

Coastline housing



Guide to Service Charges

About us

Coastline Housing Ltd is an independent, not for profit Company working across Cornwall providing affordable homes for rent and sale. The Company was set up in 1998 as a private housing association when it was known as Kerrier Homes Trust Ltd.

Today it owns and manages over 4,000 homes in Cornwall, including around 100 leaseholds, of which many of the freeholds were formerly owned by Kerrier District Council.

Coastline Housing Ltd is also a registered Charity.

Using your personal information

Your details will be used to provide and administer the service you applied for. This includes the following purposes:

- To contact you for consultation
- To provide you with information regarding your service charges and other property related matters
- To enable us to comply with our legal and statutory obligations

It is important that we have up to date contact information for you and those living in your property

Your rights to access the information we hold

Subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 you have a right to obtain a copy of the information we hold on you both digitally and physically. This type of request is known as a 'Subject Access Request'. If you wish to make this type of request please contact us.




Further information

If you would like further information on anything in this guide, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01209 200200.

If you need this Guide in an alternative format, such as large print, Braille or in translation, please contact our Customer Services Team on 01209 200200.

How to contact us

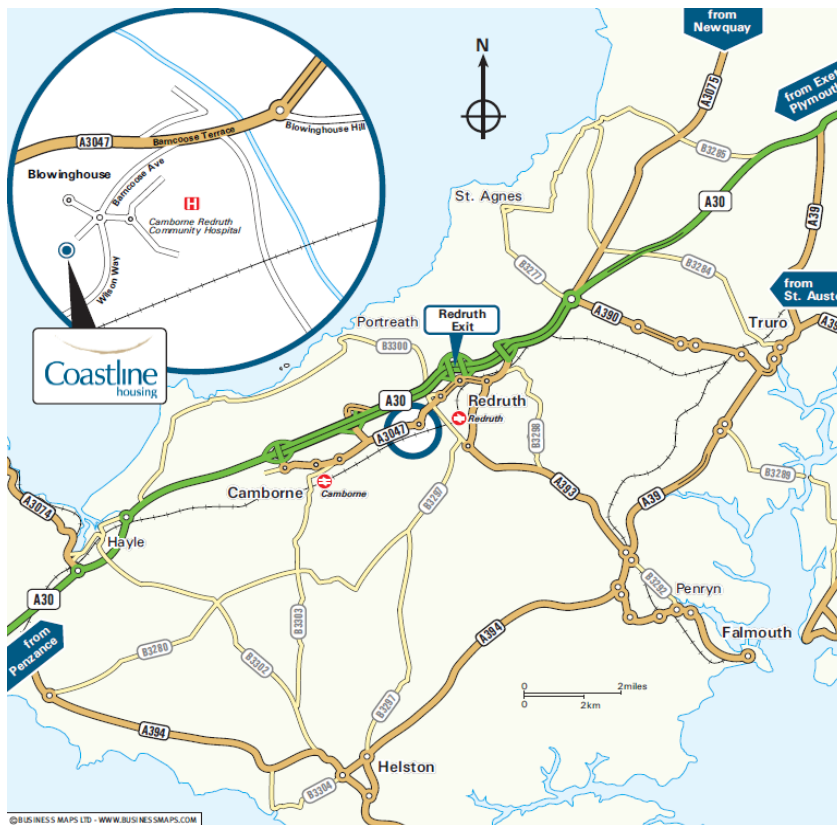
You can contact us by...	If you want to...
<p>Telephone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call our Customer Contact Centre on 01209 200200 between 8 am and 6 pm Monday to Friday. • Outside of these times calls will be forwarded to the out of hours service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to a customer service advisor • Report a repair that is our responsibility • Make an appointment with a member of the housing team • Report an emergency
<p>Email</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customerservices@coastlinehousing.co.uk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you e-mail us about any query our Customer Services Team will make sure that your message is passed on to the right person
<p>Letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastline Housing Ltd Coastline House 4 Barncoose Gateway Park Pool Redruth TR15 3RQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is our main office and registered address. Please use this address if you want to write to us about anything at all.
<p>Internet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our website address is www.coastlinehousing.co.uk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make general enquiries • Report repairs that are our responsibility • Make a complaint • Pay your service charge or cyclical charge

<p>Smart Mobile Phone/Tablet</p>  	<p>If you have either an Apple or Android device:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to the iTunes app store or Google Play and search for the free app 'My Landlord' • Start 'My Landlord' and enter the Quick Code 262 • Press 'Home Repairs' to use our dedicated mobile reporting section • Choose 'More Services' to see the same red button information available as seen on the television service
<p>Facebook</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head over to the Coastline Housing page – don't forget to like it while you are there • Just below the main photo click on the red button picture • You will be able to use the same service as available on digital TV and mobile

How to find us

If you would prefer to visit us in person, please contact us to make an appointment. Office opening hours are between 8.45 am and 5.15pm Monday to Friday with the exception of Bank Holidays.

Coastline House
4 Barncoose Gateway
Park
Pool
Redruth
TR15 3RQ



Contents

	Page No.
What are Service Charges?	6
What does my service charge cover?	6
How are service charges calculated?	7
What is the Management Fee?	7
What is a Sinking Fund?	8
Why do my neighbour and I pay different amounts?	8
I am a freeholder, why should I pay?	9
When do I receive the actual costs?	9
When do I settle the difference?	9
What if I am struggling to pay the charges?	9
Why have my charges gone up?	10
Which charges are eligible for Housing Benefit?	10
Who monitors the contracts?	10
I do not use the communal space or grounds, why should I pay?	10
What can I do if I do not believe my service charges are reasonable?	11
How often is cleaning carried out?	11
Does cleaning include the removal of bulk rubbish?	11
Why do I pay for communal electricity and street lighting charges?	12
Glossary	13

What are Service Charges?

Service charges cover the costs of managing, maintaining, repairing, insuring and providing services to residents beyond the benefit of occupying their own home. The law details that the charges must be 'reasonable' and the services provided must be of a 'reasonable standard'.

Service charges can include items such as communal cleaning, grounds maintenance, communal repairs, environmental maintenance, fire safety, communal utilities and replacement of items such as lifts. They also include management costs and any other expenses to the block or estate.

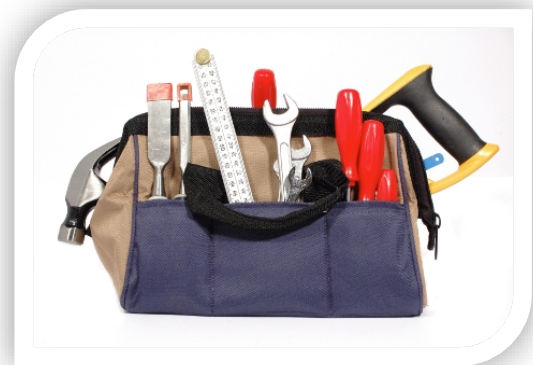
Leaseholders and shared owners pay their share of buildings insurance through the service charge; tenants pay this cost through their rent.

Coastline is committed to providing value for money and becoming more efficient wherever possible.

The aim of this booklet is to inform you how we manage service charges and answer the most common questions our customers ask us.

What does my service charge cover?

Services received can vary depending on the location, type and size of the property you live in. For example, if you live in a block with a lift you will receive higher service charges than those living in a low rise block without a lift. A breakdown of the services you are charged for is included on the service charge statements you receive in February and September. For more detail on each of these service charge items please see the glossary on page 13.



How are service charges calculated?

We charge you an amount each week, month or year (depending on your tenure type) that is our estimate of how much the services will cost for the year. We calculate this by various methods, such as looking at the costs to date in the current year and multiplying this over a 12 month period, using agreed contract costs or using a five year rolling average of actual costs. We also estimate any increase due to inflation and add in any increases or decreases in spending that we know about for the coming year. New estimated charges begin in April and we must give you 28 days' notice of any changes.

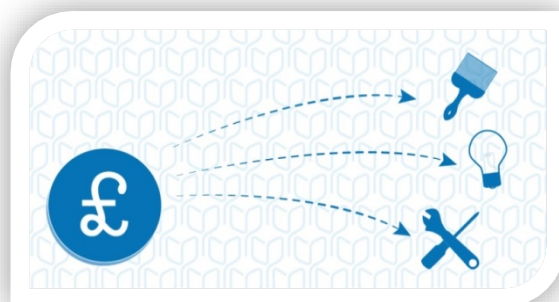
Some services are specific to certain tenures only, such as the Out of Hours Service which is available to tenants only. Other services are specific to blocks of flats only, such as Communal Area Management or Communal Cleaning. We work out the service charges per block or estate as appropriate. We then divide the cost between all those eligible properties benefiting from the service.

For example, if the total grounds maintenance costs for an estate were £2,000.00 and 100 houses were eligible to pay for the service then the cost would be apportioned equally:-

$£2,000.00 \div 100 \text{ properties} = £20.00 \text{ per property per year}$

What is the Management Fee?

Coastline is entitled to recover a Management Fee for organising and managing services and service charging. The fee is a fixed 15% of the total costs incurred and is in line with the fees charged by other similar organisations. This fee is essential for us to be able to administer service charges. We do not make a profit from this or any other service charge costs. Examples of the type of costs the Management Fee may cover can be found below:-



- Arranging for contractors
- Receiving and settling invoices
- Calculating service charges and producing statements
- Dealing with service charge related queries
- Recovering service charges
- Issuing consultation
- Staff specifically employed for service charge matters
- Developing and managing service charge IT systems
- Providing additional documentation upon request
- Employing auditors to audit our processes.

As the Management Fee is based on a fixed percentage of the total costs incurred it is calculated once all other charges have been identified and added to the total service charge payable.

For example, if your total service charges for the year were £300.00 your Management Fee would be calculated as follows:-

$£300.00 \times 15\% = £45.00$

$£300.00 + £45.00 = £345.00$ total to pay for the year

What is a Sinking Fund?

Sinking funds are usually for large communal items that have a relatively long lifespan, such as roads, roofs, lifts, and structures like bin stores. Rather than receiving a large bill when an item is replaced, which they may struggle to pay, customers pay into the fund each month or year. The payments are non-refundable if the customer moves out before the item is replaced. Sinking funds are increased annually in line with Coastline's budget forecasts and reviewed regularly to ensure that future replacement costs are covered.

Why do my neighbour and I pay different amounts?

The costs are charged to properties in a block or estate in a 'reasonable' way. All of our charges are based on an equal split between all properties we are able to charge. In some cases provision for the payment of service charges was not included when the properties

were sold by the Council and Kerrier Homes Trust. Because of this we are not legally able to pass the costs on to the owners of these properties.

I am a freeholder, why should I pay?

Your transfer document will specify which costs of maintaining the estate you must contribute to. If you do not have a transfer document please contact your solicitor, mortgage provider or the Land Registry direct to obtain a copy. Your tenure type does not determine whether you are liable to pay service charges.



All residents should contribute towards the cost of services where they benefit from their provision.

When do I receive the actual costs?

We will send you the actual costs in September each year, within six months of the end of our financial year. This letter will show you the estimates you were charged, the actual costs, and any difference between them.

When do I settle the difference?

If we have charged too little or too much the difference will be applied against the estimates for the next financial year, these will then increase or decrease accordingly.

What if I am struggling to pay the charges?

If you have difficulties in paying your service charges please contact us for confidential help and advice. We may be able to make an agreement to pay over a longer period of time or signpost you to Housing Benefit or other organisations that may be able to help. If you already receive Housing Benefit you should contact your local Housing Benefit department to ensure you are receiving the right level of benefit. If you are in receipt of Universal Credit you will need to contact the Department for Work and Pensions to discuss the housing element of your benefit.

Why have my charges gone up?

Some costs may have risen and there may be debit adjustments that have been applied for the previous financial year. If cost increases are forecast we will make an allowance for this in the estimate but if the changes happen in the middle of the year the actual costs may be higher than the estimated charges.

Which service charges are eligible for Housing Benefit?

Housing Benefit will cover most communal service charges that you pay but will not cover services for your individual property such as utility costs (gas, water, and electricity) or lifeline alarms and personal support charges. These costs would need to be paid by you.



Who monitors the contracts?

The Technical Services Team manages service and maintenance contracts and the Finance Team manages the utilities contracts. Coastline's Tenancy Management Team carries out inspections of the block and estate in partnership with involved residents. If you believe the standard of any works or services is poor please discuss your concerns with us so that we can take steps to rectify the issue.



I do not use the communal space or grounds, why should I pay?

The communal gardens, grounds and facilities are a shared area available to all residents and maintenance of these areas ensures the estates are kept clean and tidy. You are required to pay these charges whether you choose to use the

facilities or not. The appearance of an estate or block affects all properties regardless of tenure.

What can I do if I do not believe my service charges are reasonable?

Once you have received the summary of costs you can ask to review invoices and other documents that support the service charges. If after reviewing supporting documentation you remain concerned that the charges are not reasonable you can make an Official Complaint to Coastline. We take complaints very seriously and your concerns will be addressed in detail by senior members of staff and, if your complaint progresses to the later stages, members of the Board. You also have the right to apply to the First Tier Tribunal who will determine whether the charge is reasonable. Please be aware that the First Tier Tribunal does require payment of a fee before they will investigate. We would always encourage customers to provide us with the opportunity to resolve complaints in the first instance before taking their concerns to tribunal.

How often is cleaning carried out?

Communal Cleaning can be carried out once or twice a week depending on the size of the block, the amount of traffic, or requests made by residents. This varies across differing estates and developments. Some blocks have cleaning carried out fortnightly following requests from residents for a change to the standard weekly service.

Complexes such as Veor House, Trelawney Court, Hens Horn Court and Miners Court have a high level of traffic and therefore on occasion some tasks may be required daily as well as weekly. For further clarification on the frequency of cleaning in your block or estate please contact the Customer Service team who will be able to direct your enquiry to the appropriate member of staff.

Does cleaning include the removal of bulk rubbish?

Our cleaning contract does not include the removal of bulk rubbish or fly tipping. Residents are responsible for the appropriate disposal of bulk rubbish. Various schemes are available for the recycling of unwanted furniture and Cornwall Council provide a 'Bulky Waste Collection' service where large items can be collected and disposed of for a fee.



Where fly tipping does occur Coastline, as the landlord, is responsible for the collection and disposal of these items. The cost of this is recovered through the Environmental Maintenance charge. Where we can trace fly tipping to a specific household we will recharge the individual responsible and take further action as necessary.



Why do I pay for communal electricity and street lighting charges?

You are required to pay for your share of cost of the communal lighting provided to your block and/or estate.

The streetlights charge covers the electricity, including a standing charge, and maintenance of streetlights that are the responsibility of Coastline.

Service charge glossary

Item	Description
Bin Store Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the communal bin store.
Bollards Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the bollards.
Buildings Insurance	Payable by all shared owners and leaseholders to cover the insurance for the building they own or part own. A copy of the insurance policy is available on request.
Car Park Resurfacing Car Parking	Sinking fund for resurfacing of the car parking area.
Carpet Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the communal carpet.
CCTV Maintenance	The cost of repairing and accessing the CCTV system.
CCTV Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the CCTV system.
Cladding/Guttering/Roof Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the cladding, guttering and roof of the property.
Communal Area Management	This is a percentage of the Technical Services Team staffing costs for management of the communal areas of properties.
Communal Cleaning	Costs of the communal cleaning services such as vacuuming and cleaning of communal flooring, cleaning of communal surfaces and communal window cleaning
Communal External Window Cleaning Window Cleaning	Costs of the communal external window cleaning carried out by Coastline Services.
Communal Flooring	Sinking fund for replacement of the communal flooring.
Communal Internet	Ongoing costs of providing communal internet access.

Communal Painting	Sinking fund to cover the cost of the cyclical (usually 5 yearly) repainting of internal communal areas.
Communal Repairs Responsive Maintenance	The day-to-day repairs and maintenance work we carry out to the shared parts of your building. Although we carry out repairs with our own work force, Coastline Services, there are instances where we appoint specialist contractors to carry out the work.
Concierge Service	The cost of the Reception service provided at Miners Court.
Council Tax	Annual Council Tax bill for a particular property.
Cyclical Maintenance External Cyclical Maintenance External Cleaning	Sinking fund to cover the regular (usually 5 yearly) works carried out to a block such as pressure washing and repainting.
Digital Inclusion	Sinking fund for the provision of IT equipment for communal access to the Internet.
Door Entry Door Entry Maintenance Door Entry Repairs Door Entry/Hard Wired Alarm	Repairs to the door entry system on a block, including handsets with individual properties.
Door Entry Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the door entry system.
Electricity	Cost of the electricity usage for a particular block. Based on invoices we receive from the lowest contract we are able to obtain.
Electricity (Estate)	Cost of the electricity usage for a particular estate – this would usually apply to electricity costs associated with streetlights.
Environmental Maintenance	Covers, for example, pothole repair, graffiti clearance, removal of fly tipping, tree surgery and those other varied estate maintenance costs that are for communal areas.
Fence Maintenance	Cost of communal fence maintenance carried out on a particular estate each year.

Fence Replacement Fencing Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the communal fencing.
Fire Safety Fire Safety Maintenance	Annual servicing and maintenance costs carried out to a block or estate each year for fire safety equipment.
Fire Safety Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the fire safety equipment.
Furniture & Fittings	Sinking fund for replacement of the furniture and fittings.
Gas	Cost of the gas usage for a particular block/property. This is based on the invoices we receive.
Gate Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the communal gates.
Grounds Maintenance	Cost of the grounds maintenance works carried out to a specific area each year. The grounds maintenance maps are available on the Coastline website and show which roads and estates are included in each group. They also detail the work to be carried out, such as grass cutting, hedge trimming and weed spraying of hardstanding.
HM Phone System	Specific to the Homeless Service properties. This is the annual cost of the pre-programmed telephones installed in these properties.
IHM Monitoring System	The cost of the OK Each Day service.
Individual Stair Lift Maintenance	Annual servicing and maintenance costs for Coastline-owned stair lifts in individual customer's properties.
Intensive Housing Management	The staffing costs incurred in the provision of this service.
Intensive Housing Management (Night)	Cost of providing Homeless Service staff on call at night.
Internal Painting	Sinking fund for the cyclical (usually 5 yearly) re-painting of internal communal areas.
Kitchen & Bathroom Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of communal kitchen

	and bathrooms in Homeless Service properties.
Laundry	Costs of the provision and maintenance of communal laundry services. Includes hire of the machine as well as any repair costs.
Lift Maintenance Lift Servicing and Repair	Cost of the annual servicing and maintenance of communal lifts, including stair lifts. This also includes the lift phone line costs.
Lift Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the communal lift.
Maintenance Fee Management Company	Annual fee charged by the Management Company of a particular estate. This is similar to a service charge but is not controlled by Coastline; we do not set the charges.
Night Security	Cost of the Night Security service provided to Miners Court.
Out of Hours Service	Cost of providing the Coastline callout service.
Outdoor Furniture Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the outdoor furniture.
Play Equipment Maintenance	Servicing and maintenance costs for the play areas that Coastline is responsible for.
Private Sewerage	Cost for customers attached to the sewerage plants that Coastline owns and maintains. These customers only pay SWW for their water usage as they pay the sewerage element to Coastline.
Railings Maintenance	Annual cost of maintenance of railings on an estate.
Replacement Courtyard	Sinking fund for replacement of the courtyard.
Replacement Fencing/Road	Sinking fund for replacement of the communal fencing and un-adopted roads.
Replacement Flooring	Sinking fund for replacement of the communal flooring.
Replacement Path Replacement Road/Paving Road Replacement	Sinking fund for the eventual replacement of the communal paving and roads.
Replacement Railings	Sinking fund for replacement of the communal railings.

Replacement Retaining Wall Wall Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the communal retaining wall.
Roller Door Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the communal roller door.
Sewerage & Environmental	Cost of the sewerage usage for a particular block/property. This is based on the invoices we receive from South West Water.
Streetlights	Maintenance and electricity costs for street lighting.
Through Floor Lift	Annual servicing and maintenance costs for Coastline-owned through floor lifts in individual customer's properties.
TV Aerial TV Aerial Maintenance	TV aerial maintenance costs for individual blocks/estates.
TV Aerial Replacement	Sinking fund for replacement of the communal TV aerial.
TV Licence	TV licences for communal areas
Water Water Rates	Cost of the water usage for a particular block/property. This is based on the invoices we receive from South West Water.
Water Safety	Annual water safety testing costs.