



# Service Charges

What do service charges pay for?

A service charge pays for the cost of looking after the shared space beyond your own home. The service you receive will depend on where you live and what facilities are provided in your block or neighbourhood. Not all properties have a service charge.

## The main service charges pay for:

- **Estate services** which may include some or all of the following, depending on the facilities in your block or neighbourhood:– cutting grass;– maintaining shrubs and flower beds;– cutting hedges;– tree works;– weed control;– removing litter, rubbish and abandoned cars;– pest control;– maintaining and replacing playground equipment, signs and benches;– maintaining pond and water features;– any services carried out in accordance with our winter weather policy;– maintaining unadopted roads, footpaths, car parking areas;– lighting. **These services are in addition to those provided by the local council.**
- **Door entry systems and CCTV.**
- **Lighting, heating and other utility costs** for shared spaces such as halls, staircases and lounges.
- **Window cleaning** where we arrange for the cleaning.
- **Cleaning service** where we arrange the cleaning for shared spaces.
- **Lifts** including stairlifts.
- **Shared TV systems** and satellite dishes.
- **Fire alarms**, fire fighting equipment and fire safety inspections in shared spaces.
- **Fixtures, fittings and equipment** in shared rooms such as carpets, curtains, chairs, tables and kitchen equipment.
- **Laundry equipment** and running costs.
- **Catering provision** at our extra care schemes, which covers one 3 course meal per day. This is split into 2 elements, food and service.
- Besides the day to day provision of the service, the service charge also includes an amount for **future replacement of equipment or furniture**. For example, we would expect to have to install a new lift every 25-30 years. We will, therefore, collect a small amount each week so that we have the money to pay for this when replacement is required.
- We will also usually spread the cost of **tree work** over a number of years, as pruning is usually not required on an annual basis.

*How do I know which service charges will apply to me?*

The schedule of service charges accompanying your tenancy agreement breaks down the services you are receiving.

*How have you calculated the service charges?*

We set service charges to recover the full cost of providing the services. We also include a reasonable administration cost to cover tasks such as processing invoices; arranging and monitoring contracts; and dealing with enquiries. Each year we estimate how much it will cost to provide the services covered by the service charge. We do this by looking at how much it cost us in the previous 12 months and taking account of any changes that we know about for the next 12 months. For example the utility companies may have announced price rises or our contracts may include an annual price change.

*How have you divided the service charges?*

We normally divide the service charge equally between the number of homes that share the facility or service. For example, if the shared electricity in a block of eight apartments costs £160 per year, then the cost for each home will be £20 per year or 38 pence each week.

*How will I know when the service charge changes?*

Your service charge is part of your weekly rent payment. We will write and tell you the new charge when we notify you of the annual rent change. We will give you four weeks' notice of any increase.

*Can I claim Housing Benefit for service charges?*

Many of the services included in the schedule are eligible for Housing Benefit, however there are some services which are ineligible, these include personal light, heat and water and the food element of any catering service. If you ask for additional services, which we are able to provide, not all of them may be eligible for Housing Benefit. We will tell you this as part of any consultation.

*What can I do if I am unhappy with the quality of the service I receive?*

We aim to provide and deliver high quality services. If we fail to deliver a service or you are unhappy with the quality of the service you should contact us and we will take immediate steps to rectify the situation. If we do not deliver a service that we are charging for and do not reinstate it within five working days of being notified we will not charge for the service. A credit will be made to the service charge account for the block or estate. This will then be taken into account when we set the charge for the following year. If we need to pay back £50 or more to each tenant who hasn't received the service we will not credit the service charge account but will repay this at the time to each tenant affected. We may credit the amount to your rent account. If you remain unhappy with the quality of the service, we will deal with this in accordance with our complaints procedure.

*What if I want a different level of service?*

We have to comply with legislation and our Board of Management will set certain standards so there will be some services that you have to pay for. However, if you want a different level of service we will consider your request as a 'local offer'. We will need to consult with other tenants who will be affected to see if they agree with your suggestion.

*Can you change the services?*

We may decide to offer you a new service or reduce or vary the service that we currently provide. However, we will only do this after consulting all the tenants who would be affected and considering your views.

How do you ensure value for money?

**We aim to deliver value for money services. We will do this by:**

- Choosing the best option between in-house services and contractors.
- Balancing quality and price when using contractors.
- Ensuring our staff work in the most efficient way.
- Keeping our administration as simple as possible whilst providing you with sufficient information.

If you ask, we can supply our documents in large print, on CD, in Braille, in picture format and in languages other than English.

Phone: **01609 767900**

Fax: 01609 777017

E-mail: [info@broadacres.org.uk](mailto:info@broadacres.org.uk)

Website: **[www.broadacres.org.uk](http://www.broadacres.org.uk)**

**Call into our head office:**

**Broadacres House, Mount View, Standard Way, Northallerton, DL6 2YD**

Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 5.15pm | Friday 8.45am to 4.45pm