



This leaflet explains how the service charge part of your rent is calculated. If you would like it produced in large print, in Braille or spoken onto a CD, please tick this box  and send the leaflet back to Hexagon or telephone/email the Customer Services Centre. Please remember to include your name and address.

**French**

Cette brochure explique comment est calculée la partie service de votre location. Si vous désirez recevoir la traduction en français, veuillez cocher cette case  et renvoyer la brochure à Hexagon ou téléphoner/e-mail au Customer Services Centre. N'oubliez pas d'indiquer vos nom et adresse.

**Kurdish**

ئهم بڵاوکراوهیه باسی چۆنیهتی حیسابکردنی خهرجیی خزمهتگوزارییهکان، که بهشیکن له کریهت، دهکات، ئهگه دهتهوێت بۆ زمانی کوردی تهرجومه بکریت، تکایه ئیشارهتیک له ئهم بۆکسه بده  و بڵاوکراوهکه بنێروه بۆ هیکساگۆن-Hexagon یاخود تهلهفۆن/ئیمیل بکه بۆ Customer Services Centre (سهنتهری کاروباری بهکارهێنهرانی خزمهتگوزارییهکان). تکایه له یادت نهچیت که ناو و ئهدرهسی خۆت بنووسیت.

**Vietnamese**

Tờ tài liệu này giải thích tiền thuê nhà của quý vị được tính toán như thế nào. Nếu quý vị muốn được bản dịch bằng tiếng Việt, thì hãy đánh dấu kiểm vào ô vuông này , xong gửi tờ tài liệu này về cho Hexagon, hoặc là điện thoại / gửi điện thư cho Trung Tâm Dịch Vụ Khách Hàng. Hãy nhớ viết tên và địa chỉ của quý vị.

**Cantonese**

這份傳單解釋怎樣計算屬你租金部分的服務收費。如果你想得到這份傳單的中文翻譯，請在這個方格  畫勾示明此意，然後將傳單寄回給 Hexagon 房協會。請記著寫下你的姓名和地址。或者，你可以打電話或寄電郵給客戶服務中心，提出這個要求。

**Spanish**

Explica este folleto cómo se calcula la parte de **cargos de servicio** de su alquiler. Si le gustara que sea traducido en (insertar el idioma aquí), sirva-se marcar esta casilla  y devolver el folleto a Hexagon. Sirva-se no olvidar de darnos su nombre y direcciones. O, puede llamar por teléfono / enviar un correo-e al Servicio de Atención al Cliente.

**Tigrinya**

እዚ ወረቓት ናይ ኣገልግሎት ክፍሊት (ስርቢስ ቻርጅ) ክፋል ናይ ክራይ ገዛኹም ከመይ ከምዘጽብጽብ ይገልጽ፣ ናብ ቋንቋኹም ክትርጎመልኩም ትደልዩ እንተ-ኾንኩም (እትደልዩዎ ቋንቋ ኣብዚ ጽሑፍ) ነጺ ሳጹን  ምልክት ግበሩሉ። ነዚ ወረቓት ድማ ናብ ሂክሳጎን ስደዱዎ፣ በጃኹም ስምኩምን ኣድራሻኹምን ንዓና ምሃብ ኣይትረስቡ፣ ወይ ድማ ንዓማሂል ኣገልግሎት ማእከል ደውሉሎም/ ወይ ኣመይል ስደዱሎም፣

**Portuguese**

Este folheto explica como é calculada a parte da sua renda que corresponde às taxas de serviços. Se pretender obter estas informações traduzidas para , assinale esta caixa ' e envie o folheto para a Hexagon ou contacte o Centro de Serviços de Clientes por telefone ou e-mail. Certifique-se de que inclui o seu nome e endereço."

**Urdu**

اس لیف لیٹ میں یہ بتایا گیا ہے کہ آپ کے کرایے میں مروس چارج والے حصے کا حساب کتاب کیسے کیا جاتا ہے۔ اگر آپ کو اس کا ترجمہ اردو میں درکار ہو تو براہ کرم اس خانے  میں نشان لگا کر یہ لیف لیٹ ہمیں گن کو واپس کر دیں۔ براہ کرم ہمیں اپنا نام اور پتہ دینا مت بھولیں۔ یا آپ کسٹمر سروس سینٹر کو فون/ای میل کر سکتے ہیں۔

# Your area needs you!

Can you spare a few minutes each week?

Do you want to see the area around your home looking as good as it can?

Do you want to make a real difference to the services Hexagon provides?

If your answer to these questions is YES then why don't you become a Hexagon Estate Champion. Join an increasing group of resident volunteers who help us to provide the best possible services by:

- Telling us about any problems with the work of the cleaning/gardening contractor
- Letting us know about any graffiti, dumped rubbish, abandoned cars and so on
- Reporting any repairs needed to communal areas
- Joining Hexagon staff on a quarterly 'estate walkabout' and working with us to identify and resolve any problems

In return for your effort, we can provide training, social events, and free shopping vouchers.

If you are interested, please let us know by calling Catherine on **020 8768 7962** or emailing **cfoxwell@hexagon.org.uk**

Your Service Charge Explained

# Your Service Charge Explained

As part of the weekly rent charge, you pay a 'service charge'.

This leaflet explains what a service charge is, and how we work out how much it should be. It also includes some of the most frequently asked questions about service charges. Please note that it does not deal with how the actual rent is set – this is covered in a separate leaflet 'Your Rent Explained' available from our Customer Services Centre.

If after reading this leaflet you have further questions about how your service charge is calculated, please telephone our Customer Services Centre.

## What is a service charge?

The service charge is money that Hexagon collects to pay for specific services that we provide to, or immediately around, your home. **The actual services that are provided to you will vary, depending on where you live. The list of services provided to your home is shown in the service charge budget sent to you with your rent increase letter.** Examples of the services covered by a charge include

- Cleaning to communal (shared) areas – the hall, stairs and landings in a block of flats, for example
- Gardening and grounds maintenance to outside areas – looking after communal gardens or car parks, for example
- Cleaning to outdoor shared areas, such as bin sheds
- Road sweeping on 'non-adopted' roads (see note 1 below)
- Lighting to communal areas

- Refuse collection and bin hire (where we have to pay for this – see note 2 below)
- Window cleaning to communal areas
- Where your block has special equipment, we charge a 'usage charge' to cover the costs of the initial installation, day to day repairs and servicing, plus an amount for the future replacement cost. We levy usage charges for equipment such as;
  - door entry phone system
  - communal TV systems
  - fire detection/alarm systems
  - lifts
  - playground

We sometimes also have to arrange special services such as

- Removal of dumped bulky refuse – furniture, old fridges etc
- Removal of abandoned or untaxed vehicles

**These services have to be paid for through the service charge.**

**Note 1** – a non-adopted road is a road that the council do not own and for which they have not taken on responsibility. Hexagon has to pay for the upkeep of non-adopted roads including cleaning and lighting, and this charge is passed on via the service charge.

**Note 2** – Hexagon is charged by the council for the use of the large bins in blocks of flats. We have to pass this cost on via the service charge.

We can also – with the agreement of all the residents – carry out minor improvements to estates or communal areas and pay for these through the service charge. Examples of this could be

- Improving the landscaping/planting to communal gardens
- Setting up a parking permit scheme

There is also an administration charge – currently 11.5% of the cost of providing services – that Hexagon applies to cover its costs in setting up and providing the services. This charge also pays for any costs associated with the Estate Champion Scheme.

## How is the service charge calculated?

Every year in May, we estimate what the cost of each service is going to be in the year ahead. To help us do this, we review how much we have spent on providing services to your block/estate in the previous year, or over previous years.

We then take into account any new service charge expenditure that we expect to incur. We also add on the administration charge and usage charges if applicable.

This gives us a total 'budget' for your scheme or block for the year ahead – which starts in July.

We then divide this by the number of homes where the service is provided, and divide this by the number of weeks in the year.

This gives us your weekly service charge for the year ahead.

**Your service charge is 'fixed' which means it will not change during the year even if we actually spend more (or less) than we have budgeted for.**

## Will Housing Benefit pay the service charge?

All the service charges for communal services levied by Hexagon are eligible for Housing Benefit, so HB will pay your service charge if they pay your rent. They take into account the total weekly charge (rent plus service charge)

and use this figure to calculate benefit.

The only exception is that some 'improvements' as mentioned above may not be HB eligible. We would discuss this with the residents concerned when considering any improvement schemes.

## What if you don't use all the services provided?

We have to share the cost of the services amongst all the residents affected, so even if you don't make use of an actual service provided, you do still have to pay for it. An example of this might be if there is a lift in the block of flats where you live, but you always take the stairs – you still have to contribute to the upkeep of the lift.

## Why do some residents of the same estate pay a different service charge?

We try to calculate service charge budgets as accurately as possible, based on the actual services we provide to you. So for example, we calculate and set different service charges for houses and flats on the same estate (because the houses don't benefit from services such as the door entryphone system etc). Two blocks of flats on the same estate may have a different service charge if one block is bigger than the other, or if one block has a lift and the other doesn't, for example.

## If you think we have calculated your service charge incorrectly

If you do not agree with the service charge we have asked you to pay, please contact our Customer Services Centre about it in the first place. An adviser will go through the calculation with you in detail.

If you still disagree with the figure, please write to us, setting out where you think we have got the calculation wrong. Your letter will be treated as an informal complaint, and you will receive a reply within 15 working days.

## If you don't agree that we are actually providing the services for which we are charging you

If you are not satisfied with the quality of the services we provide, or you think we are not providing a service that you are being charged for, please speak to our Customer Services Centre about it in the first place. They will discuss your concerns and, if possible, agree with you what Hexagon can do to put it right. The most common complaint we get is about the quality of cleaning services, and about dumped rubbish.

If after a reasonable time you do not think the situation has improved, please write to us, setting out what you think we are not doing properly. Your letter will be treated as a Formal Complaint, and the matter will be reviewed by a senior officer. You will receive a reply within 15 working days.

## Service Charges Service Standards

Please note that these Service Standards are to do with the way we **charge** for services, not the services themselves. Service standards relating to the way we provide services are covered in a separate document, available from our Customer Services Centre.

1. Service charge budgets will be based as accurately as possible on past actual expenditure and best estimates of any known future expenditure.
2. Hexagon does not aim to make any surplus (profit) from service charges, although we do aim to cover our costs in providing the services through the Administration Charge.
3. A summary of the services provided and a breakdown of the budget will be provided to all residents who pay a service charge. This will be provided once a year, with the annual Notice of Rent Increase. Copies of the summaries are available at any time during the year on request.
4. Service charges are 'fixed' and will not be changed more than once a year. They will be reviewed once a year to ensure they are as accurate as possible.
5. If Hexagon fails to provide any of the services for which we are charging, after we have been told about the failure and given

reasonable time to put it right, we will refund you the relevant part of the service charge. The 'reasonable time' will vary depending on the circumstances but, for example, one week to restore communal lighting, or one month to improve the services of a cleaning contractor would be deemed reasonable. Any refunds will be paid into your rent account. Refunds will not be made where the service charge is paid directly by Housing Benefit.

6. We aim to deal with telephone enquiries about service charges on the spot, or within one day. We will reply to written or email enquiries within ten working days.
7. If you have a complaint about the service charge we are asking you to pay, or you think we have got something wrong, we will aim to resolve the matter informally within 15 working days. If you are not satisfied with the informal response, you can complain using our Complaints Procedure. Details of the Complaints Procedure are available from our Customer Services Centre or on our website.