

February 2019



# Improving leasehold services



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

We want to deliver an excellent service to our leaseholders, keeping you informed and involving you in the work being undertaken to your building and/or the estate in which you live.

We are introducing a number of changes which we hope will improve the quality of information and service you receive from us and help you to plan and budget for paying for major work.

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## Only by working together can we deliver the service you want and a service we can be proud of.

We will:

- develop the leaseholder panel into a leaseholders' forum, to become a representative consultative body for all changes in processes and service relating to leaseholders
- regularly ask leaseholders how we are doing and where we need to make improvements
- regularly work with leaseholders to review the changes outlined in this leaflet.

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## Making it easier for you to budget

We will:

- invoice for major work once the work has started on site, rather than billing on estimated charges. This means you will never receive a bill for work that is subsequently delayed
- involve leaseholders in the scrutiny of major work, both during and on completion of a project
- make major works' final invoices more in line with the estimated costs, by ensuring you never receive a final bill that is more than 20 per cent greater than the estimate
- offer 2.5 per cent discount on major works' bills if paid in full within the specified time period
- provide a breakdown of costs for major works charges once the project is completed
- review and widely publicise the payment options that we offer including any interest free, or deferred, payment plans for major works bills. This includes help for leaseholders facing significant financial hardship by allowing them to spread the cost of larger bills (over £10,000) for up to ten years (with interest chargeable).

## Involving you more in the planning of works

We will:

- improve our consultation with leaseholders on all planned and cyclical works programmes, including writing to leaseholders ahead of the legal consultation timescale to discuss with them the scope of the work
- inform leaseholders, as soon as possible, when urgent or emergency work is required, or has been carried out and we are seeking a contribution
- organise meetings for leaseholders, if they would like them, before work starts to their building
- produce and publish a seven-year plan for cyclical maintenance so that leaseholders can see when work is due to take place. This is now on our website and we are working towards publishing a seven-year programme for all major work
- set out at the start of any project how contracts are decided and how we ensure they offer value for money

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## Being clearer about service charges

We will:

- publicise more widely that we currently offer leaseholders the option to spread payment over 12 months
- review each part of the annual service charge, for example cleaning, electricity and communal repairs with leaseholder representatives
- review the itemised bills so they are clearer, explaining how costs have been calculated and why leaseholders are being charged.

## Working with you to resolve issues

We will:

- introduce a disputes process whereby if there are common concerns amongst leaseholders relating to a particular project these can be considered by a panel of senior Council officers
- respond to queries and disputes on major bills within four weeks. This gives us time to consult widely, for example with surveyors and contractors to ensure a full response.

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## Generally making things easier

We will:

- introduce a new style modern lease in plain English so it is easy to understand
- give our leaseholders the opportunity to swap their old lease for this new one. For those who choose not to, we will explain the main terms of their existing lease in plain English
- offer new leaseholders an appointment with us to run through their rights and responsibilities, and their obligations to us
- explore offering an informal lease extension, enabling leaseholders to save money as you would not have to serve a legal notice on the Council to extend your lease
- write to you and the other leaseholders if all of the flats in your building have been sold leasehold, there are no commercial properties and it is not situated on an estate to offer you the ability to purchase the freehold. This is in addition to any other legal rights you may have
- consider selling unused spaces to leaseholders, for example attics, to allow leaseholders to extend their homes
- explore the use of lease amendments such as transferring the responsibility for repairing or renewing your windows, which could allow leaseholders some control but does not undermine our ability to deliver a programme of works.

## Getting involved

It is only by working with you that we can improve our leaseholder services to meet your needs and requirements.

If you would like to be involved in the leaseholder forum that we are developing, please let us know.

If you don't feel able to commit to attending regular meetings, perhaps you would like to get involved in particular areas of work? Over the few months we're looking to improve our consultation process for major and cyclical work, as well as our payment plans and service charges.

There may be one-off meetings and focus groups you could attend and opportunities to comment on draft policies and information by email or post. If you would like to be involved, or you would like more information, please contact us and let us know which area of work you are interested in and how you would like to be involved:

**Home Ownership – Housing Management**  
**The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea**  
**292a Kensal Road**  
**London, W10 5BE**  
** 020 7605 6464**  
** [hm-homeownership@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:hm-homeownership@rbkc.gov.uk)**

Or visit our website:

** [www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-management/community-investment-membership](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-management/community-investment-membership)**

for more information about how we currently work with residents.



## English

Information from this document can be made available in alternative formats and in different languages. If you require further assistance please use the contact details below.

## Arabic

يمكن توفير المعلومات التي وردت في هذا المستند بصيغ بديلة ولغات أخرى. إذا كنت في حاجة إلى مزيد من المساعدة، الرجاء استخدام بيانات الاتصال الواردة أدناه.

## Farsi

اطلاعات حاوی در این مدارک به صورتهای دیگر و به زبانهای مختلف در دسترس می باشد. در صورت نیاز به کمک بیشتر لطفاً از جزئیات تماس ذکر شده در ذیل استفاده کنید.

## French

Les informations présentées dans ce document peuvent vous être fournies dans d'autres formats et d'autres langues. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide complémentaire, veuillez utiliser les coordonnées ci-dessous.

## Portuguese

A informação presente neste documento pode ser disponibilizada em formatos alternativos e em línguas diferentes. Se desejar mais assistência, use por favor os contactos fornecidos abaixo.

## Somali

Macluumaadka dokumentigan waxaa lagu heli karaa qaabab kale iyo luuqado kala duwan. Haddii aad u baahan tahay caawinaad intaas dhaafsiisan fadlan isticmaal xiriirka faahfaahinta hoose.

## Spanish

La información en este documento puede facilitarse en formatos alternativos y en diferentes idiomas. Si necesita más ayuda por favor utilice la siguiente información de contacto.