

Your observations and our replies

Consultation C - The timeframe for charging leaseholders for services

Last updated: 10 February 2023



Received between – 18 November 2022 and 10 February 2023

Observation: *I don't have a particular view on the proposals being made, other than that they need to be managed better than the way the process has been managed in the past. I have been trying for over a year to get the information about my service charges that is showing on my online account to match what I have received by post and by speaking to staff at the Home Ownership Unit. The Home Ownership Unit have explained some of the issues with the online system and have done their best to explain the process of raising estimates and invoices, but it has been extremely confusing. To go onto my account and appear to be in arrears of four times the annual amount I had quoted in letters I had received earlier in the year was very unsettling - and I am a maths graduate who knows to look into these things.*

To also receive an invoice for an amount that was not explained (actually the arrears on the 2021/22 charges) was very confusing, when I was in the middle of trying to get things sorted out through the HMU. I understand that they don't know what mailings are being sent out as these go from the accounts department. So, although their names are put at the end of the letters for leaseholders to contact if we have questions, they have no idea what letters we may be referring to, so can't answer our queries. Honestly, it has been a fiasco and without a long phone call with one of the HMU, I would have been totally confused. Please can you make sure that your future systems are aligned in such a way that the public-facing staff know what is going on and are able to help us understand our accounts.

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Reply: We are aware that sometimes the information is not clear, and this leads to confusion for all parties - we want to get these right. We are also working on redesigning our IT systems to realign accounting processes for estimates, actuals, and annual charges. To ensure accuracy and transparency, the working group will help us make the decisions about the services to be provided, and the relevant costs to be charged. We know we have not always got it right, but we are hoping to move forward with this consultation with residents. You can join the working group by completing the [Housing Consultation](#) online form.

Received between – 29 October and 18 November 2022

Observation: *Will my service charges increase?*

Reply: The aim of the consultation is to identify all of the service charges provided, and the relevant costs. In some cases, where the services are not currently identified separately, it is likely that charges for services provided will be an additional charge to the rent. The working group will help us make the decisions about the services to be provided, and the relevant costs to be charged. You can join the working group by completing the [Housing Consultation](#) online form.