

Understanding some of your charges

This year, some of the charges you pay for services in your neighbourhood have increased. These are called **Estate Service Charges**. We want to help explain each charge and why there may have been an increase.

Estate Service Charges cover essential services that maintain the quality, safety, and cleanliness of your shared living environment. These charges may increase due to inflation, rising contractor costs, additional service requirements, or regulatory changes. Below is a breakdown of the key services covered by your estate service charge and why they may fluctuate over time.

Bulk rubbish collection

We use a contractor to collect and dispose of bulk rubbish, helping to keep your neighbourhood and communal areas clean, hygienic, safe, and free of obstructions. The cost of this service may rise if the volume of bulk waste increases, bins are misused or cross-contaminated, disposal regulations change, or contractor fees go up.

If you need to dispose of large household items such as furniture, mattresses, or appliances, you must use a bulk rubbish collection service. Leaving these items in communal areas can create hazards and attract pests, leading to additional cleaning and maintenance costs. When we know who the individual residents are leaving bulk rubbish, and where we have evidence, they will be recharged the costs of the rubbish collection. Please remember:

- Dispose of bulk rubbish correctly.
- Arrange for collection through local council services where available.
- Do not leave large items, or unwanted furniture, appliances, or other items in hallways, as this creates obstructions and can lead to increased service charges due to additional removal and cleaning efforts.
- Do not engage in fly tipping by leaving rubbish or bulky items in external communal areas. This is illegal, increases cleaning and removal costs, and may lead to higher service charges.
- Report any instances of fly-tipping so that the necessary actions can be taken to remove waste promptly and prevent further issues.

Pest control

Pests such as rodents, cockroaches, and insects can become a problem if rubbish is not collected regularly. We carry out pest control services where necessary to keep communal areas free from infestations. The cost of pest control is included in your Estate Service Charge and may vary based on the severity of infestations, inflation, contractor fees, and the level of treatment required (inside and outside of communal areas only).

We use a contractor for pest control, including treatments to prevent pests, regular routine inspections, and pest management in response to reported infestations. If infestations become severe, additional treatments may be required, which can impact service charges. The charge you pay includes;

- Routine inspections: Regular pest control checks are conducted to find and prevent potential infestations before they become a widespread issue.
- Preventative measures: These include sealing entry points, applying repellents, and making sure rubbish is being collected effectively.
- Emergency response: In cases of severe infestation, pest control teams are deployed within 24 hours to carry out the necessary treatments.
- Resident awareness: Guidance and information is shared with residents on how to help prevent pest infestations in your neighbourhood.

You can help prevent pest infestations. Please remember to:

- Keep communal areas and your home free from food waste and rubbish to prevent attracting pests.
- Report any signs of pests such as droppings, gnaw marks, or unusual odours to us immediately so we can address them promptly.
- Store food properly in sealed containers and avoid leaving food exposed in your home.
- Make sure bins are securely closed and waste is disposed of correctly.
- Avoid feeding birds or other wildlife near the estate, as this can attract rodents and other pests.
- If you notice gaps or cracks in walls or communal areas where pests may enter, report them so we can repair them.

Cleaning services

We employ contractors to carry out cleaning in the communal areas where you live, so they're hygienic and presentable. These services include stairwells, entrance halls, bin stores, and other shared areas.

Cleaning costs may rise due to higher contractor rates, increased cleaning frequency, or the need for emergency or deep cleaning services. The charge you pay includes:

- Regular cleaning: Communal areas are cleaned weekly, fortnightly, or monthly, depending on requirements in your building.
- Bin store maintenance: Communal bins are jet-washed quarterly to keep them clean and prevent pests.
- Graffiti removal: Offensive graffiti is removed by the end of the next working day, and non-offensive graffiti within 72 hours.
- Emergency cleaning: Where hazardous waste or bodily fluids are reported; we'll attend and clean it within 24 hours.

You can help keep communal areas clean. Please remember to:

- Dispose of rubbish properly and avoid leaving waste in shared spaces.
- Keep hallways clear and avoid blocking communal areas with personal belongings.
- Report any issues to us as soon as you can so we can get them cleared quickly.
- Encourage your neighbours to take responsibility for shared spaces and keep them clean.

Grounds maintenance

We employ contractors to make sure communal outdoor spaces are well-kept, safe, and visually appealing. This service covers green spaces, pathways, car parks, and other shared external areas.

Costs may rise due to higher contractor costs, additional grounds maintenance visits, or one off costs every few years.

- Regular maintenance: Grounds are maintained on a fortnightly schedule to keep them tidy and accessible.
- Grass cutting: Lawns are mowed between March and October with grass not exceeding 5cm in height.
- Litter picking: Contractors clear litter from communal areas during each visit, but litter can easily build up and be blown in from elsewhere.
- Hedge and shrubs: Hedges and shrubs are trimmed regularly to prevent them overgrowing and blocking pathways.
- Pathways: Car parks and pathways are swept and leaves are cleared during autumn.

You can help keep your neighbourhood tidy. Please remember to:

- Avoid littering and use bins to keep communal areas clean.
- Report overgrown hedges, grass, or damaged pathways so we can fix them.
- Do not park on grass verges, as this can cause damage. The cost of fixing this could increase your service charge.

Do you have any questions?

If you have any questions about your Estate Service Charges or the managing agent for your building, please contact us or visit our website for more information.

www.pahousing.co.uk