

INTRODUCING, AMENDING, AND REMOVING A SERVICE CHARGE POLICY

23 March 2022

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Date effective from:	23/03/2022
Policy approved by:	OMT
Review Date:	23/03/2025

EIA Required?	<input type="checkbox"/>
EIA Completed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Revision number:	3
Lead officer:	Rebecca Cullen

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A service charge is a cost payable by a tenant in situations where additional services are received for a property or area they reside in.
- 1.2 Payment of service charges are the responsibility of the tenant, however in some instances, service charges may be covered by Housing Benefit or housing element of Universal Credit, however in all cases the service charge payable by tenants must cover the real cost of providing the service.
- 1.3 Additional services that may incur a service charge include, but are not limited to are grounds maintenance, caretaking, building and window cleaning, sheltered scheme support, Carecall, Concierge services, heating, communal electricity, entry phones, TV aerials, Wifi, laundry, intensive housing management, sinking funds, management costs.
- 1.4 This policy explains the process of when and how service charges can be introduced, amended or removed.
- 1.5 Service charges can be applicable to tenants, owner-occupiers who have purchased their property via Right to Buy and shared ownership leaseholders. For the purpose of this policy, all shall be referred to as tenants.
- 1.6 This policy explains the process of when and how service charges can be introduced, amended or removed.

2 STRATEGIC LINKS

- 2.1 This policy links to the following;
 - Stockport Homes Group's (SHG) aim of 'being accountable to customers'.
 - Value for Money Strategy 2021-2024

3 KEY FEATURES

- 3.1 Consideration to introduce, amend the delivery of, or remove a service that incurs a service charge may be initiated by SHG or a tenant(s).
- 3.2 SHG will carry out formal consultation with tenants to ensure that the service being charged for is fit for purpose and considers the needs and expectations of those directly affected and / or the overall aims of Stockport Homes.
- 3.3 Tenants must be given written notice with specified timescales to consider the proposal and provide written feedback.

- 3.4 SHG will consider the outcomes of the consultation and make the decision as to whether the service will be introduced, amended or removed. All decisions will be approved by the Head of Housing Management and the Director of Operations
- 3.5 Where SHG introduces, amends or removes a service that incurs a service charge in situations where a negative response to consultation has been received from tenants, SHG must be able to demonstrate that any customer feedback received has been appropriately considered.
- 3.6 Most answers to service charge queries from customers can be found on our FAQs about services charges available on the Stockport Homes website.

4 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 An equality impact assessment (EIA) screening form has been carried out and a full EIA is not required.

5 OWNERSHIP, MONITORING & REVIEW

- 5.1 This policy is owned by the Operations Directorate. The policy will be monitored by the Operations Management Team and reviewed in line with the Policy Review Group and Operations Management Policy and Procedure Review schedule.