



Shared Ownership Customer Charter



Customers

Information

We will ensure that shared owners are fully informed of their rights and responsibilities and have as much information about the home and development as possible, including lease terms, ground rent payments (if any) and estimated service charges.

Moving in

We carry out a home demonstration service with the shared owner when they move in and require home builders to provide NHBC (or equivalent) warranty and insurance packages for newly built homes we acquire, which typically provide ten years of physical damage and defects protection to the shared owner. We use technological solutions to make fixing defaults (snagging) as easy as possible by connecting developers, managing agents and shared owners within one app such as Clixifix.

Inflation-linked rents

The sub-market rent for our homes will not be increased by more than RPI+0.5% each year.

Ground rents

The majority of our shared owners will not have to pay ground rents. Where ground rents come with an existing building, we will negotiate with the freeholder to eliminate ground rents or ensure they are at a minimal level and do not include unreasonable multipliers (e.g. doubling every few years).

Service charges

We will ensure that the purpose of service charges and the range of services are fully explained to new buyers, and how these might change over time. We ensure that shared owners are in control of the management of the building or the estate by becoming members of the Residents' Management Company. We will support shared owners in conflicts with external freeholders or managing agents about what is a reasonable and affordable service charge. We will also regularly inspect properties to ensure that the relevant freeholder ensures that they are safe and well maintained.

Charges and fees

We do not charge our shared owners additional fees. There is no fee for staircasing, assignments, consent for improvements or the provision of additional information.

Consultation

We welcome feedback from our customers. We will survey customers once a year to measure and benchmark levels of satisfaction, and to seek ideas for improvement in our services.

Lease term

We will provide c.999-year leases for dwellings completed from 2022 onwards. For existing dwellings we provide a Shared Ownership lease of at least 125 years, and ideally at least 250 years where we own the freehold or a head lease of at least 250 years.



Lease extensions

We will extend existing leases to 999 years, or the maximum term that we can, for a nominal charge of £1.

Staircasing

Shared owners have the right to increase their share of the ownership in stages to become outright owner and benefit from long-term growth in equity value. We also offer the Shared Ownership plus (SO+) option to buy a further 1% of the value each year for 15 years at a predetermined price without legal and valuation fees.

Reverse staircasing

When shared owners encounter financial difficulties, we may buy back part of their share at market value to help the shared owner reduce their mortgage and provide liquidity to get through short-term difficulties and hence avoid losing their home.

Selling or moving on

We provide shared owners with options for selling including selling on the open market at full value and sharing the proceeds, selling the Shared Ownership lease to an eligible household or we will find a replacement shared owner.



New homes

New homes

We will ensure that new homes are indistinguishable from market housing and come with all the amenities and service charges expected by an owner occupier.

Home quality

We will ensure that new homes are built to the design quality standards set out in the New London Plan and the Homes England requirements, including the latest Government National Design Guide.

Changing working practices

We will provide new homes with room for study that can be used as a home working space if needed.

Outdoor space

We will provide new homes with access to private external space in the form of a garden or balconies.