Accountant providing assurance on the annual service charges.

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## Section 2: Personal Service Charges

Personal charges refer to services that are provided by the Trust to you in your individual property. Personal charges are not covered by Housing Benefit.

Service charge	Service charge description
Private Heating Charge	This charge relates to the cost of providing heating to your individual property from a communal boiler. The charge pays for the usage of gas or electricity for heating; it does not include any cost for maintaining the heating system.
Private Water Charge	This charge relates to the cost of providing water to your individual property from a communal supply. The charge pays for the usage of water; it does not include any cost for maintenance.