

Actual annual service charge

April 2024 to March 2025

SE16
SE1
SE5 SE26
SE17 SE19
SE21 SE23 SE15 SE1
SE22 SE24

Estimated and actual service charges

Service charges represent a share of our costs of providing and maintaining services to your block and estate. You are required to contribute towards these costs under the terms of your lease or, if you are a freeholder, your transfer of part.

Estimated service charges

Before the start of the financial year we send you a reasonable estimate of the amount we expect the service charges to be. You should pay these estimated charges in advance on 1 April, 1 July, 1 October and 1 January. Alternatively, we accept 12 monthly payments from April to March.

Actual service charges

After the end of the financial year, we prepare our final accounts with details of what was actually spent on providing the services to you. If we have overestimated the charges, you will receive a credit on your account. If we have underestimated the charges, you will receive an invoice for the additional cost(s).

The next billing run will take place in February 2026 for the estimates for the 2026/27 financial year. Freeholders are not sent estimated charges and are only invoiced after the end of our financial year once we have finalised the charges.

What my service charges cover

The communal services you receive vary according to where you live and the type of property you own. For example, if you live in a flat on an estate, you will receive more services than if you live in a flat within a street property. The services that apply to your home are shown on the breakdown sent with this leaflet. Where a service is provided to both your block and estate we have shown the charge for each. A list of the services that can be provided by the council is detailed on the following pages, together with an explanation of how we calculate the costs.

You may also be charged for major works to your block or estate, or your building if you own a converted flat in a house. If so, you will be consulted about the works before they start. You will be invoiced separately for these works.

How we make our calculation

The charge to you is based on the direct and indirect relevant costs to the council of providing each individual service.

All calculations have been based on the cost of providing the service to your block and estate except where stated in the following sections.

If you bought your home from the council, between April 2024 and March 2025, we have worked out the charges from the date of your purchase to 31 March 2025. If you bought your home from another leaseholder, it is your responsibility to liaise with the previous owner regarding the excess charge or credit.

For all services, except building insurance, we calculate the charges based on the size of your property. This assumes that each property has four basic rooms, which we call units – bathroom, kitchen, living room and hallway. We then add the number of bedrooms to come to a total number of units for each property.

For example, a one bedroom property has five units, while a three bedroom property has seven units. We apportion the cost of providing services to a block or estate by the total number of units to give a cost per unit. This is multiplied by the number of units in your property to come to your charge. This means that the owner of a three bedroom flat will pay more than the owner of a one bedroom flat in the same block.

Services provided

Care and upkeep

This charge is for the cleaning and upkeep of external and internal communal areas such as balconies, corridors and lifts as well as walkways on the estate. It is based on the hours the contractor's staff spent cleaning your block and estate. It may include the provision of refuse containers and delivery of refuse sacks and multi level collection for some blocks, which is separate from the refuse collection service paid through your council tax.

We have shown separate charges for your block and estate in the breakdown enclosed with this leaflet. Your resident services officer or Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) monitors the standard of cleaning and has regular meetings with the cleaning managers and residents to resolve any issues raised by the residents.

Estate grounds maintenance

This charge is for maintaining communal land on estates including flowerbeds and grassed areas. It may include a charge for the maintenance of trees on your estate. The charge is based on the hours the contractor's staff spend maintaining your estate. Your resident service officer or TMO monitors the performance of the contractor.

Lighting and electricity

This charge covers the maintenance of lamp columns and replacement of light bulbs on your block and estate. It may include the cost of electricity supplied to all the lighting, including entrance halls, balconies, stairwells, on the estate grounds and electrical testing.

TV aerial

This covers the provision of a communal television aerial to your block if it is provided and costs have been incurred.

Entryphone

Where provided, the door entryphone charge covers the cost of its repair and maintenance.

Heating

We provide heating and hot water to some blocks and houses. The heating charge is based on the cost of running the boiler house and plant rooms serving your property and includes a number of different elements:

- The amount of fuel used
- An annual contract sum for planned and preventative maintenance – making sure that all equipment is regularly serviced and in good condition
- Electricity to power the boiler and plant rooms
- Reactive repairs – repairs which fall outside the main contract. These will consist of repairs in the boiler house and mains pipework as well as repairs to heating and hot water systems in individual properties (non boiler repairs)
- Direct and indirect management costs – heating engineers, energy management and council officers who manage the district heating contract.

The costs of running the boiler and the plant linked to the boiler house are added to give a heating estate cost. This total amount is apportioned between each property receiving heating or hot water from that boiler house based on the calculation explained above.

We also take into consideration whether you receive full central heating, partial heating or hot water only by applying the following weighting factors to your property:

- Properties which receive full central heating and hot water are allocated a weighting factor of 4.52
- Properties which receive full central heating but no hot water are allocated a weighting factor of 3.52
- Properties which receive partial heating are allocated a weighting factor of 2.5
- Properties which receive hot water only are allocated a weighting factor of 1.

Our own heating engineers manage the heating contractors. For those properties with heat meters the gas element of your charge is based on your individual reading. Please refer to your heat meter statement for more details on how this is calculated.

Lifts

We look after your lifts, making sure they are in good repair. We use a contracted company to maintain the lifts and pay them a fixed amount each year. We review the lift servicing contract every two years. The current contract includes a monthly maintenance check and the contractor is paid for each call out. Lift contracts are made up of:

- Annual planned and preventative maintenance measures (PPM), to ensure all equipment is regularly serviced and is in good condition.
- Reactive repairs, relating to work which falls outside the PPM contract
- Electricity
- Lift monitoring (phones/alarms) and lift inspection costs, which are a requirement of our lift insurance policy
- Direct lift management and other overhead costs (lift monitoring engineers).

The first four costs are based on the lift(s) in your block, but the last cost is divided across all lifts in the borough using the bed weighting method explained above. Our own lift engineers monitor the performance of the lift contractor.

Security services

If your block benefits from additional security measures such as a concierge, CCTV or private security, then we will charge you a percentage of the costs of these services.

We have given a higher weighting, of 30 per cent, to blocks where a concierge is located, as they receive extra services which are not received by other blocks.

Responsive repairs

We may have to make repairs to the structure and communal parts of a building or repairs to the communal parts of an estate. This charge is calculated based on payments to our contractors for the repair. This charge will also include maintenance to any communal water tanks provided in the block and may include pest control measures taken in the block.

You have only been charged for repairs carried out on your own block or estate, based on the number of bedrooms in your property.

You now have instant access to your itemised service charge breakdown for 2024/25 by going to www.southwark.gov.uk/mysouthwark and logging into your service charge account. Alternatively you can go to www.southwark.gov.uk/actual-service-charge-breakdown and complete an e-form.

We have charged freeholders for any repairs on the estate and in some cases repairs to the block for shared elements.

You can request a repair to the external part of your block or to a communal area by sending an email to repairs@southwark.gov.uk, by accessing your MySouthwark account at www.southwark.gov.uk/mysouthwark or by calling 0800 952 4444. Any non-structural repairs to the internal parts of your home are your responsibility. For further information please go to www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/repairs.

Building insurance

Under the terms of your lease, we have to insure your flat and the building against a range of risks. The most cost effective way for us to do this is to arrange cover for all leasehold properties with a single insurer, which from 1 April 2023 is Protector. If you own a freehold, underlease house or shared equity house, you must arrange your own buildings insurance.

Since the new contract with Protector, your buildings insurance premium is calculated based on the sums insured and bedroom size.

The insurance covers all insurable risks and you can request a key facts policy summary and booklet giving more details. For further details of the current building insurance policy for home owners, including a summary of cover and how to request a claim form, please go to www.southwark.gov.uk/homeowners.

Overheads

Overheads are the costs, such as staff salary costs for council staff involved in managing communal services. They also include office and IT costs, transport costs, communications, enquiries and complaints.

An element for overheads is incorporated in the charge for the services listed, as it is an integral part of the cost of providing a service.

Administration fee

We charge you a fee for administering your service charge account. This amounts to 10 per cent of the total of your service charge as outlined in your lease (third schedule).

This fee covers costs over and above those already explained, including:

- Staffing and office costs of parts of the homeownership services that deal with service charges
- The calculation, billing and collection of service charges
- Providing information about your service charge account and general information on all aspects of home ownership
- The administrative and IT costs of calculating and sending you invoices, and accounting for payments made.

The administration fee is different to the direct and indirect management costs for individual services; these are covered under overheads, on page 8. Tenant management organisations (TMOs) have a different arrangement for payment of their administration costs.

Ground rent

If you own a flat or maisonette, you are required to pay a set annual fee for renting the ground from the council. This is set out in your lease.

Tenant management organisations (TMOs)

For properties managed by a TMO, charges are based on information provided by the TMO for services they provide. These services can include care and upkeep, grounds maintenance, estate lighting and repairs. The charges are based on the actual costs of providing these services to your block or estate for 2024/2025. Where the council provides a service, we have calculated the cost as explained in the previous sections. If you have a query or complaint regarding the services provided or managed by your TMO, you should raise these directly with the TMO.

Other information

Queries regarding your service charges

The service charges for 2024/25 have now been actualised. If you have any queries about your service charge account, please visit www.southwark.gov.uk/homeowners/your-service-charges. If you have a query about the standard of service provided to you, we may refer you to your service provider or TMO office.

You can raise a concern regarding the standard of service at any time by emailing your resident services officer using one of the addresses below, depending on your property's location – centralhousing@southwark.gov.uk, northhousing@southwark.gov.uk, southhousing@southwark.gov.uk

If your name or address is incorrect, you can amend this by going to www.southwark.gov.uk/homeownerschanges

MySouthwark service charge account

MySouthwark is our online portal where you can view and download:

- An itemised service charge breakdown for individual services for 2024/25
- A statement of account

You can also view:

- The total balance on your service charge account(s)
- The original amount and current balance of individual invoices
- Transactions against individual invoices

If you have not already done so then please sign up at www.southwark.gov.uk/mysouthwark and register your service charge account. If you need help please go to www.southwark.gov.uk/contact-us

Text messaging

We offer a text message facility so that we can text you with service charge account updates and other useful information.

We will never ask you for your personal or financial details via text message.

An example of the wording of the text message that you may receive from us is as follows: This is Southwark Council, Home Ownership Services. Please find attached correspondence from the Accounts Team.

Contact us

Home Ownership Services, PO Box 71994, London SE1P 5FW

Some of our services, such as service charge refunds and itemised breakdown requests are now only offered online or by writing to us at the address above. For further information visit www.southwark.gov.uk/contact-us.

You now have instant access to your itemised service charge breakdown for 2024/25 by going to www.southwark.gov.uk/mysouthwark and logging into your service charge account.

You can make an appointment to speak to us online or arrange a telephone call by going to www.southwark.gov.uk/your-service-charges.

We aim to provide a high quality service. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve, please contact Home Ownership Services.

Terms of payment

If you are a leaseholder, and you have received an invoice from us, under the terms of the lease payment is due within one month. If this presents a problem for you, please contact your Homeownership account officer or go to www.southwark.gov.uk/home-owners/your-service-charges/problems-paying

If you are a freeholder, under the terms of transfer of part payment is due within one month or we can agree a monthly instalment plan ending in September 2026. You can request this by going to www.southwark.gov.uk/pay-service-charges.

Service charge credit notes

If you have a credit note you can request a refund or transfer if all of the following apply:

- the credit balance is more than £100
- your service charge account is up to date with no outstanding invoices or balance
- you've kept all agreed payment plans up to date at the time you make your request

You can login to your MySouthwark service charge account to check your current balance. To request a refund or transfer go to www.southwark.gov.uk/servicechargerefund.

Service charges: Help and advice

The terms of your lease specify that you must pay service charges. If you fail to pay within the time limits defined, you will be in breach of the lease, and may ultimately risk losing your home. For this reason it is important that you let us know as soon as possible if you are having trouble paying your service charges or if there is any aspect of the charges that you do not understand.

Additional information on service charges

You can find information on the charges themselves in the leaflets that accompany the invoices, particularly:

- The ‘Tenants Rights and Obligations’ leaflet, which explains your responsibilities and rights as a leaseholder
- The leaflet ‘Annual Service Charge Actual’, details how the charges are broken down.
- If you're a leaseholder then you can find further information about leasehold ownership on the official government website by visiting www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-lease

If you are having trouble paying or wish to seek independent advice

If you are having trouble paying, it is important that you let us know. You may also get independent advice from a number of other sources listed overleaf.

Southwark Homeowner Services website has comprehensive information on homeownership. It is also a gateway to a wide range of online services such as access to your online account, paying your service charges and mysouthwark homeowner service.

 www.southwark.gov.uk/home-owners-services

Citizens Advice Southwark offer an independent advice service aimed specifically at leaseholders. They can also help you to claim Universal Credit.

 0800 144 8 444

 www.citizensadvice-southwark.org.uk

London Mutual Credit Union is a financial co-operative that exists for the benefit of our members who live and/or work in Southwark, Lambeth, Westminster or Camden.

 020 7787 0770

 www.creditunion.co.uk

 info@creditunion.co.uk

The Money Advice Service set up by the government to offer free and impartial advice.

 0800 138 7777

 www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

National Debtline offer free independent and confidential advice and are available to discuss options that may be available to you.

 0808 808 4000

 www.nationaldebtline.org

Step Change offers free debt and financial advice and mediation service

 0800 138 1111

 www.stepchange.org

The Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE) is a government funded body providing free advice on leasehold law.

 020 7832 2500

 www.lease-advice.org

The Local Support Team offers an income maximisation service for the vulnerable or disabled. The team are also responsible for administering the Hardship Fund and the Southwark Emergency Support Scheme, helping customers who are facing severe financial difficulties.

 020 7525 2434

 www.southwark.gov.uk/benefits-and-support

 localsupport@southwark.gov.uk

Gas servicing for leaseholders

It's essential that you service your boiler every year. If you let your property it is a legal requirement. You can take advantage of the servicing contract the council uses to maintain the boilers in our tenanted properties. If you are interested please contact us. Please note that you can only join the scheme if you have your own gas boiler.

What we are offering:

- A full service of your gas boiler
- Inspection of all other gas internal space heaters
- A Gas Safety Certificate will be issued once the boiler is certified safe by the Gas Safe registered engineer

The cost of the service is £120.67. Please note if your boiler is non-operational then the contractors will not be able to carry out a service.

How to apply for the scheme

For further information and to pay for the service please visit www.southwark.gov.uk/gas-servicing

If you do not want to join the scheme

You do not have to use our contractors to carry out your gas servicing, but it is essential that you have your boiler and other gas appliances serviced annually. We need proof that your boiler and gas appliances have been serviced so please send us a copy of your Home Owner Record or Gas Safety Certificate which is supplied by whoever carries out the service.

