



## CARE HOUSING ASSOCIATION SERVICE CHARGES POLICY

<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>17/05/2022</b>
<b>Created By</b>	<b>Matthew Eddisford</b>
<b>Committee Review Date</b>	<b>16/05/2022</b>
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>December 2024</b>

### 1. Purpose

Service charges are levied for additional services which we provide to tenants in addition to normal landlord services, and which are not included within rent.

Services could include those:

- Necessary for good housing management.
- Provided to the tenants after consultation.
- Required to meet our legal and regulatory obligations.
- Which provide value for money.

The range of services provided will vary from property to property but may include:

- Communal area cleaning, decoration, maintenance and repair
- Grounds maintenance and landscaping
- Maintenance and repair of hoists and lifts
- Maintenance and repair of fire alarms and fire equipment
- Carpets and furnishings in communal areas
- Bedroom furniture
- Electrical and gas commitments
- White goods replacement
- Window cleaning
- Council tax

Consideration will be given to each individual tenant's needs when calculating service charges. Care Housing Association (Care) understands that costs may vary dependant on need and this will be reflected in the service charges. For example, if a tenant requires more robust and durable furniture, their service charge for furniture replacement would be higher.

### 2. Policy Statement

Care will provide services that meet the needs of our tenants, taking into consideration the characteristics of the property and/or scheme and its local environment.

The services will be set out to tenants at the commencement of the tenancy. Details of any changes to the services provided will be notified to those affected within 28 days.

Service charges will take into account the full cost of services provided, value for money and the provision for maintenance and replacement of equipment used in the supply of services. Care will seek to re-charge the actual cost of providing the services, although we reserve the right not to re-charge the full cost where the Board have considered and agreed that there is a sound reason not to do so. Such considerations will include the tenant, management and financial impact of each decision and the outcome of any consultation undertaken in relation to the services to which the charges relate. Care may also create a sinking fund for each property to meet anticipated future expenditure as well as unexpected expenditure which cannot be covered by insurance.

Service charges will be reviewed annually, and an increase/decrease notice sent to tenants in accordance with the terms of our Tenancy Agreements. Care will calculate the estimated cost for the forthcoming year on the basis of costs incurred in the previous year and predicted/known future spend.

Care will seek to:

- Ensure services charges are sufficient to meet the cost of delivery
- Ensure services are sufficient to meet need
- Enable new services, when required, to be provided
- Provide clear information about services delivered
- Maintain our properties to an appropriate standard
- Review charges annually using a fair and consistent approach
- Ensure appropriate consultation takes place with tenants
- Ensure service charges are eligible for housing benefit where possible

Care will use both fixed and variable service charges where appropriate.

### **3. Responsibility**

The designated officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of this policy will be the Chief Executive.

### **4. Equality and Diversity**

Care is committed to respecting diversity in all aspects of our work and we will not tolerate any form of discrimination.

We recognise that there is the potential for impact across the characteristics of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex or Sexual Orientation.

Where we are made aware of or identify customers with specific needs, we will be proactive in targeting our communication and support appropriately and consider any specific needs individually.

### **5. Commitment and Review**

Care will formally review this policy every three years, or more regularly as required. Care will consult with residents if material changes to this policy are proposed.