



# Service Charges What are they?

**Kettering**  
*Borough Council*

## What are service charges and who has to pay them?

Service charges are additional charges within your rent that cover the cost of providing additional facilities where you live. These extra facilities can include communal gardening and cleaning, laundries, fire alarms, door entry systems and the heating and lighting of communal areas.

Service charges are usually included within the rents for tenants of our sheltered housing schemes and blocks of flats with communal facilities.

## Our policy

The Council's primary aim is to delivery high quality services to its tenants, and where additional services are provided that they represent value for money and are of an excellent standard.

We are committed to a fair and transparent system of recharging tenants of HRA properties for additional services or facilities that are provided where they live and to ensure we can justify the costs of providing those services.

Our policy sets out how service charges are calculated and how information regarding service charges is provided to tenants. All the information we provide will be in clear, easy to read formats that have been approved by tenants.

The Council will encourage regular feedback from tenants to ensure it delivers services that are of good quality and provide value for money and we will seek to introduce mechanisms that allow tenants to influence the selection of services and service providers at their location.

## How are service charges calculated?

We use the costs of providing services over a fixed twelve month period, called the accounting period, when setting your weekly service charge.

The costs are then divided by the number of rent weeks in the year and split between the number of flats that receive those services. As each scheme has its own set of costs, your weekly service charge relates directly to the services **you** receive.

## **When are service charges reviewed?**

We review service charges at the same time as your annual rent review on the first Monday of April each year.



## **What information is provided about service charges?**

When your service charges are reviewed, we will send every tenant who is affected a service charge statement. This statement sets out the costs incurred in the previous accounting period. It will also show the estimated costs for providing the services for the year ahead and how much your new weekly service charge will be.

## **How can you pay your service charges?**

As the service charge forms part of your normal weekly rent, it is included within the full rent figure you pay each week. You do not have to send a separate payment to cover service charges.

## **Giving feedback about the services you receive.**

Throughout the year there will be regular contact with tenants who receive additional services. We will seek your views on how good they are and take action to resolve any concerns you raise about them.

We will carry out a tenant survey twice a year which will measure tenant satisfaction with services, and this feedback will be used to decide whether any changes need to be made including whether to change companies or contractors who deliver services to you.

## **What if my circumstances change?**

If the correct procedure is followed we must repay any overpaid subsidy back to the Supporting People authority. This may place your account in arrears and any outstanding balance will need to be cleared as quickly as possible.

## **Tenant service standards**

To support this policy we have introduced the following Tenant Service Standards:

- ◆ We will provide information about our policy on our website, in tenant information leaflets and in the Tenants' Handbook.
- ◆ We will administer charges fairly, accurately and promptly, ensuring that your rent account has been charged correctly at all times.
- ◆ If you request more information about how your service charge is calculated we will provide it to you in a timely manner.
- ◆ We will provide information about the contractors who delivery services at each scheme and their attendance schedules if they are available.

## **Who do I contact?**

Depending on the type of enquiry you may contact either of the following:

If you have a query about the day-to-day provision of services please contact:

For Sheltered Housing tenants – contact your Scheme Manager

For general needs blocks of flats – contact your Neighbourhood Manager

If you have a query about charges on your rent account, or how your charge has been calculated, please contact:

The Rent & Business Support team on:

**01536 535647 or 534278 or 534362.**

Email: **[housingservices@kettering.gov.uk](mailto:housingservices@kettering.gov.uk)**