

Understanding some of your charges

Building service charges

This year, some of the charges you pay for items in your building have increased, these are called Building Services Charges. We wanted to help explain each charge and why there has been an increase.

Emergency lighting: servicing and repairs

If you have access to communal areas, you'll most likely find there is emergency lighting installed. This will illuminate escape routes if your building loses power, making sure the areas are safe to use. It's important that we maintain the system through regular servicing and carrying out repairs as required.

We use a contractor to do this; they inspect and test the lights every month and complete a full service annually. The testing ensures the system is working as it should be and involves dropping the power for a short period of time to see that the emergency back-up works. The service involves leaving the lights off for three hours to ensure the back-up is sufficient. We use different contractors depending on where you live, and the name of your contractor is listed below.

PA pays for a monthly service contract; this means we know what our costs are each month for the routine testing and servicing, and this is what we pass onto you. We also pay for any callouts if the lights stop working. Our aim is to get things working again within 4 hours for an emergency and final fix within 24 hours to keep you safe. The cost for this isn't included in our service contract and we don't know in advance how many callouts or repairs we'll get in a year.

2026/27 changes:

In the last couple of years, we have seen an increase in repairs needed with costs also going

up in line with inflation, hence there might be an increase in your service charge this year.

Contractors

Midlands – Fieldway

London and Southeast – Openview

Fire safety maintenance contract, repairs, and fire equipment

If you have access to communal areas, you'll most likely find there is fire servicing equipment installed. This could include – but is not limited to – fire alarm systems, sprinklers, or automatic opening vents. These have all been installed for your safety, and it's important that we maintain the systems through regular servicing and doing repairs as required.

We use our in-house team to complete testing at weekly, monthly, and quarterly intervals which includes alarm call point checks and checking the vents are opening automatically. We instruct a contractor to complete a full service every six months. They will check all the call points, make sure all battery backups work, and all detection functions correctly. Any faulty equipment will be replaced. We use different contractors depending on where you live, and the name of your contractor is listed below.

PA uses its own staff for the testing each month and a contractor for the servicing; this means we know what our costs are each month for the routine testing and servicing, and this is what we pass onto you. We also pay for any callouts if the equipment stops working. Our aim is to get things working again within 4 hours for an emergency and final fix within 24 hours to keep you safe. The cost for this isn't included in our service contract and we don't know in advance



how many callouts or repairs we'll get in a year. We know that things sometimes fail, and we've estimated what the costs of this might be. This might be higher than in recent years due to an increase in costs for parts and additional repairs needed.

2026/27 changes:

We have seen an increase in repairs needed as well as higher costs for parts over the last couple of years, not all of which have been passed on to residents. This does mean that you might see an increase this year though, however we always believe our costs to be fair.

Contractors

Midlands – Fieldway

London and Southeast – Openview

Lift servicing and repairs

If you live in a block, especially a large one, you will often find one or two lifts. We complete a safety check, called a LOLER twice a year and will also make sure that repairs are completed when the lift breaks.

We use a contractor to do this, and they inspect all parts of the lift to make sure it is safe to use. We also test the lift emergency call line once a week so in the event of the lift doors not opening, there is a way to call for help.

2026/27 changes:

We are aware that we have underbudgeted the true costs for this area in the last year but we also know that some of our lift breakdowns are due to vandalism so please make sure you report any issues so we can investigate and reduce costs going forward. We are also aware that some of our lifts break down more frequently than others and need replacing. We are doing that as part of an ongoing programme over the next few years.

Contractors – repairs

Midlands – Deltron

London and Southeast – Precision Lifts

Contractors – safety checks

Midlands and London and Southeast – Zurich

Solar panels servicing and repairs

If you live in a block, there might be solar panels installed on the roof. If working correctly, they help generate electricity and reduce your communal energy bills. Every two and a half years we check all our solar panels to ensure they are working correctly and produce as much energy as possible.

We use a contractor to check the panels themselves as well as the electrical installations linked to the solar panel system.

PA pays for each test and this is what we pass onto you. We also pay for any further work if there are issues with the panels. This might include cleaning, changing parts, and replacing wiring. The cost for this isn't included in our service contract and we don't know in advance how much work might be needed. We know that things sometimes fail, and we've estimated what the costs of this might be.

2026/27 changes:

Rather than charging a larger amount every third year, we are looking to spread the cost over three years to make this charge more manageable for you.

Contractors

We will be procuring a new contractor to make sure we get the best value for the service charges you pay.

Door access, intercom systems, gates, barriers, and shutters

If you live in a block, often there are door access and intercom systems installed. This means you use a key fob to get in and out of the building as well as being able to open doors remotely. Where there is automatic door access, you will often see mechanical arms on the communal doors which open and close these once you

use your key fob. Access systems might also be used for pedestrian gate as well as car park gates and shutters.

For gates, barriers, and shutters we also complete two servicing jobs and one risk assessment per year. This includes checking all parts and also doing force tests to make sure that the automatic closure is at the right speed and nobody can get trapped in the doors or gates.

2026/27 changes:

Over the last few years, we have seen an increase in repairs caused by vandalism. This occurs when the doors or shutters are being forced open and the mechanical arm or motor breaks. Unfortunately, this is reflected in your service charge if our contractors must come out more frequently to complete repairs.

If you notice any vandalism, please report this to us as we can try and identify individuals who are causing the damage. This will help to keep your costs down.

We have recently procured a new contractor for our gates, barriers, and shutters. They will be carrying an audit of our all equipment this year. We will be looking to make as many as we can more vandalism proof. So, with their help, we hope to see a reduction in costs in future years.

We also know that some of our intercom systems need replacing and we will be looking at a larger programme to do these.

Access Control and Intercom Contractors

Midlands – Access Control Solutions

London and Southeast – AVS Projects

Gates, barriers and shutters contractors

Midlands and London and Southeast – ABCA

You might also find that some of the services you paid for last year aren't listed on your statement this year. That is because some services don't need to be carried out every year and we only charge you when they're due.

Water risk assessments

Depending on the type of home you live in, the type of communal facilities available, and if you have any vulnerabilities, we carry out water risk assessments either every year or every other year. So, if you don't see a charge this year, you'll see it again next year.

Electrical Safety Check

We check the electrics in your home and communal areas every five years. You don't pay for the safety check in your flat, but there's a service charge for our communal checks. If you saw this on your service charge statement last year, then you won't see this charge again for a few years until the next electrical safety check is due.

Do you have any questions?

If you have any questions about your building service charges, please contact us or visit our website for more information.

www.pahousing.co.uk