



Housing and Technical Resources

Property Services

**Information for owner-occupiers in high-rise flats
(Hamilton edition)**

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Our commitment

This publication gives you information you may need to enjoy your home and make full use of the services that we provide. It aims to answer many of the commonly asked questions which you may have and provides information about your rights and responsibilities as a resident.

You have the right to expect a high-quality service from us. We will try to maintain and improve the level of service we provide so that you can enjoy your home

We want to make sure that the services we provide

- are effective and respond to your needs
- are high quality and provide choice
- are good value and
- take account of your views and suggestions for improvement

Our service standards and commitments to you

If you send us a letter or email:

- Our written response will be in Plain English
- We will acknowledge your correspondence within three working days
- We will respond to all letters within 10 working days
- If we cannot provide a full response within this time, we will tell you when you should receive an answer
- Our response will be in the format that suits you, including in Braille, on audio tape, in a different font size and in different languages

If you visit the office

- Staff will be polite and respectful
- All staff will display name badges
- You will not have to wait more than 10 minutes
- If you have an appointment, we will see you on time. If there is a delay, we will explain why.
- You can ask for a private interview room

If you phone the office

- we will answer your call within five rings
- staff will give you their name and department
- if the person answering your call cannot help you, they will transfer you to the appropriate person

If we visit your home

- Staff will show identification and will introduce themselves.
- Staff will be polite.
- Staff will show respect for your home.
- Where possible, we will arrange home visits at a time that is convenient for you, especially if you cannot leave your home.

Repairs and Factoring

The Council acts as Factor for your block and a number of services are provided for the benefit of all residents.

If repairs are required to the shared or common parts of the block, the Council will arrange for the works to be undertaken. There are existing provisions within the deeds for your block which allow the Factor to instruct any necessary repair or maintenance works.

The Council will consult with owners about any major improvement works.

Upon completion of the works, the Council acting as Factor will organise payments to the contractor.

The deed of conditions for your block explains how we will divide the cost of repairs and also confirms which parts of the block are classed as shared or 'common'.

We normally divide factoring charges by the total number of properties in the block and we will pay our share for any Council owned properties.

The Council will:

- process all common repair enquires
- provide assistance and advice
- Divide the cost of repair works equally
- issue repair bills to owners
- issue factoring account statements to owners every three months
- issue a notice of the factoring charges every year

If you have any questions in relation to your factoring or general block charges, you can get more details from the Factoring Team on 0303 123 1012.

Your responsibilities

As a homeowner, you are responsible for repairing and maintaining your property. As an owner-occupier of a flat, you have other rights and responsibilities, which are shared equally with the other co-owners in your building.

Each co-owner is responsible for payment of a share of the cost of any repair or maintenance works to the shared or common parts of the building, any shared facilities and management services, as set out in the title deeds. Each co-owner must contribute to the cost of these services.

As an owner, you must:

- Make sure that your property is covered by an appropriate building insurance policy. You can contact the Council for advice on Buildings Insurance by telephoning 0303 123 1012
- Pay factoring fee, common repair and general block charges. Any bill issued will provide information about the various payment options available for you
- As a homeowner in South Lanarkshire, you are responsible for paying Council Tax. You may be able to claim a reduction for a single person or a reduced payment if you are claiming benefits. You can get more advice and information from your local area services office on 0303 123 1012
- Not cause, or allow other people including household members to cause, nuisance to other occupiers, neighbours or people living in the community. If you have concerns about Anti-Social Behaviour please contact your housing officer initially on 0303 123 1012

How often do you pay?

Factoring and common repair charges

At the beginning of each new financial year, we will confirm the factoring fee and general block charges for the coming year. The annual notification letters are normally sent out in February.

You must pay your quarterly charges by the end of March, June, September, and December each year.

As well as the quarterly fixed factoring fee charges, we will also charge you a share of the cost of any repair works involving the shared or common parts of the block.

If a common repair is undertaken, you may receive a bill for your share of the costs. Payment of any common repair charges is expected within 14 days.

Major improvement works

The Council will issue invoices for major work, for example to replace lifts or repairs to the roof and structure of the building. If any grant assistance is available in connection with a programme of major works, owners may be able to apply. Once the work has been completed, the owners invoice would normally be reduced by the amount of any grant assistance awarded.

Owners concerned about arrears or wishing to discuss what flexible payment options are available can contact us on 0303 123 1013.

Buildings Insurance

For those owners on the block Buildings Insurance policy provided by the Council, premiums are issued once a year which provides cover from 1 October to 30 September.

We will usually issue bills after the beginning of October each year.

For advice about Buildings Insurance please call us on 0303 123 1012.

Council Tax

Council Tax payments are due in 10 monthly instalments between April and January on the 1st of the month.

If you are behind with your Council Tax payments please contact us on 0303 123 1011. Our staff can give you advice and help you set up a repayment plan.

Contact us on 0303 123 1011 to ask about a Council Tax Reduction.

Money Matters advice

Our Money Matters service can give you independent and confidential advice if you are facing debt problems. Money Matters provides a free impartial service.

Our money advisors will review your finances, prioritise your debts and complete a financial statement which includes details of your income and expenditure. We will then give you advice on what options are suitable for you and provide you with the necessary information to help you make a decision. Based on your decision, we will contact your creditors and negotiate with them on your behalf.

For the Hamilton area, our Money Matters Advice Team can be contacted on 0303 123 1008.

Caretaking Service (Hamilton edition)

Residents in our multi storey blocks benefit from a caretaking service which is organised and managed by Housing. The information provided below explains what you should expect from your Caretaker and the services provided.

Normal hours of duty

Hamilton

Monday to Thursday from 8am to 4.30pm.

Friday 8am to 4pm.

Saturday and Sunday – A general inspection carried out during morning period 8am to 12 pm. Bins rotated, foyers and lifts swept and washed.

Emergency contact number

0800 242024

(This number is only for emergency use outwith the working hours listed above.)

Duties

Caretakers have a number of regular duties, which include the following:

- Maintaining the shared areas and the immediate area surrounding the block in a safe and tidy condition
- Washing, sweeping and keeping clean all shared areas of the property, including the foyer, bin chute rooms, glass panels, windows and doors in shared areas, the inside of lifts, stairways, landings, drying areas, laundry areas, storage and bin areas
- Contacting your local housing office should residents or their family, friends or visitors cause a nuisance or disturbance in the block
- Regularly checking that fire regulations are being followed and that equipment is fit for purpose
- Working closely with residents groups if there is one. Advice about setting up a residents group is available by contacting your local housing office on 0303 123 1012
- Taking appropriate action and/or referring residents concerns to the local housing services office
- Regularly inspecting the shared areas to identify repair and maintenance issues or possible dangers

- Making sure the entrance and shared areas (including the office and plant room) are secure
- Operating the 24-hour closed circuit television system (where appropriate)
- Reporting lift faults and breakdowns, and contacting the repair engineer

The Caretaker's rota

Your caretaker will regularly carry out a range of tasks aimed at ensuring that your block is safe, comfortable and clean:

- **Lifts** – brush, wash interiors
- **Bin room** – brush, hose and rotate rubbish bins
- **Foyer** – brush, wash
- **Bin chutes** – check for blockages
- **Inside of building** – inspect each level
- **Outside building** – check the surrounding areas
- **Individual landings and stairs** – brush, wash and buff
- **Lift, foyer and bin areas** – final check

Please note - The caretakers cover for each other during spells of annual leave. Residents would be notified of this via the noticeboard.

General enquiries or complaints

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the caretaker service and want to make a complaint or just make a general enquiry, you can contact your local housing office on 0303 123 1012.

Maintenance contracts and General block charges

Hamilton

As an owner in a multi storey block and in addition to the Councils factoring fee charges, you are also liable for payment of your share of the cost of 'general block charges'.

The general block charges for your building include your share of the cost of the:

- Employee costs for the caretaking service
- Lift maintenance
- Maintenance of the booster pumps for water supplies
- Ventilation fan maintenance
- Fire fighting equipment and emergency lighting - checks and maintenance
- Testing and maintenance of the dry riser
- Communal cold water storage tank – cleaning, maintenance and sampling
- Maintenance of any common rooms (where applicable)

You should report any repairs and mechanical breakdowns to our Repairs Centre on **0303 123 1010**.

The cost of the general block charges will be calculated and set each year and you will receive confirmation of the costs each February.

By dividing the cost of your general block charges between all of the flats in the block and applying these charges quarterly, this helps spread the costs over the year.

Payment of your general block charges is due along with your quarterly factoring fee charges with payment expected before the end of June, September, December and March.

Common repairs and repair charges

Hamilton

In addition to the Councils factoring fee charges and the general block charges, owners will also receive common repair bills in relation to work carried out in the block to the shared or 'common' parts. These include:

- the solum and foundations;
- the outside walls and cladding
- the window frames and window glass for the common halls or landings or entrances
- all load bearing walls
- the roof
- the entrance halls and all common halls stairways and landings and the walls enclosing the same;
- all apartments or areas used for storage or administration including the bin room and any caretaker's office and accommodation;
- the elevators, stand-by generators and all plant and equipment used in connection therewith;
- main water supply pipes, including main risers and lateral mains and all branch pipes leading to individual dwellinghouses (excepting branch pipes so far as enclosed within any individual dwellinghouse), static storage tanks, break tanks and feed pumps and overflows;
- electrical switch gear and all main electric cables, but excluding electric cables so far as enclosed within and serving any dwelling house;
- mechanical ventilation ducts except in so far as situated within and serving any dwelling house;
- fire fighting equipment including dry and wet risers and smoke check doors;
- main gas supply pipes and branch pipes and duct ventilation for gas supply, except in so far as such branch pipes or duct ventilation are situated within and serve any dwelling house;
- rain water conductors, foul water conductors, drainage taps and manholes;

- communal television aerials up to the point where the outlet enters the power socket serving any dwelling houses;
- aircraft beacons
- lightning conductors
- drying areas on the roof or landings of the Main Building or elsewhere in the Property
- waste disposal chutes
- lighting equipment for all entrances halls, stairs and landings and flood lighting equipment;
- balconies so far as extending beyond the building line of the Main Building even although serving only one, or more, individual dwelling house;
- The Common Room and any Subsidiary Buildings, and the Curtilage

The Deeds for your block will provide you with information about the shared or common parts of the block and verify how any common repair charges should be apportioned.

In a block of 70 flats for example, each owner would be liable for payment of a 1/70th share.

Resident's information

Lift breakdown

If the lift breaks down while you are inside it, you should follow the procedure displayed in the lift.

You will be automatically connected to our emergency call centre. You will be asked to confirm details of the tower block and which lift you are in – odd or even. Each lift is clearly identified as either odd or even. The call centre will then contact a lift engineer and, if necessary a caretaker to get you out of the lift as quickly as possible.

The call centre will be in contact with you at all times and will keep you informed of the progress.

Lifts and stairways

You can reach your floor by:

- The lifts; or
- The stairway

In some high-rise blocks, lifts stop at alternate floors. If one of the lifts is not available, you can use the other lift to take you to the nearest suitable floor and go up or down the stairs to get to your own floor.

The lift might break down if you overload it, so if you are moving large items, you should take care that the sides and floor of the lift are protected from damage. If you are carrying large items in the lift, you should not open the escape hatch in the ceiling without contacting the caretaker. Lifting the escape hatch can automatically disconnect the power supply.

Repairs and mechanical breakdowns

You should report all repairs to our Repairs Centre on 0303 123 1010

You should tell the caretaker if any mechanical equipment has broken down, for example, pumps or lifts. If there is an emergency and the caretaker is not on duty, you should contact the out of hour's emergency service.

Cold water supply

There is a stopcock so you can turn off the water supply if there is a burst pipe or any other fault at a tap or cistern. You should find out where your stopcock is. The caretaker will be able to tell you where it is, you should keep access to your stopcock clear at all times, particularly if it is in a cupboard.

If there is a fire

If a fire occurs in your flat:

Your smoke alarm should give you early warning in order to escape safely. Contact the fire service by dialling 999 then tell the caretaker as soon as possible if there is one on duty.

- Follow your 'fire escape plan'
- Shout to alert the household and get out quickly
- If smoke is present keep low, crawl if you need to get below the smoke level
- Contact the fire service by dialling 999 then tell the caretaker, if there is one on duty
- Close doors behind you as you escape, to prevent smoke and fire spread
- Don't return to investigate or fight the fire
- Don't use the lifts; always take the stairs to exit the building

The doors to a landings and stairways must be kept closed at all times as they reduce the spread of fire. You should make sure you understand the fire procedure notice which is in the entrance hall of your block.

If the fire is not in your flat:

If a smoke alarm is sounding in a communal area or you smell smoke, call the Fire and Rescue Service and tell them the location of the fire if you know it.

Stay in your flat and keep the front door closed, you will be far safer.

Pack a towel or sheets around the bottom of the front door to stop smoke getting in. Go to an open window and wait for the arrival of the Fire and Rescue Service.

Only leave the safety of your flat if you're affected by heat or smoke, or if you're told to leave by firefighters or the Police.

If you wish to arrange a home fire safety from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service please telephone 0800 0731 999.

Door entry system

A controlled door entry system is fitted to the main entrance of your building. You can use this with your main entrance door key or fob.

When you have visitors, they will have to use the intercom system which will sound a buzzer on the intercom station in your flat.

To use the door entry system

- Your visitor will sound the buzzer
- If they pull the door before the lock is released, the door will not open. Tell your visitor not to touch the door until the lock is released.
- Press the button at the top of the unit to let your visitor in.
- The red button at the bottom of your set will flash to let you know that the door is open.
- The door will stay open for as long as you keep your finger on the button, so press for several seconds to give your visitor time to enter.
- If you do not want to be disturbed, you can turn off the buzzer by pressing the red button firmly for several seconds. The button will change to green to show that you want some privacy.
- To turn your buzzer back on, you must press the green button firmly for several seconds. The button will change to red and your buzzer will now sound if you have a visitor.

Television aerial

Your building has a shared television aerial. Many of the flats can receive satisfactory television signals with an internal aerial. However, if you find that you cannot get a good picture and your flat does not already have a connection to this aerial, you may apply to have this service provided. Please note that there may be a charge to be connected to the aerial. You can call us on 0303 123 1012 to get more details from your local housing office.

Satellite dishes

You are not allowed to have a satellite dish. Connections to a shared television aerial can be provided by contacting your local housing office initially on 0303 123 1012.

Repairs to shared areas

Anyone can report repairs to shared areas to our Repairs Centre on 0303 123 1010.

No-smoking policy

In line with our no smoking policy, you must not smoke in any shared areas, including lifts corridors, the entrance hall, laundry facilities, drying areas, bin areas and common rooms.

If you or anyone in your home smokes, under the Government's no smoking laws you must not smoke near our staff while they are visiting you. Please do not smoke in the areas of your home where our staff may be working, and make sure that you close the door between the room you are smoking in and the areas our staff are working. Please co-operate with us in this matter, to help protect the health of our employees. If you are likely to have difficulty doing this, please let us know before we start any work

Removals

Please give the caretaker details of your removal, including the date and time. It may be possible for a lift to be made available for you to use during this time. The caretaker can give you more details.

Please give the caretaker as much notice as possible.

Drying room

Some multi storey blocks have drying rooms on each floor where residents can hang out washing. Your caretaker will be able to confirm where these are.

Windows in shared areas

You should make sure that the windows are not left open as they may become damaged by a sudden gust of wind. This can especially be a problem on the higher floors of a tower block.

Getting rid of large items of rubbish

If you want to get rid of any large items of rubbish, for example, furniture, fridges and cookers you should call land service on 0303 123 1020. If you need to store items while you are waiting for them to be removed, please contact the caretaker –do not store them in shared areas.

Car parking

You should only use the car parking areas next to your block. Car parking is limited, and for private vehicles only. You must not park large commercial vehicles, caravans, boats, and so on, in the car park. Please also avoid parking across the access points for the emergency services.

Pets

You will not normally be able to keep pets in high-rise flats, but you can keep a caged bird or fish. In exceptional circumstances, we will consider granting permission for you to keep other domestic pets if there is a valid medical reason, for example, guide dogs and hearing dogs for deaf people. This also applies to visitors' pets, except for animals which help people with sight or hearing difficulties.

Holidays and when the property is empty

If you are going away from your home from your home for four weeks or more, you should let the caretaker know for security and safety reasons. You may also want to tell your immediate neighbour or your tenant's / resident's association.

If you are going to be absent for a longer period, you should tell the caretaker, providing written details of any emergency contact telephone numbers you have.

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone 0303 123 1015 or email equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk