



Curo Service Charges

This leaflet explains the charges we make to cover the cost of providing services to you in shared areas.



What are service charges?

Service charges are payments made by our customers for the costs of providing services in shared areas.

Services provided to your home can differ depending on the type of property you live in or the area surrounding you.

Here are examples of some of the services that could be found in flats or houses:

Flat

- Cleaning
- Electricity
- Window cleaning
- Door entry
- Fire alarms
- Grounds maintenance

House

- Grounds maintenance
- Estate electricity
(estate lighting owned by Curo)

Our service charges are grouped into charges for:

- The **estate** your home is on
- The **block** your home is within
(a block is a set group of properties)
- The **internal** shared areas within your block

The service charge will also differ considerably between tenants and home owners. Those differences are explained in this leaflet.

The costs of these services are apportioned to your property reflecting the contribution required – this percentage (shown on your statement) will depend on factors like the total number of homes that share these services, and the property size. The following pages show an example statement.

Your tenancy, lease agreement or deed of conveyance tells you how we manage the costs of the services we provide.

How do we calculate your charge?

At the end of each financial year (running from April-March), we compare what we estimated it would cost to provide your services against the actual cost. We then make a charge or credit to the property to cover any difference. This adjustment applies to the property rather than to the resident.

Tenants

For our tenants, as set out in your tenancy agreement, we have a 3-year cycle of charges. We do this to stop large payments building up.

Year 1 – we will estimate what we think we are going to spend on services to your shared areas over the coming year. We charge these weekly alongside the rent charge. You will see details of the charges in the rent review at the start of the year.

Year 2 – we will create a new estimate for year 2, but we will then review what it actually cost in year 1 to provide those services and compare it against the year 1 estimate. If we have estimated too much, a credit is due back to you. If we have estimated too little, you'll need to pay something extra.

Year 3 – we will create a new estimate for year 3. Your charge this year is adjusted to repay any credit you are due, or to recover any additional amount you need to pay. This cycle continues all the time, so your charge in 2017/18 is made up of both estimated costs from 2017/18 and adjustments from 2015/16. We only make changes to your charge when we review your rent, so that the charge can be made and collected as part of your total rent

Tenants do not have to pay a service charge for things like road repairs, structural work to their home or buildings insurance. These costs are covered by Curo as the landlord and paid from your rent.

Shared owners

The same 3-year cycle described above applies for shared owners, with monthly rather than weekly contributions.

Shared owners do pay for roads not owned by Curo, structural works and buildings insurance as your lease agreement makes you the owner of the home. Curo does not pay a proportion of the services based on the equity owned as it is you as the owner who benefits from these services.

Leaseholders

Where Curo has a responsibility to maintain buildings the cost of doing so is recovered through the service charge. Generally we will not look after the inside of your home, but will be responsible for maintaining the structure and exterior of the building. This means that the service charge covers not only shared estate services, but also things like the day to day repair of the building, insurance and so on.

In addition, leaseholders may pay their share of the cost of major works needed to an estate or building. There are rules (known as Section 20 law) which ensure that you are consulted and get advance notice of such costs, and these are invoiced as soon as possible after works are completed. Occasionally shared owners and freehold owners may have to contribute to major works in the same way.

How do we calculate your charge? (cont...)

Managing your charge

Leaseholders are managed differently, in line with your individual lease agreement.

Year 1 – we will estimate what we think we are going to spend on services to your shared areas over the coming year. We generally send these annually in late February.

Year 2 - we will create a new estimate for year 2, but we will then review what it actually cost in year 1 to provide those services and compare it against the year 1 estimate. If we have estimated too much, a credit is due back to you. If we have estimated too little, we will request further payment from you. Rather than carrying this over, the adjustment required is usually credited or invoiced by the end of September as a lump sum.

Freeholders

Freeholders are customers who have exercised a Right to Buy or Right to Acquire on their house. If there is a service relating to the estate your home is in, we will say in the deed agreement that there is an ongoing obligation to contribute to that service.

The annual cycle of estimates and charges works in the same way as leaseholder charges.

Sinking Funds

For shared owners, leaseholders and freeholders, depending on your agreement we may ask for a contribution to a 'sinking fund'. As explained on the left, at times you will be expected to contribute towards major works. The sinking fund can be used to ensure that rather than making a one-off 30-day payment, you can spread the cost of the work out over the years before works takes place. When the major works are completed, the costs are initially offset against the money held on account. Any remaining money would then be passed on to you, while the fund again builds up in time for the next set of works.



Adding, removing, amending service provided

For tenants

Our tenancy agreements usually allow us to review and amend the services we provide after consulting with you. Amendments might include introducing a new service we feel is needed, removing a service which isn't working, or making a fundamental change to an existing service agreement.

For leaseholders



Leases are worded broadly to ensure effective management of shared areas, rather than specifying the services provided. Where possible we will treat our leasehold customers in much the same way as our tenants, letting you know in advance of any changes.

What will you receive and when?



Year 1

At the start of the financial year you will receive an estimate:

-  Tenants/shared owners
this will be in the form of a rent review
-  Leaseholders/freeholders
this will be in the form of an invoice



Payment of the estimate is based on your occupancy agreement but is paid during that financial year.

-  Tenants
usually charged weekly
-  Shared owners
usually charged monthly
-  Leaseholders
usually annually
-  Freeholders
usually annually



Year 2

At the end of the financial year, we'll review the estimates and within six months of the end of the financial year we send out a detailed statement of the actual costs:

-  Tenants/shared owners
statement will be for information only
-  Leaseholders/freeholders
statement will include an invoice/credit note for the difference

Universal Credit and Housing Benefit

Most of the services we provide to shared areas are eligible for assistance.

Services relating to your home, such as Council Tax, private utility supplies like gas and electricity, and satellite TV services are not eligible and have to be paid for by you.

You can see a full list of these services on our 'Service Charge Descriptions' document at www.curo-group.co.uk/servicecharges



Year 3

You will receive an estimate:



Tenants/shared owners this will include the addition of the adjustment for Year 1



Leaseholders/ Freeholders will have already been charged for the Year 1 adjustment the previous year, so you will just receive an invoice for Year 3

Need help paying?

If you need help paying your rent please contact us on **01225 366000**. It's better to contact us as soon as you start to get into difficulty rather than later when things have got out of hand.

How to pay



By Direct Debit

Contact us on 01225 366000 to arrange this or call into one of our offices.



At Local Shops

You can make payments anywhere that you see one of these symbols. Take your rent swipe card with you when using any of these services.



At the Post Office

Take your rent swipe card with you. If paying by cheque make it payable to 'Post Office' and write your rent reference number on the back.



By Standing Order

If you want to pay this way here are our bank details to set this up.

Account Name:

Curo Places Rent

Sort Code:

20-05-06

Account No:

00697958

Please put your tenancy number as the reference, if you don't have it give us a call on 01225 366000 and we'll look it up.



By Post (cheque only)

Send your payment by post to: Curo, The Maltings, River Place, Lower Bristol Road, Bath, BA2 1EP. Please make cheques payable to 'Curo Places Ltd.' and write your rent reference number and address on the back. Please do not post-date cheques.



By telephone

(24 hours)

Call 0844 557 8321. You'll need your rent swipe card and your credit or debit card when you make the call. This call is charged at the national rate.

(8am-8pm)

Contact us on 01225 366000.



Curo App

Download the Curo App and register to pay using your smartphone. You will need your rent swipe card and a credit or debit card.



Online

Log on to www.allpay.net and click on the 'make a payment' link. You can then register to pay your rent online. You will need your rent swipe card and a debit or credit card.

NEED HELP?

Curo

The Maltings
River Place
Lower Bristol Road
Bath BA2 1EP

www.curo-group.co.uk



Phone us 01225 366000



Email us servicecharges@curo-group.co.uk



@AskCuro



@curogroup



Live Chat via our website



Use On-line forms via our website

Visit us in Bath, Keynsham or Midsomer Norton
Please see website for addresses and opening hours

If you would like this information in an alternative
format please get in touch.