

Service charge headings and their meanings

A helpful factsheet

We've grouped similar costs together under a general heading. This table shows the services that could be included in each cost, along with a brief description. (Please remember that only some of the services in each heading may apply to you.)

| Service charge heading on rent account | What's included | Description | General Needs | Supported housing | Leasehold | Shared Ownership | Leased Garages |
|--|-------------------------------|---|---------------|-------------------|-----------|------------------|----------------|
| Buildings insurance | Buildings insurance | Costs of insuring your property and any communal areas, plus public liability insurance. Please note: it doesn't include the contents of your home as you're responsible for insuring these. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Cleaning | Communal cleaning | Contractor costs for cleaning communal areas and communal windows. This may also include cleaning of stairs and floors, sweeping and dusting indoor areas and the cost of cleaning materials. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Communal area window cleaning | Costs of cleaning communal windows when they're not part of a cleaning contract. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |

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|--|---|--|---------------|-------------------|-----------|------------------|----------------|
| | Property windows* | Costs of cleaning windows for individual properties. | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Communal gas supply | Costs from utility providers for any gas supplied to communal areas. We pay this to them on behalf of residents. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Heating and water | Communal oil supply | Costs from utility providers for any oil supplied to communal areas. We pay this to them on behalf of residents. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Communal boilers service and maintenance | Costs for the servicing and/or maintenance of communal boilers and any work or parts needed to repair these. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| TV systems | Communal TV aerials, digibox, Sky box, estate aerials service, maintenance and electricity supply | Costs for servicing, supplying and maintaining of any shared TV, digital, cable, or satellite system installed for the estate or block. If there's a shared lounge, the cost of the TV Licence will be included here. (This is separate to any charges residents pay to providers for subscriptions to particular services.) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Lighting & electricity | Communal electricity | Costs from utility providers for any electricity supply to communal areas. This may include parking or outside lighting, as well as lighting or heating to communal areas. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Communal water supply & drainage | Water rates landlords supply | Costs from utility providers for the water supply to communal areas. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |

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|--|---|--|---|-------------------|-----------|------------------|----------------|
| Communal water supply & drainage | Water softeners | Costs for servicing and maintaining water softeners to the communal water supply. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Legionnaires assessment | Contractor costs to test for, and monitor, legionella bacteria, as well as completing risk assessments and maintaining water systems. (These costs only apply where we provide communal water systems that supply the water to your home.) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Calorifier blowdown, clean and descale | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Dechlorination | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Sewerage/water pumps service and maintenance | | Cost for servicing and maintaining sewerage plants, sewerage pumping stations, surface water pumps and water and sump pump systems. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Cess pits/septic tanks service and maintenance | Costs for servicing and maintaining cess pits and septic tanks. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Sewerage treatment plants service and maintenance | Cost for servicing and maintaining sewerage plants, sewerage pumping stations, surface water pumps and water and sump pump systems. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Hot and cold water monitoring | Contractor costs for testing, completing risk assessments and maintaining communal water systems. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Pumping station service and maintenance | Servicing and maintaining sewerage plants, sewerage pumping stations, surface water pumps and water and sump pump systems. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |

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| Communal water supply & drainage | Pumping station electricity | Utility costs for the supply of electricity required for running a pumping station. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Environment Agency Annual Permit | Costs levied by the Environment Agency annually for certain types of sewerage schemes. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Door entry/ security | Door entry system service and maintenance | Cost for servicing and maintaining any door entry systems, CCTV cameras, alarms and electrical doors. Servicing and maintaining any communal automatic gates, barriers or shutters. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | CCTV | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Security services | Cost for servicing and maintaining any door entry systems, CCTV cameras, alarms and electrical doors. Servicing and maintaining any communal automatic gates, barriers or shutters. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Automatic gates and shutters | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Automatic doors -service and maintenance | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Fly tipping and pest control | Refuse collection | Contractor costs for removing rubbish and bulk refuse left in bin storage areas and around estates. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Pest control | Contractor costs for pest control in communal areas. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Bulk waste removal and dumped items | Contractor costs for removing rubbish and bulk refuse left in bin storage areas and around estates. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| External management costs | External management company costs | Costs payable to an external Managing agent who is carrying out estate services on behalf of the Freeholder. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |

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| Grounds maintenance | Grounds maintenance | Contractor costs to look after outside areas of estates and schemes (such as gardening, maintaining paths and parking areas). Also carrying out tree surveys, pruning and surgery. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Grounds maintenance - tree work | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Gritting/salt for paths | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Major ground works | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Health and safety/fire equipment | Emergency lighting testing, service/maintenance | Contractor costs for testing, servicing and maintaining fire systems and carrying out fire safety inspections. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Health and safety/fire equipment | Fire panels testing, service/maintenance | Contractor costs for testing, servicing and maintaining fire systems and carrying out fire safety inspections. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Communal area smoke detectors testing, service/maintenance | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Fire ventilation system service/maintenance | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Communal fire equipment service/maintenance | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Sprinkler system service/maintenance | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Dry riser service/maintenance | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |

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| | Lightning conductor service/maintenance | Contractor costs for testing, servicing and maintaining lightning conductors on blocks. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Health and safety/fire equipment | Fall arrest system service/maintenance | Inspecting and maintaining safe wires, bolts and cradles within various systems to make sure they're safe. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Electrical equipment testing | Costs for testing and maintaining electrical installations in communal areas when it's needed. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Lifts | Communal passenger lift service and maintenance | Servicing lifts and stair lifts in communal areas. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Communal stairlift service and maintenance | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Lift - emergency telephone | Costs from utility provider for emergency telephone lines in lifts. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Repairs, maintenance and decoration | Water, drainage and sewerage repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Electrical repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Emergency lighting repairs | Costs for completing day to day repairs in communal areas. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Fire panel repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Communal area smoke detector repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |

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|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|-----------|------------------|----------------|
| Repairs, maintenance and decoration | Fire ventilation system repairs | Costs for completing day to day repairs in communal areas. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Communal fire equipment repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Sprinkler system repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Fire extinguisher repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Dry riser repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Lightning conductor repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Fall arrest system repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Automatic gates and shutter repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Lift repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Automatic door repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | General repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Communal lighting repairs | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Gutter clearance | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Communal area maintenance | | Costs of maintaining and redecorating communal areas. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ |
| Communal area redecoration | X | X | | ✓ | ✓ | X | |

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| Tenancy or leasehold related services and facilities | Guest room income | The income received from the rental of guest rooms within sheltered schemes is used to offset the services charges charged to that scheme. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Laundry income | Income from laundry machines is offset against service charges (where this applies). | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Laundry equipment | Costs for providing equipment and appliances in sheltered or supported schemes. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Furniture and equipment ~ | Costs for providing furniture, equipment and appliances in sheltered or supported schemes. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Appliances | | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Telephone | Costs from utility providers for the telephone systems installed in leasehold sheltered schemes. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Central control alarm monitoring * ~ | Costs for providing central control alarm monitoring in some sheltered or supported schemes. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Council tax * ~ | Council tax costs in some sheltered or supported schemes. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Assisted bathrooms - service and maintenance | Costs for maintaining communal assisted bathrooms in sheltered or supported schemes. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Caretaker/site supervisor or scheme officer | Employing a caretaker, cleaner or scheme officer for a scheme. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | |

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|--|---|--|---------------|-------------------|-----------|------------------|----------------|
| Tenancy or leasehold related services and facilities | Commercial kitchen equipment service | Maintaining, servicing and replacing catering equipment in some sheltered or supported schemes. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Equipment replacement provision ~ | For replacing furniture, appliances and equipment in sheltered and supported schemes. | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Pumping station replacement provision | For replacing water or sewerage pumping stations if needed. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Door entry system replacement provision | For replacing door entry systems. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Reserves/provisions | Lift replacement provision | For replacing lifts. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Reserve funds | Contributions from leasehold properties towards any future items that need replacing. Typically this will be things like communal windows and doors, roofing and decorating of communal areas. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Renewals | Contributions towards replacing items like communal appliances (for example, a washing machine). | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Fees | Validation fees | Only for leaseholders and shared owners. Service charge statements are independently validated each year so that our residents know that our charges are fair and accurate. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |

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|---|---|--|---------------|-------------------|-----------|------------------|----------------|
| Management charge | Sovereign management charge | This covers the costs we incur for things like managing contracts for the services we provide, surveyor visits, undertaking risk assessments, calculating and producing service charge statements. For our general needs residents, freeholders and some leaseholders and shared owners this is calculated as 15% of the cost of providing the communal services. For other leaseholders and shared owners there is a scale of fixed management charges. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Personal utilities *# | Private resident heating costs*# | Costs from utility providers for any gas, oil or electricity supplied to your home, where we pay this on your behalf. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Private resident heating and hot water *# | Costs from utility providers for any gas, oil or electricity supplied to your home, where we pay this on your behalf. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Private resident water rates * # | Costs from utility providers for any water supplied to your home, where we pay this on your behalf. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| | Private sewerage costs* # | Costs for emptying and removing waste from cess pits, septic tanks and pumping stations (where this applies). | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Ground rent | Ground rent | Payment of any ground rent to a property's Freeholder. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| External management company ground rent | Ground rent | Ground rent payable to an external Management company and they pay it to the Freeholder. | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |

Key

- * Not eligible for Housing Benefit
- # Not eligible for Universal Credit
- ~ Certain items may not be eligible for Universal Credit

Note: eligibility for either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit may vary according to your Local Authority

Get in touch

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All enquiries and out
of hours emergencies

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Limited is charitable