



NORTH STAR

Creating homes, building futures

YOUR
SERVICE
CHARGES
EXPLAINED

northstarhg.co.uk



What is a Service Charge?

If you live in a house or flat that has shared areas or facilities, a service charge is paid towards the cost of providing these services and repairs to these areas.

An example of a service charge would be the cleaning and maintenance of any communal areas such as an entrance lobby, stairwells, or lifts. Your share of the cost of these is included in the service charge.

A service charge can also include estate charges. These are charges for services provided to the estate on which your property is situated and can include items such as grounds maintenance.

Ongoing Service Charges

Service charges are estimated for the year based on the previous year's actual spend with an inflationary increase for our cleaning and grounds maintenance contracts. We put contracts in place to try and minimise any increase to costs and ensure that the services provided deliver value for money. We also consider any information we have about changes to services. We forecast as accurately as possible to keep any differences in your annual service charge to a minimum. In some areas such as utility bills it is not possible to forecast how much energy will be used or know how much will be spent.

What services are covered by the Service Charge?

North Star provides a wide range of services to the properties we manage. We provide certain services to make sure that properties are safe and others to maintain a good standard of living for our tenants. More details about the services we provide are shown on the next page including which company provides this service.

Administration Fee

North Star charges a fee which covers the costs we incur as a landlord in calculating and arranging the service charges associated with your property. Currently costs are calculated at 15% of the overall service charge. This is in line with the social housing sector.

Management Charge

For people living in supported accommodation where additional support staff are employed to help tenants, we make an additional charge called a management charge. This charge helps pay for those additional staff.

INFORMATION ON SOME OF NORTH STAR'S SERVICES



Landscaping

In 2020 we appointed Tivoli, formerly known as Greenfingers to carry out all landscaping work. We involved over 400 customers in this process. Grass cutting takes place through March – October. Other services may include pruning shrubs, weeding, maintaining hedges or hard surfaces.



Cleaning/Window Cleaning

Hi-spec are our current cleaning contractor. Windows are cleaned monthly and internal cleaning of communal areas varies between sites from fortnightly to monthly.



Fire Alarms, Fire Safety Equipment, Door Entry & CCTV

The safety of our customers is paramount. We have a legal obligation to service communal fire alarms and fire safety equipment. This work is carried out by Tees Fire Services and they are also responsible for repairing any faults or parts on the fire alarm systems.



Legionella

In some schemes North Star has an obligation to provide a legionella control and monitoring programme to ensure good water hygiene, including cleaning shower outlets and storage tanks. This service is provided by a company called Hydrochem.



Lift Servicing, Maintenance & Fire Alarm Testing

MMC Facility Management Ltd maintain, service & repair lifting equipment and undertake weekly fire alarm testing at some of our properties.



Concierge

Some blocks benefit from an onsite concierge service, provided by Northern Security Limited, whose role is to provide security within the communal areas of the block.



Utility Costs

These are costs for gas & electric to light & heat a communal area or to provide a communal electric supply. We have fixed prices with EDF Energy until March 2025.

What if I need more information?

If you require further information relating to your service charge, please contact your Housing Officer.

Help us to improve our services!

If you would like to have your say on how North Star delivers services to tenants, we have a wide range of opportunities to get involved. Please visit <https://www.northstarhg.co.uk/get-involved/its-your-voice/> to see more details and sign up for notifications. There are chances to enter prize draws and receive payments for taking part!



North Star

North Star brings together the skills, resources and values of Endeavour, Teesdale and Darlington Housing Associations.

GET IN TOUCH

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Please note that all calls to our Customer Services Team are monitored and recorded.

<https://www.northstarhg.co.uk/privacy-statement/>

Creative

Connected

Courageous