



Providing Tenants access to Computers to support effective Housing Management.

A guidance note from Community Lives Consortium about the Eligible Service Charges that it puts in place so that tenants have access to a Broadband enabled computer to support the Housing Management Services that they receive.

February 2007.

Introduction

Community Lives Consortium is a non-profit making company that exists to support people who have a learning disability to live ordinary lives in the communities of South Wales.

As part of this work it provides a housing management service to 9 different social landlords, it delivers these services to approximately 200 tenants in this area.

Since 2005 it has been increasingly delivering this Housing Management service with the aid of Broadband enabled computers supplied into the tenant's homes.

This has been possible though the use of 3 funding sources:

1. An eligible service charge for **'Telephone (provision of phone and voice/data connection)'** this charge of an average of £2.43 per tenant per week in 0708 pays for the provision of telephone line and broadband connection.
2. Since April 2005 the eligible service charge for **'Administration Costs'** has an element in it entitled 'Housing Management Equipment' this element which is £2.96 per

tenants per week in 0708 pays for the provision of a computer and software including depreciation and maintenance.

3. A charge has been made within each Community Care package of £255 per service user per year for **ICT systems and support**. This pays for the maintenance of an ICT Support Structure and the development and purchasing of Software that helps people to be more effectively supported in the community.

1. 'Telephone (provision of phone and voice/data connection)'

This charge is calculated as the cost of line & equipment rental and broadband costs over the year divided by the number of tenants residing at the same address divided by 52.

These are agreed on the basis of guidance about eligibility of service charges for communal telephone calls set out in HB Guidance Manual Para 4.730, this lists 'communal telephone charges, but not personal calls' as an eligible charge.

2. 'Administration Costs' - 'Housing Management Equipment'

This table below shows how the £2.96 Housing Management Equipment item is set on 0708. The overall Administration charge set by CLC in 2007 / 2008 is £22.22 per tenant per week.

	No of PC's installed in Tenant's homes	Unit cost including leasing costs	Total cost over 3 year lease agreement	Revenue required per year
Scheme PCs (incl. printer & software)	21	£1,253	£26,305	
Scheme PCs TS, (incl. printer & software)	31	£1,552	£48,120	
Scheme Laptops, (incl. printer & software)	4	£1,618	£6,472	
Total	56	£4,423	£80,897	£26,966
Number of Tenants using PC's	175	Charge per tenant per wk		£2.96

The software included with each computer includes; Microsoft Office, Communicating in Print, remote maintenance and antivirus software.

This equipment is the property of the landlord's agent and is included in the property inventory which is attached to the Tenancy agreement.

An administration charge for Housing Management has been generally accepted as an eligible service charge;

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Circular HB/CTB A10 /2001 Appendix, page 13, section 11 (ii) "Housing Management Charges."

Lists activities that the landlord can charge reasonable costs associated with administration and housing management, this list includes:

- *Housing management policy information*
- *Administration and maintenance of occupancy agreements*
- *Liaison with other agencies*
- *Providing information to tenants on occupancy related matters*
- *Staff training in relation to housing management*
- *Occupancy consultations and occupancy related matters*
- *Internal monitoring of housing management tasks*
- *Advising on personal possessions insurance*
- *Organising internal decorations, portable appliance testing, exterior window cleaning, minor maintenance and repairs and gardening*
- *House rules and meetings*
- *Tenant consultation regarding internal decorations, new furniture, etc.*

CLC provides PC's in tenants home's to support it in the performance of the above functions. Thus is making a charge within it's Administration charge to support these activities.

3. ICT systems and support

Alongside this Housing Management agenda, CLC is also working with City & County of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot and CDSM (a software developer) to develop a wider range of web applications that are available to vulnerable people living in the community. This programme is funded through charges made to Community Care of £255 per service user per year as well as Service Principles Service Responses monies.

The applications that have been developed so far include:

- Talking e-mails with reinforcing pictures, symbols and video, these can be seen at CLC's website:
<http://www.communitylives.co.uk/>
- The information site for people who have learning disabilities and their family members 'Swansea Lives' <http://www.swansea-lives.com/>
- The personal planning, recording and on-line community 'People and Places', information about this can be found at;
<http://www.swansea-people.co.uk/>
<http://www.npt-people.co.uk/>
<http://www.cdsm.co.uk/products/pandp/index.htm>

For more information about any information included in this guidance note please contact Debbie Chegwen at Community Lives Consortium Debbie.Chegwen@communitylives.co.uk.

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