



Your service charges – Frequently Asked Questions

What is a service charge?

Your service charge covers the cost of services provided to your scheme, neighbourhood and personal charges in relation to your home.

How is my charge calculated?

The charge is calculated annually based on the cost of services you receive for the previous year and estimated costs for the coming year.

What items are chargeable?

We provide a breakdown of your service charges with your budgets. This sets out what services are chargeable and what these cover. Please take a look at this and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Why have my service charges increased?

The economy is still challenging. Although costs for utilities have gone down this year, gas and electricity prices are higher than in previous years.

Whilst we always work to ensure the best value for money for our customers, wider pressures mean that the cost of delivering some services, for example grounds maintenance or providing fire safety equipment, have increased. In some cases, costs have increased for delivering essential building safety services and we have contacted customers separately to provide more detail around this.

Some customers may see an increase in charges for grounds maintenance, cleaning and waste management services. In 2023, we brought most of these inhouse with these moving over from contractors to our Onward Environmental team.

The cost of delivering these types of services have increased due to economic pressures beyond our control. For example, vehicle costs, equipment costs and tipping costs are all much higher than they were in previous years. But these costs would have been significantly higher if we had carried on using our external contractors rather than bringing services inhouse. We also provide services to external communal areas, for example maintaining car parks and external lighting. We now have more accurate data that captures the full costs of delivering these services and as a result in some cases you may see changes in your service charges in this area.

We understand that the cost of living continues to be a challenge and if you are concerned about increases, or would like to discuss these, please get in touch.

Why does my neighbour pay a different amount to me?

You only pay for the services that are provided directly to your house or in the building and/or area that you live. There may be rare circumstances where a neighbour pays a different amount.

An example of this might be where you pay for the maintenance of a communal garden, but your neighbour has their own garden. In some cases, for example with freehold estate charges, we cannot pass on a service charge.

What if I can't afford the increase?

If you are worried about your service charges, please contact our Customer Accounts and Money Advice Team at Homeownership-CustomerAccounts@onward.co.uk

Where can I find a schedule of the services I receive?

Our Onward Environmental team provides grounds maintenance, cleaning, window cleaning, and waste management service for most customers. Most internal communal areas are cleaned fortnightly, with some properties and sheltered schemes being cleaned more frequently. Window cleaning takes places usually every two months or as stated in the property agreement.

Grounds maintenance visits take place every two weeks. Litter picks are carried out on all visits. Grass is cut during the growing season, except in cases of extreme wet weather, and hedge and shrub reduction works are carried out from November to February. Some grassed areas, for example meadows, may be cut less frequently. You can find out more by visiting www.onward.co.uk/services/environmental-services/ or giving us a call.

For those customers that receive a service from Onward Environmental, we will send a newsletter which sets out the services that we provide and when you can expect to receive these. If you have any questions about your grounds maintenance service please get in touch..

Where can I find a breakdown of my service charges?

Service charges will vary across schemes. You can find details of your service charges and what these cover in the budgets that we send separately to leaseholders. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.