



A new way of working

The way the Council bills for major works has changed and all leaseholders should make sure that they understand how the new processes may affect them.

Any formal consultation carried out after the end of July 2011 may now be invoiced based on estimated charges as advised in your section 20 notice of proposals or, as some refer to them, notice of estimates, which is the document that tells individual leaseholders of their share of the costs for the intended works.

This is a significant change from previous years when invoices were issued quite some time after the works had been finished on site.

The decision to go forward with this new way of working was agreed by Cabinet decision in July and should see benefits to

leaseholders' engagement and satisfaction with the full major works process.

Many leaseholders will have been recently sent notices about the Council's plan to enter into a long-term agreement for

carrying out planned preventative maintenance works. This will be the largest programme so far where the new billing arrangements will come into effect. However, Decent Homes works and most responsive repairs projects will still have invoices issued after the works on site have been completed.

A range of payment options will be available to leaseholders depending on the size of the bill and their eligibility. The options include interest-free payment terms which will require signing up to a formal arrangement to pay.

The 'Paying for Major Works – Estimated Invoicing' leaflet will be included in the section 20 paperwork so that leaseholders can begin to prepare for the forthcoming bill.

Prompt payment in full attracts a 2.5% discount. However, late payment or delaying setting up a formal arrangement to pay, may result in interest being applied to the outstanding amount on a monthly basis.

Leaseholders in receipt of certain benefits may be able to get help with their major works costs from the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP).

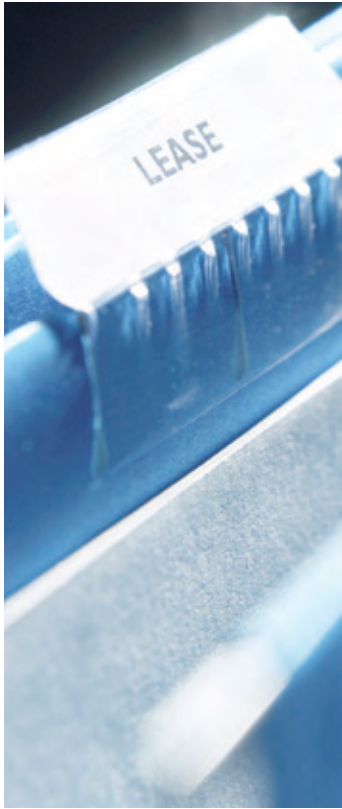
● Contact them direct for information and advice.

● **Welcome to the first edition of Your Leasehold.** We hope to bring you information useful to both new and current lessees; updates on services and notable dates for your calendar.

Please feel free to send your comments, queries and suggestions to us.
Best regards
Leasehold Services

IN THIS FIRST EDITION...

- Understanding your lease
- Your payments
- Resident participation - Get involved
- Gas safety



Interested in buying the freehold to your property?

There can be many advantages in owning the freehold to a block, with some ex-leaseholders reporting how good they feel having total control of management, repairs issues and what they spend for services.

While legislation makes provision for freehold enfranchisement, to give it its proper name, there are several hundred leaseholders in the Borough who live in buildings where there are no tenants, and so are ideally placed to consider the benefits.

A leaflet will be sent to those leaseholders specifically, but if you would like to know more, please contact the Home Buy Team (number on the reverse).

Your payments

Annual service charges are applied to your account as separate invoices in March (for everyone) and September. Each invoice has its own balance and unless a plan has been agreed needs to be paid individually. Usually this is only necessary if you have recently bought your property, fallen behind or missed an instalment.

Leaseholders should note that payments will always be allocated to the oldest debt first, then to interest and then to the most recent outstanding invoice.

Always check the statements sent to you twice a year to make sure that you are up to date or you can ask for a current one at any time.



SUBLETTING

Renting out your leasehold property is permitted in the lease but you must formally advise Legal Services that you have done so. Telling Council Tax or renting back to the Council is not the same as registering your sublet.

You will need to provide a copy of the tenancy agreement, your forwarding address, contact telephone numbers for yourself and the tenant(s), details of your managing agent (if you are using one) and pay the fee of £30.

Failure to register a sublet can affect your insurance. Legal Services' details are on the back page.

Service charges

The actual annual service charge invoice is sent out in September of each year if we have underestimated your Interim charges for the previous year.

● We currently ask for a separate payment for this bill but we'd like you to tell us if you would prefer us to add it to your current direct debit payments. Please let us know at the address overleaf.



ALTERATIONS

Making your home your castle is one of the joys of being a homeowner but some works require permission – and not just from Building Control or Planning.

Any works involving alterations to the structure, even if it's just moving a central heating flue, may require **Landlord's Consent** before the works are carried out.

If you have already carried out works without formal consent or you are not sure if you need it, contact Home Buy (number overleaf) for advice.



Let me in, please!!

While all leaseholders have the right of 'quiet enjoyment' of their demised premises, access must be given to the landlord in order to carry out repairs.

Repairs can be to any part of the building for which the landlord is responsible – including, in some instances, the front door.

● See Schedule 5 of the lease for more information.



Resident participation get involved

The Council is always interested in finding out residents' views and in providing ways for local people to participate in, and influence, local services.

With housing services now back in-house, the Council has been consulting on a Resident Involvement Strategy that

encourages more of the people affected by services to take part in the decision-making around their delivery.

● Please contact Ms Fiona Buist Tel: 020 8753 4532 if you would like to receive further information.

Buildings insurance claims



If the unexpected happens and you need to make a claim on your buildings insurance, please call **Aspen Insurance** on **0800 368 22 22**.

You should also make sure you report any repair that needs to be carried out to parts of the structure and fabric (e.g. roof leak, broken guttering) or to a Council tenanted property

(e.g. a leak from above) and keep note of the Works Order Ticket number, as this will be required by Aspen as part of the claim.

Claims should be submitted as quickly as possible after the incident.

Shhh!!!

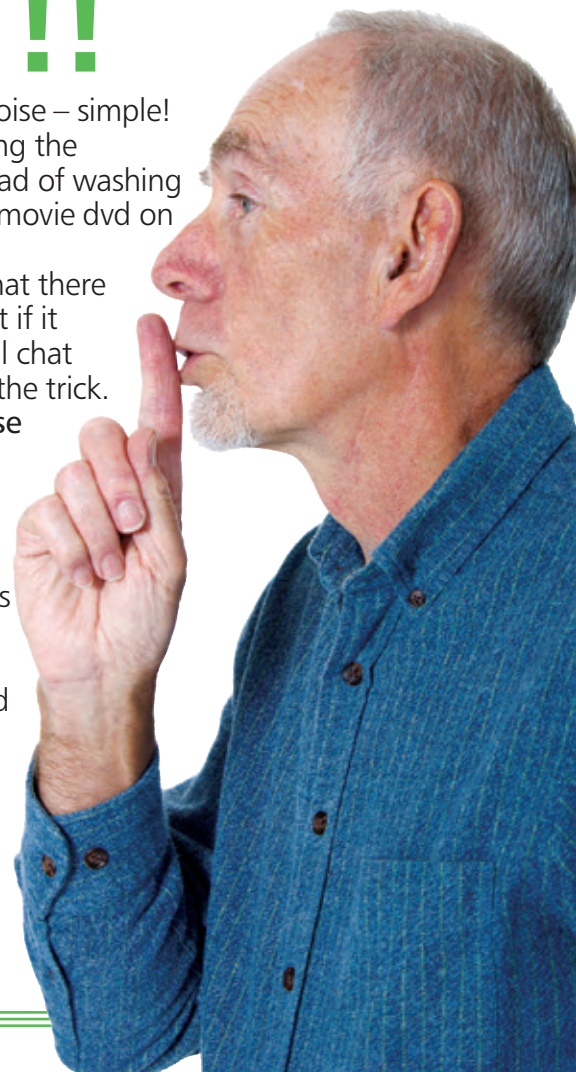
Day-to-day living generates noise – simple! Whether it's kids playing; doing the vacuuming or putting on a load of washing or watching the latest action movie dvd on your home theatre.

It's reasonable to expect that there is going to be some noise, but if it becomes an issue, an informal chat with your neighbour may do the trick.

A common source of noise problems is wooden or laminate flooring.

The lease does not allow for any other type of flooring than carpet (except in kitchens or bathrooms) so if there are noise complaints concerning the floor, you may be required to change the covering.

If you do experience noise nuisance issues that you are unable to resolve, please get in touch with your housing officer via the Customer Service Centre (number overleaf).





Everyone loves a warm and snug home during the winter months and checking your gas appliance is burning fuel safely will help guard against the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. This silent menace can kill in a matter of hours causing around 14 deaths a year.

We recommend that all leaseholders ensure that gas equipment is checked and certified as safe every 12 months, but if you are a landlord and sublet your home you have a legal duty to do so.

Using a carbon monoxide detector can give some peace of mind but does not replace a proper check.. Symptoms of early carbon monoxide poisoning can be hard to spot – tiredness, drowsiness, headache, nausea, chest and or stomach pains – so always seek urgent medical attention if you think you may have been affected.

Safety checks should only be carried out by a competent person who is Gas Safe registered and the engineer's ID card will show what work he or she can carry out. You can contact Gas Safe Register on 0800 408 5500. www.gassaferegister.co.uk

More information is available from the Health & Safety Executive who have produced the leaflet "Gas Appliances – get them checked – keep them safe". www.hse.gov.uk/pbns

Over 60s, chronically sick, disabled, deaf/hearing-impaired, blind/visually impaired may be able to join their gas supplier's Priority Service Register for a free annual safety check. Look on the back of your gas bill for contact details.

LEASEHOLDER FORUMS

Drop-in 6 to 7pm then
Main Meeting 7 to 8.30pm

- South Hammersmith 27 March 2012
- Hammersmith North 10 April 2012
- South Fulham 16 April 2012
- Fulham North 24 April 2012



USEFUL CONTACTS

**Sublet Registration
~ Change of
Address Copy of
Lease ~ Notices of
Charge and Transfer**

Contact: 020 8753 2723
Legal Services
Room 132
Town Hall,
King Street
London W6 9JU

**Communal and
Structural Repairs ~
Nuisance/Anti-Social
Behaviour
Estate/Communal
Rubbish Collection**

Contact: 0800 093 3132
Customer Service Centre

**Street Rubbish
Collection
~ Recycling Bulky
Items/Waste**

Contact: 020 8753 1100

**Block/Estate
Caretaking**

Contact: 0800 996 1751

**Council Tax
Street Parking
Permits**

Contact: 0800 803 1020

**Garage Project
Team**

Contact:
020 8753 1183
020 8753 1184

**Purchase Additional
Space - Alterations
Lease Extension -
Freehold Purchase**

Contact: 020 8753 6464
Home Buy
Ground Floor
145 King Street
London W6 9XY

**Planning and
Building Control**

Contact: 020 8753 1811
Environment Services
Town Hall Extension
King Street
London W6 9JU

**Aspen Buildings
Insurance**

Contact:
0800 368 22 22

**Evening/Weekend
Emergency Repairs**

Contact: 020 8748 8588

**Service Charge and
Major Works Billing,
Payments and
Income Recovery
Section 20 Notices
~ Pre-Sale Enquiries
Leaseholder Forums**

Contact: 0800 840 4501
(Option 2)
Leasehold Services
3rd Floor
145 King Street
London W6 9XY

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