



Weslo are governed by the Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011 that came into force on 1 October 2012, which placed a number of obligations on Weslo, who had previously been acting as Estate Manager, to provide minimum standards as property factors. The Act applies to all residential property and land managers whether they are private sector businesses, local authorities or registered social landlords like Weslo.

The Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011 consists of three parts:

- A compulsory register of all land and property where a service is provided by a factor.
- A Code of Conduct that dictates how the service to owners is provided and requires us to issue a Written Statement of Service to every owner.
- A dispute resolution service, namely the Home Owner Housing Panel (HOHP).

We have been obliged to register all our estates and owned properties that receive services from Weslo, which are primarily landscape maintenance and repairs to common properties and areas.

The Act sets out a code of conduct which is a minimum standard of service that we must comply with. A key part of the Code of Conduct is a Written Statement of Service which sets out the terms of service and is based on your Title Deeds and Deed of Conditions that govern our estates and the requirements of the Code of Conduct. The statement gives us authority to act on behalf of owners in the estate and how we fulfil our obligations to owners under the Code of Conduct.

Where Is My Written Statement of Service?

The written statement was sent to you in September 2013 or when we are made aware of a change in ownership. This identifies your property, estate name, the type of service you will receive from us, and your share of any costs for which you are responsible. The statement also explains our authority to act, our financial obligations and the arrangements for future communication. This legislation has substantially increased our workload by having to formalise our agreement with owners who receive a service from us.

Why Did Nobody Tell Me About Common Charges?

When you purchased your home your Solicitor should have informed you about the common charges. If you have a Home Report it should also have identified if there was a factor. Your Deed of Conditions which forms part of the legal documentation you agreed and signed at the time of sale contains details of obligations and conditions which apply.

What Do Weslo Maintain?

We maintain the common landscape areas out with the curtilage of your property. As these areas are owned by Weslo your Council Tax contribution does not fund the cost of maintaining these areas. These areas include:

- Grass and shrub beds
- Unadopted roads, parking bays and footpaths
- Cobbled and paved areas

The main work carried out under the landscape contract is:

- Grass cutting
- Shrub bed maintenance
- Tree Maintenance
- Hedge Maintenance



We also carry out other maintenance to common areas:

Day to day repairs are repairs which are carried out on a reactive basis when the need arises. Planned maintenance is work that has been identified in advance and is targeted to specific issues that we have identified.

What Can I Do If I Am Not Happy With The Service?

You can make a complaint through our complaints procedure. Once you have exhausted our complaints procedure you can apply to the HOHP which has been set up to resolve problems between owners and their propertyfactor.

Can I Organise The Work Myself

Owners are entitled, with our consent to appoint an alternative factor, or to take over the management of the estate themselves. In these circumstances Weslo would be happy to provide owners with any assistance necessary to facilitate such a change.

Weslo is, first and foremost, a registered social landlord and we fulfil the role of estate manager/factor by default, as, in our experience, owners do not wish to take on this role although they are perfectly at liberty to do so.

How Are The Costs Calculated?

Common maintenance work is carried out on behalf of all residents who are jointly responsible to pay an equal share of the costs. Your share is based on the total number of houses in the estate or block and we pay the share for the properties we own. Your statement of account shows all the work carried out plus our estate management fee.

What Is Covered By Our Estate Management Fee?

Weslo incurs the following costs:

- Complying with legislation and regulatory guidance governing our service
- Undertaking estate inspections
- Responding to general enquiries
- Management of the landscape contract
- Invoicing and management of owner accounts

Under your Title Deeds we are only entitled to recharge the direct cost of managing the service to owners. The estate management fee is reviewed annually to ensure it reflects the costs we incur.

Why Is It More Than £10 As Stated In My Written Statement?

Prior to the Written Statement of Service being issued we were conscious that our management fee of £3.50 up to a maximum of £35.00 had remained unaltered for many years. Guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator indicates that registered social landlords must ensure that the costs we incur are not subsidised by tenants and reflect the cost of providing the service.

Following the issue of the Written Statement we completed a detailed analysis of the actual staff time spent on providing these services. It became clear that we were significantly undercharging for the service to owners. Additionally we were able to conclude that the cost of services to owners has, in fact, been subsidised by our tenants for a number of years. It was also clear that there were differences in the amount of work required in each estate and we wanted to ensure that our charges reflect this.

How is the Estate Management Fee Calculated?

On an annual basis before our statement of accounts are issued we review staff time involved in managing our estates and owners accounts. This indicated a cost to Weslo in the region of £53,000 per annum which increases incrementally each year. We analyse the work required in each estate and have categorised these as a low, medium or high level of management.

Based on our actual costs for 2014 we calculated an estate with a low level of management should receive a £12.00 estate management fee, medium £17.00 and high £25.00. Our highest management fee is still lower than most other registered social landlords and factors in the private sector, whose charges range from £28.00 to £120.00.

When Will I Be Invoiced?

We invoice owners at the beginning of each year for the previous years work. Any repair where your share is over £50.00 will be invoiced once the work has been completed. We request that payment is made within 21 days of receiving the invoice.

If you find it difficult to pay the invoice please contact us as soon as possible to discuss repayment options. We offer affordable interest free repayment terms tailored to your circumstances.

Contact

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