



## Service Charge Policy

### Summary Statement

Quality services have a positive impact on the living environment of customers, clients and homeowners by making their homes and neighbourhoods **safe and pleasant places to live**. Home recognises the importance of delivering quality services; we encourage customer involvement in the provision of services and where possible we maximise opportunities for choice and influence.

We operate both fixed and variable service charges across our business that are set according to legal and regulatory guidelines and the terms of our tenure agreements. All new tenure agreements will include the right to vary the service charge.

We are committed to providing services that are fair, reasonable, affordable and deliver good **value for money**. Setting and collecting service charges effectively protects our income by passing on a fair cost and helps us to invest in reliable and fit-for-purpose housing services, now and in the future. To achieve this aim we will always seek to recover the full costs of the services we provide.

The Service Charge policy will help us deliver key elements of our **customer and client promise** through clear policy standards which set out our commitment to:

- Comply with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements for setting, presenting and collecting service charges
- Accommodate the terms of historic service charge arrangements unless otherwise agreed
- Ensure service charges represent good **value for money** through consultation and involvement in the procurement and **choice of products and services**, including those provided by third parties
- Design new housing schemes with the aim of minimising service charge costs where possible
- Apply service charges fairly
- Provide a clear statement of service charges annually
- Consult in an accessible manner over the cost and quality of services we provide, any plans to introduce or remove services and any anticipated increases above the Homes and Communities guideline limit for general needs customers
- Provide service charge training to help colleagues to understand the service charge process and enable them to explain it to customers and clients
- Apply fees for administration and for homeowners, including customers in Scotland subject to factoring arrangements, management costs

- For homeowners and customers in Scotland subject to factoring arrangements we
  - pass on a fair share of the cost of performing repairs
  - manage building or sinking funds to ensure there is sufficient funding to meet anticipated planned maintenance commitments
  - consult prior to non-emergency expenditure on major works including how the work is to be invoiced and paid for
  - notify and consult with customers as soon as possible after the completion of emergency works necessary to make the property safe

The full Service Charge Policy can be obtained by contacting the Policy Team on 0345 141 4663 or by emailing [policy@homegroup.org.uk](mailto:policy@homegroup.org.uk).