

Worried about high service charges?



Camden's financial support offer + other information and useful links

Dear {firstname}

As a leaseholder, you will have recently received from Camden a service charge demand for the estimated costs of day-to-day services in the year to 31 March 2024. For some, there is also a charge for major works. For many, the increased charges are alarming.

Energy and Major Works Costs - help from Camden

At the Leaseholders' Forum meeting on 14 March, Geraldine Littlechild (acting Head of Leaseholder Services) spoke about the assistance which Camden is offering to leaseholders to support them with the payment of the estimated heating charge and major works charge. In summary:

1. Leaseholders may pay the charge by 12 monthly instalments (extended from the usual 10 monthly payments).
2. Leaseholders may apply to have payment of the heating element of the estimated charge extended to a longer period, tailored to specific needs. Camden will require the leaseholder to provide details of their income and expenditure for review before deciding whether a longer repayment period will be offered.
3. Leaseholders who are on a communal heating system and who are also required to pay major works bills may apply to have the major works bill frozen, to be paid at a later time. Camden will require the leaseholder to provide details of their income and expenditure for review before deciding whether freezing a major works bill will be offered.
4. Camden will conduct a mid-year review of heating costs to see if payments might be reduced.
5. Any leaseholder who wishes to seek this support should apply to leaseholderservices@camden.gov.uk as soon as possible.

A leaseholder does not need to be residing in their property to benefit from this support.

Gas and electricity prices

A building may require **bulk gas** for the communal heating boiler and **electricity** to power lifts, door entry, lighting to common areas, boiler controls and pumps.

This is communal energy and is quite separate from the domestic gas and electricity which a leaseholder might use and pay for themselves.

Camden has various types of communal systems supplying heating, hot water or cooking gas or combinations of these.

Bulk gas has seen a huge price hike for the contract period October 2022 to September 2023. The new gas price increased by 318% (from 2.04 to 8.53 pence per kilowatt hour - that's four times more expensive). The daily standing charge increased by 76%. The Government's EBRS support scheme does appear to shave 1.5p/kWh off this figure, from October to March. But the new EBDS support package from April 2023 is less generous and does not appear to offer us any price reduction.

Electricity prices have also increased for the same period. Typically the new unit price per kilowatt hour is up by 69% and the daily standing charge up by 23%. Camden has explained that delivered p/kWh unit rates for electricity are made up of the cost of the energy itself (wholesale costs), plus the pass through of third-party costs, such as regulated network charges (the cost of transporting energy) and green levies. The capped element of the Government's Energy Business Relief Scheme (EBRS) applies only to the energy component of delivered prices and not the third-party costs (the cap also doesn't apply to any standing charge elements of the bill). Camden's purchased electricity rate for the current period is approximately 17p/kWh, which is below the Government cap of 21.1 p/kWh, so is not eligible for relief under EBRS. Third-party costs make up the remaining 10 p/kWh.

Year ending 31 March 2024 (estimated charges recently billed)

Camden only knows the energy unit prices for the first 6 months and Laser has provided no estimate for October 2023 to March 2024. Camden says it has estimated the energy cost for year ending March 2024 based on the expected 2022/23 outturn and adding 50%. Someone has commented on the Discussion Board that having modelled the prices it appears that Camden has got its estimated charge about right - unless Laser manages to buy the fuel under the new contracts from October 2023 at significantly lower prices.

Year ending 31 March 2023 (estimated charges billed in March 2022)

For year ending 31 March 2023 the energy price was partly set in October 2021 (for March 2022 - September 2022) and partly set in October 2022 (October 2022 to March 2023). Camden knew the unit prices for the first 6 months but had to estimate those for the second period. Camden now knows the likely actual cost and has used this as a basis for estimating the charge from April 2023 to March 2024. Working these numbers back, it appears likely that many leaseholders will face a hefty additional charge for heating when in September this year Camden bills the actual costs for year ending 31 March 2023.

Heat meters

Understandably, leaseholders with communal heating want more control over their energy costs. At the CLF meeting on 14 March, Geraldine Littlechild said that some estates are due to move from communal heating to individual meters. A list and timescale will be

made available.

The Camden Service Charge Guide says about heat meters:

"The Heat Network (Metering and Billing) Regulations 2014 requires all homes on a district heating network to have a heat meter where it is possible. We have been rolling out a long-term programme to install heat meters in our homes in line with these Regulations and our Camden Plan to reduce carbon emissions in the borough. A heat meter accurately measures the energy you use to heat your home and the hot water you use. It also measures how much energy is used by the estate."

Camden has a helpful Service Charge Guide on its website.
Camden has a website page about Energy Costs on this link:

[Camden Service Charge Guide](#)

[Camden Energy Costs](#)

CLF Guide to Gas Pricing

~~The Forum published in 2016 a Guide (updated February 2017) which looks at gas supply and transmission history in Camden and explains why making costs comparisons is tricky. Worth a read, if you have the time. link below.~~

Discussion Board Posts

Leaseholder Services

Camden's recent service charge demand in particular high energy costs - has been a hot topic on our website Discussion Board (runs to 2 pages already - open the link below).

Register to keep updated or to post yourself (see the link at the bottom).

~~CLF Demand - Gas Pricing (2016)~~
A number of teams in Leaseholder Services, carrying out a wide range of tasks relating to the management of Camden's leasehold properties.

Recently improved website information is here on this link:

[Service Charges Discussion](#)

[Leaseholder Services pages on Camden website](#)

CLF Meeting 14 March

CLF Representatives met on 14 March for the quarterly meeting and 28 leaseholders joined online. See below for the link to the online chat screenshots.

The meeting received a presentation from the acting Head of Leaseholder Services and from the Head of Repairs Operations. Minutes were taken by the Committee Officer and will be published soon (see link below).

[Teams meeting chat](#)

[14 March minutes \(when issued\)](#)

For your diary/planner:

The next CLF meeting (Annual) will be a hybrid at 7pm on Tuesday 30 May 2023.

Camden Resident Account

Leaseholder Services has published a Camden Account Guide for leaseholders. See the link below. In their personal account, leaseholders can see a breakdown of day-to-day charges and cost details for major works/ major repairs.

[Guide to the Camden Account](#)

[Open the Camden Account](#)

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