

Leaseholder information

From Southampton City Council, for council leaseholders concerning your lease and how the council, as your Landlord, manages the block in which you live.

Leaseholder Information



Important information for Southampton City Council leaseholders

If you are a Southampton City Council leaseholder (of a residential property) you have bought the right to live in your property for a fixed number of years. This period is initially set at 125 years from the date of the first property sold in the block.

The lease you have signed is a binding contract that is legally enforceable. It contains both your rights and obligations as a leaseholder, and the council's rights and obligations as a freeholder.

Southampton City Council owns the building in which you live and is responsible for looking after the structure, exterior and common areas of the block.

As a leaseholder you have to pay the proportion stated in your lease of the council's costs of maintaining the block and providing services.

The council operates a forum which is held twice a year where leaseholders can network with other leaseholders from across the city. These meetings are in the evening and are advertised in the quarterly Tenants Link.

Service Charges

You are charged for the cost of services to your block. These are payable monthly and may cover the following:

- Routine repairs and maintenance
- Wardens, cleaning, and grounds maintenance
- Communal lighting and heating and lift operating
- Concierge and door entry system
- Buildings Insurance

We will send you an estimated bill for these charges and any others applied to your property every March.

We will send you a statement of the final charges in September each year when the actual costs are known for the previous year April to March. This will show the service charges for the year less the payments received from you for that period.

If your actual service charges are greater than the payments received from you, then the difference is payable to the council immediately.

If your actual service charges are less than the payments received from you, then you will be sent a refund for the difference or have your account credited with the amount.

If you wish to inspect the accounts, you have six months in which to do this.

Ground Rent

When you buy a leasehold flat or maisonette you also have to pay ground rent. This is currently £10 per annum if you hold a post 1986 lease and £25 per annum if you hold a pre 1986 lease. An annual invoice will be sent to you quoting your ground rent charges.

Maintaining Your Home

Under the terms of your lease you are responsible for the repair and maintenance of everything inside your flat. The council are responsible for repairing and maintaining the exterior of the building and any communal parts, including the grounds.

If you are unsure about who is responsible for a repair or have any other repair enquiry, please contact the repairs and maintenance department.

Gas Central Heating

If you pay for your heating within your service charges, your boilers and fires are covered by an annual gas servicing contract managed by the council. However this does not cover major repairs or replacements and you must make arrangements for these yourself.

It is possible to disconnect from the landlord system. If you would like information about this please contact the Leasehold Services Department.

If you have your own gas system it is your responsibility as an owner or landlord to ensure the safety of yourself and other residents by maintaining and servicing all gas appliances on a regular basis.

Electric and geothermal heating

There is no servicing but any repairs can be reported to the council's Repair Line.

The council is unable to grant permission for disconnection to the electric or geothermal heating due to the layout of the pipe work and wiring.

Structural alterations

Permission must be requested for any alterations affecting the structure of your home. This includes any changes to walls, doors, windows and putting in flues etc.

Pet policy

You must obtain our permission for keeping some pets. For further information please consult your lease or the Leasehold Services Section.

Fire doors

The front door to your home must meet the minimum safety requirement of being of a 'half hour' fire resistant door. You must ensure that it is kept in good condition. You need the council's permission before carrying out any changes to the structure of your front door.

Living in your home

You are responsible for the behaviour of any of the people and pets living in your home.

If you are renting out your home you are responsible for your tenants' behaviour.

You must not allow any behaviour that causes a nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to other residents. This includes smoking in communal areas, criminal damage, parking in areas where it is not permitted or is inconsiderate to others, or bothering other residents or visitors to the block.

Anti-social behaviour of any type constitutes a breach of your lease and can result in legal action being taken against you.

You can find further information about living in your home on the council's website at www.southampton.gov.uk/living/housing/anti-social-behaviour

Major works

Major works and the consultation procedure

Major works are large items of expenditure on the block such as roof replacements, windows, cladding, new lifts (where applicable), or even heating or landscaping.

When carrying out major works to your block (which cost over £250 per property) or entering into a long term agreement (over £100 per property per year) the council has to follow the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

This follows three stages:

NOTICE OF INTENTION – to explain what the agreement is for and why it is necessary. For smaller jobs the leaseholders can suggest a contractor, the council will then decide between different contractors.

NOTICE OF PROPOSALS – once 30 days have elapsed for comments and nominations the council then advises leaseholders of the contractors who have tendered for the work. You can view the tenders at this stage if you wish to do so.

AWARD OF CONTRACT/WORKS under a Long-Term Agreement – after another 30 days the council informs the leaseholders of the new contract/cost of works.

This is a brief description and full details can be obtained by contacting the Leasehold Services Department.

Major works Charges

During the final stage of the consultation procedure leaseholders are offered the facility of paying monthly in advance of the invoice being sent out.

Once the work has been completed an invoice is sent out and according to your lease the balance is payable within 28 days.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, please contact the Leasehold Services Section for advice.

The council can only carry out the work to your block if it has the income to do so. Therefore it is important that you pay your charges promptly.

Please note that the non-payment of service charges, major works or ground rent could affect the future sale of your property, or result in legal action being taken against you.

The freehold and the lease

Purchasing the freehold of your building

The Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 gives leaseholders the right to purchase their lease collectively.

In order to do so, the number of qualifying tenants must be more than two thirds of the total number of leaseholders in the block.

We recommend that you seek appropriate legal advice if you are considering doing so. For further information contact the Leasehold Services Department.

Extending your lease

You may request an extension to your lease by contacting the Leasehold Services Section.

If you wish to seek an extension to your lease you will be responsible for the cost of the extension, the survey fees and the legal fees.

Once the extension is granted, it will extend the remaining term of your lease by 90 years. You will no longer pay ground rent.

Buildings and contents insurance

Buildings Insurance

The council arranges the insurance of the building and this forms part of the service charges.

You are sent notification of the buildings insurance every year in April along with your estimated service charges. This document can be sent to your lender if required.

Contents Insurance

It is your responsibility to arrange and purchase insurance for your own contents and belongings. We advise that all leaseholders take out contents insurance.

The council does run an independent contents insurance scheme and for more information contact the Contents Insurance Department.

Contents insurance information can be found on the council's website at www.southampton.gov.uk/living/housing/tenants/moneymatters/homeinsurance

Useful phone numbers and email addresses

Leasehold Services, Service Charges and Accounts

Tel: 02380 834137/02380 2707
leasehold.accounts@southampton.gov.uk

Repairs and Maintenance

Tel: 08005 191919 (option 4)
housing.repairs@southampton.gov.uk

Ground Rent

Tel: 02380 834828
richard.poore@southampton.gov.uk

Buildings Insurance

Tel: 02380 833291
insurance@southampton.gov.uk

Contents Insurance

Tel: 02380 832149
rent.accounts@southampton.gov.uk

Tenant Participation Unit

Tel: 02380 833185
tenant.participation@southampton.gov.uk

Environmental Health

Tel: 02380 832531
environmental.Health@southampton.gov.uk

Gateway (General Enquiries)

Tel: 02380 833000
gateway@southampton.gov.uk

Right to buy and leasehold website www.Southampton.gov.uk/living/Housing/RTB

www.southampton.gov.uk

