

Understanding your service charges – a guide for residents.

This is a basic guide to understanding your service charges, for Sutton Housing Society residents.



What are service charges?

Service charges are payments for services Sutton Housing Society (SHS), as your landlord, provides in shared areas of your building or estate. They are separate from your net rent and show separately on the annual rent review letter that is issued to residents. They are included as part of your gross (total) weekly rent charge.



What do service charges pay for?

Service charges help pay for things that are available and or provided to everyone in the building, such as:

- Cleaning shared areas (hallways, stairs, lifts)
- Window cleaning
- Lighting in communal areas
- Heating in shared spaces and / or within homes
- Grass cutting and grounds maintenance
- Bin and waste services
- Lift servicing, fire alarms and door entry systems
- Repairs to shared areas.

This is not an exhaustive list. These services help keep your building safe, clean, and well maintained.



How are service charges worked out?

We calculate service charges to make sure:

- The cost of services are covered
- You only pay for services at your building / estate
- Charges are fair and transparent

We estimate costs for the year ahead using previous costs and current prices. For example, heating and electricity are based on actual usage records. We do not make a profit on service charges.



How often are charges reviewed?

Your service charge is set once a year. You will receive details in your annual rent letter. New residents are given a breakdown when they move in.



What happens if costs change?

We set a yearly charge based on an estimate. If actual costs change, your charge does not change during the year. This means your payments stay clear and predictable.



Can I see what I am paying for?

Yes. You can ask for:

- A breakdown of your service charges
- An explanation of how they are calculated

We are committed to being open and transparent and are happy to share this information with you.



Can I get help with paying?

Some service charges may be covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. Your rent letter will show which charges are eligible.



What if a service is not provided that I'm paying for?

We aim to deliver all services to a good standard.

If something goes wrong, you may be entitled to compensation or to a refund of the service charge. This could include:

- A refund of part of a service charge e.g. when a lift is out of order for a prolonged period of time
- A goodwill payment or gesture following the failure of a service for which you are charged.

Compensation may be considered where we fail to meet our service standards or you experience inconvenience.

Need help?

If you have questions about your service charges, please contact your Housing Manager on 020 8642 1500.