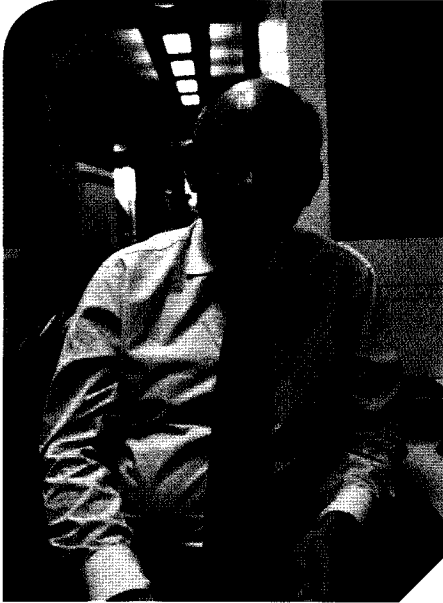


HomeOwnerNews



- Keeping you informed -

March 2017



Welcome

We have now calculated the estimated service charges for 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, please see the enclosed bill.

This newsletter aims to keep you up-to-date on issues that affect you as a leaseholder.

In this edition, we cover a range of topics including leasehold surgeries, new service contracts and the future procurement of gas and electricity. I hope you find this newsletter helpful and informative. If you have any suggestions for improvements

or topics you would like to see covered in future editions, please email leaseholderservices@camden.gov.uk

Finally, I would like to thank those leaseholders who gave their feedback on the new long term contracts for estate cleaning and grounds maintenance. You can read more about the new contracts inside.

Mike Edmunds
Head of Leaseholder Services

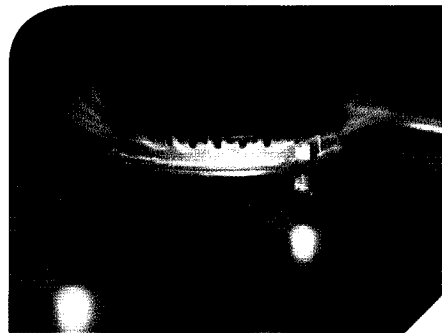
Future procurement of gas and electricity

Camden is one of 180 public sector organisations, including 21 London borough councils, which currently purchase gas and electricity through the LASER public sector buying organisation.

By combining gas and electricity needed by 180 organisations, we are able to purchase energy for Camden's housing, schools and corporate estates at cheaper wholesale rates.

Doing this means entering into long term energy contracts. This also means we must consult you about the new contracts. However, the way that energy is purchased through a buying

organisation means that there is no practical way of consulting leaseholders before starting the fuel buying process. We will therefore aim to get a consultation exemption, so we can continue to access energy at wholesale prices. You will still receive information about the energy contracts and a notice of our intentions will be issued to all of you. We will provide further updates in this newsletter and on our website, and we will keep the leasehold forum fully informed and involved in the process.



Alterations to your home

We have recently updated the 'making improvements to your home' guide on our website. Here you will find information on seeking consent for changes to your property, the valuation and purchase of additional space and what you need to do to make an application.



 **Find out more**

camden.gov.uk/leaseholders

camden.gov.uk/leaseholders

 **Camden**

New services contracts from 1 April 2017

Estate cleansing services.

Veolia ES (UK) will take over estate cleaning services. The new contract is set to last for eight years and covers waste and recycling collections from estates, including the clearance of bulky items. You can read more about this in the article below.

Grounds maintenance

It is proposed that Quadron Services Limited will take over grounds maintenance. The contract will last for five years and includes the management

of all council estate grounds and communal areas including maintenance, inspection and planting. They will also oversee grass cutting, and the maintenance of hedges and flower beds.

Tree services

City Suburban Tree Surgeons Ltd will take over tree services, the contract term will be for five years. The new contract includes the management of all council owned trees, including those on estates. They will oversee the inspection, maintenance

and planting of trees, as well as the removal of dead, dying and unsuitable trees.

For full details of these services along with pricing schedules, visit camden.gov.uk/leaseholders



Recycling and rubbish collections are changing

From 1 April we are changing the way we manage our recycling and rubbish, and looking at more efficient ways to keep Camden clean and tidy.

Recycling and food waste will continue to be collected from all homes weekly. The majority of households, particularly those who receive communal collections, will also continue to have their rubbish collected at least once a week.

We know that 85% of an average rubbish bag in Camden is recyclable but currently residents only recycle 25%. To encourage recycling, those who have space to store their rubbish over two weeks (around a third of residents) will move to fortnightly rubbish collections. We'll also offer additional collections, including a special recycling collection service for household

items such as batteries, small electrical items (hairdryers, kettles, toasters) and textiles, so we encourage everyone to look at what they are throwing away to see if they can recycle more.

Estates cleansing and fines for fly-tipping

We are currently finalising plans to make estate cleansing more efficient. This could involve changing the frequency depending on local need, allowing us to focus resources where they are needed most.

In addition, we have introduced £200 fines for fly-tipping. Repeat offenders face penalties of up to £50,000.

For more information and to find out how your household will be affected, visit camden.gov.uk/recyclingandrubbish or call 020 7974 2202.



Leasehold surgeries

If you have any questions about your service charges that you'd like to discuss, why not attend one of our leaseholder surgeries? Appointments are available between 5.30pm and 7.15pm. Contact us at leaseholderservices@camden.gov.uk to reserve your slot and avoid disappointment.

The next surgery dates are:

Tuesday 21 March

Tuesday 23 May

Tuesday 27 June

Tuesday 12 September

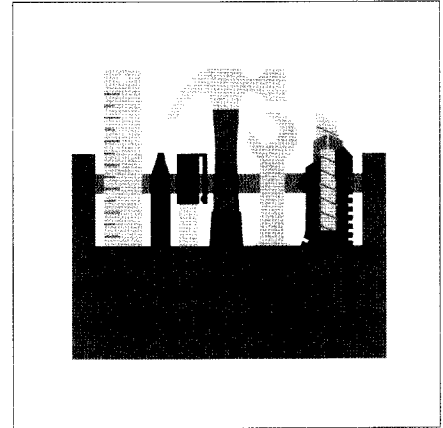
View communal repairs online

Did you know that you can view communal repair costs online? Visit camden.gov.uk/rechargeablerepairs for more information.

We upload information about each quarter's repairs on the following dates:

- April - June is uploaded by the end of October
- July - Sept is uploaded by the end of December
- October - December is uploaded by the end of February

- January - March is uploaded by the end of May



Key leaseholder scheme

We have introduced a Key Leaseholder Scheme (KLS) to engage with you about service charges.

KLS members have the opportunity to raise questions about the communal block and estate repairs that we intend to charge for, before the actual adjustment is issued in September. Our aim is to reduce the number of queries to be investigated and credits to be applied to accounts after the actual adjustment has been issued.

If you'd like to join the KLS and get details of rechargeable repairs please contact leaseholder services at leaseholderservices@camden.gov.uk or call us on 020 7974 3559.

The Camden Account

Almost 58% of leaseholders are now using the online Camden Account. If you haven't tried it yet, registering is easy and you can:

- ✦ View a statement of your account
- ✦ View summary of your estimated annual service charges
- ✦ View a detailed breakdown of your actual service charges from 2011/12 onwards, including rechargeable repairs and other supporting costs
- ✦ View the Service Charge Guide
- ✦ Make a one off payment or set up an instalment plan
- ✦ Update your contact details and correspondence address
- ✦ Register your sublet details and pay subletting fees
- ✦ Report or track a housing repair

You can also register to manage other services via the Camden Account such as Council Tax, Parking and Rubbish and Recycling. To register for the Camden Account please visit camden.gov.uk/camdenaccount

We are currently working on improving information about major works charges available to leaseholders via the Camden Account. A comprehensive breakdown of major works costs will be available once the 2016-17 accounts have been issued in September.



Our ward housing managers have put together some tips on being a good neighbour based on some of the common problems that arise. If you are subletting your property please pass this information on to your managing agent and tenants.

Disposing of rubbish

Rubbish can attract pests and create hazards. It is therefore important to dispose of your refuse in an appropriate manner. To avoid recharges, please do not block the bin chutes with large boxes, these items should be taken to the bin room and placed directly in the bin or refuse sack.

Noise

Our most frequent complaints are about noise. Please be considerate to neighbours and the local community.

Your refurbishments

Before you carry out any refurbishment works to your property, you will need to get agreement from the tenancy services team. You will also need to make your own waste removal arrangements as we do not allow skips anywhere on the estate.

Please do not remove internal doors to create open plan properties without building control advice. The hallway of your property contributes to fire safety, especially where the entrance door opens directly onto a communal staircase.

Street properties

If you live in a street property that doesn't receive a caretaking service you and your neighbours will have to take turns to clean the communal areas.'

Fire safety

In the event of a fire, clutter in communal areas can slow down your exit and prevent fire services tackling the blaze. Keep stairwells, balconies and hallways clear from bikes, prams and other similar hazards.

Please also remember that you cannot smoke in communal areas.

Maintenance

Ignoring leaks can cause damage to your home and your neighbours' home and can lead to claims for compensation. If you have a leak, please attend to it quickly.

Emergency contacts

Do you have an emergency contact on file? If not, please let us know your emergency contact. This can be a relative or a friend. This helps to reduce response times in the event of an emergency.

It is also important to let us know of any changes to your property. For example if your property is managed by a lettings agency or sublet to new tenants.