

Dear

RE: Service Charge

We are writing to let you know that from you will be asked to pay a weekly service charge for your house. This is 4 weeks from when you were given this letter.

What is a service charge?

A small weekly amount of money charged by your supported housing provider that goes towards the cost of electricity; gas; water, TV licence and internet in your house. These are bills that are not paid for by housing benefit. When you leave Pathways and live independently in your own house you will need to pay for these bills from your own money to the different companies that supply them.

Why do I have to pay it?

All supported housing providers charge residents a service charge. Pathways to Independence have not done this before as we have tried to keep costs down for our residents. However we understand that young people managing their money and paying their own bills is an important part of becoming an adult and living independently.

Our job at Pathways to Independence is to support you to gain the skills and experience to you need to move on from social services care and be independent. Many young people have a shock when they move to their own house and have to start paying bills as they do not have experience of budgeting for the extra money. Paying a service charge while you live at a Pathways house will get you ready for the reality of paying your own bills and being responsible for yourself when you move out and live independently.

Who has to pay?

All supported housing comes with a service charge. If you are entitled to benefits and are required to pay rent then you must pay a service charge for your house. If you are under 18 and do not have status social services will pay your service charge until you turn 18 and have status.

How much will I have to pay?

£40 per month. This is less than the cost of the bills per person in your house but is a contribution towards them. This is around the same amount that other supported housing providers charge young people.

How will I pay?

Your keyworker will help you to set up a standing order from your bank account in the same way as you pay your rent every month.

What happens if I don't pay?

The service charge is a compulsory part of living in supporting housing. Just like the house rules or paying your rent, you must agree to this while you live in a Pathways house. If you do not pay you will risk losing your accommodation.

We understand that this is a change and you will need to be careful with your money to afford this new charge.

Over the next few weeks your keyworker will meet with you to plan a budget to make sure you can afford to pay this charge for your house. We will be having house meetings to discuss it

If you have any questions or worries please speak to your keyworker first, or you can ask to speak to managers at Pathways directly.

Kind Regards,