

Plymouth Community Homes



Service Charges Policy

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Version: 2

Approved by: Board on 6 February 2021

Definition

Service charges are paid by residents as part of, or in addition to, rent and / or ground rent to meet the cost of any services provided by Plymouth Community Homes or its agents.

Purpose

This policy outlines Plymouth Community Homes' approach to setting and collecting service charges.

For Service charges relating to Leaseholders, please also see the Leasehold management policy

Policy statement

Plymouth Community Homes policy on service charges sets out the principles by which we will operate.

- 1) Tenants, leaseholders, shared owners and freeholders should have equal access to all services, which will be provided to a good standard at an affordable and fair price.
- 2) We will offer the same range of services to all residents and agree with residents the actual services they wish to receive.
- 3) Everyone receiving services will be charged for those services including management and administration of the services bearing in mind some of the services are eligible for housing benefit.
- 4) We will aim to cover the costs of services provided but will not seek to make a surplus.
- 5) Changes in service charges will be clear and there will not be hidden charges.
- 6) New services will not be introduced without consultation including the consideration of the costs and charges for those services.

- 7) Fair price will be achieved through challenging costs and creating efficiencies thus providing value for money.
- 8) Where new developments use external management agents to maintain estates, and the charge is set by the agent, the service and charge will be monitored, in light of impact to PCH residents.
- 9) All practices on service charges will be compliant with the law and regulations

Implementation

The policy will be implemented through the service charge strategy which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Housing Support charges

Plymouth Community Homes currently provides Housing support services to tenants living in sheltered housing accommodation. Charges include, for example, the cost of the Sheltered Housing Officer and the emergency alarm service.

Housing support services will be reviewed as appropriate under the Supporting People legislation.

Review and monitoring

We will evaluate our policies, procedures and practices through a rolling review programme and in the light of any changes in the law and best practice, and proposals for changes recommended as necessary. The reviews will include equality impact assessments to ensure that all of our policies encourage and support our determination to promote equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

Plymouth Community Homes will ensure that opportunities are provided for tenants, leaseholders, shared owners and freeholders to engage in the process of reviewing and monitoring this policy.

Systems will be in place to monitor progress against agreed targets, and reported via the Customer Focus Committee to the Board on an annual basis.

Monitoring will include the following elements

- assessments of tenant satisfaction with what is being done, making sure that methods of doing so take into account the access needs of all;
- regular reports to the board who have overall responsibility for ensuring that the policy delivers continuous improvement and value for money

- systems that identify performance issues and monitor the progress of actions to address them.

Relevant legislation

Landlord and Tenant Acts 1985 and 1987, Housing and Regeneration Act 2008

This Policy is supported by the Service Charge Strategy and supplemented further by related PCH policies and procedures.
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Responsible officer: Director of Business Services & Development, Plymouth Community Homes
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