



If you have any questions or need further advice on Service Charges please contact us on: **0300 111 2211** or **enquiries@choice-housing.org**

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Your Guide to Service Charges

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What do Service Charges cover?

A Service Charge is an additional charge to your basic rent which covers the cost of extra services. Service Charges are applied at all Choice Housing Ireland Limited developments which have communal facilities.

In our sheltered housing schemes, there are also charges for support provided to the tenants. Heating Charges are payable at schemes with a communal or shared heating system.

There are therefore three types of charges:

- Service Charges
- Support Charges
- Heating Charges

SERVICE CHARGES

Service Charges cover the costs of lighting, heating and cleaning of communal areas.

They also contribute to the costs of some staff employed in the housing scheme, including Cleaners and Maintenance Assistants.

Other facilities covered by the Service Charge include:

- Replacement of Fixtures in Communal areas (e.g. Laundry Equipment, Kitchen Equipment)
- Pest Control (Sheltered Accommodation only)
- Communal TV System
- Internal Painting and Floor Covering (Communal areas only)
- Grounds Maintenance

Your Service Charge may be eligible for payment through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

SUPPORT CHARGES

In Sheltered Housing a Support Charge is applied for the additional housing support service provided to assist those tenants.

Typically in sheltered housing schemes, these services will include:

- Telephones in Scheme Co-ordinator's Office, Payphones and the Universal Alarm Communication (UAC) which is linked to the 24 hour call service (if applicable)
- 24 hour emergency call system
- Intensive Housing Management
- Assistance with claiming benefits
- Help with organising social interaction
- A safe and secure environment
- Support Planning
- Assistance with minor repairs

Supporting People Payments

Support Charges are not eligible for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. However, all tenants in sheltered and supported housing who are in receipt of Housing Benefit will be entitled to Supporting People subsidy payments.

Supporting People payments are paid directly by the Housing Executive to Choice. Universal Credit claimants do not qualify for Supporting People subsidy payments.



HEATING CHARGES

Heating Charges are applied at schemes where Choice provides communal heating facilities to heat individual dwellings. The charges are based on the actual costs of fuel used in the previous year, with allowances adjusted to account for inflation and fluctuating fuel costs.

Heating Charges are not eligible for payment through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

Consultation

A service charge meeting will be held at all sheltered schemes to allow residents to meet with staff to ask any questions that they may have about service charges and how they have been calculated. All residents are welcome to attend these meetings. Detailed accounts of the previous year's expenditure are provided.

For residents living in non-sheltered accommodation, annual statements will be issued to each tenant and Housing Officers will provide more information on request.

