

Housing program.

➤ Tenant Fact Sheet. – General Service Charges

As part of the terms of your tenancy agreement with the Society your household **may** be required to pay a “General Service Charge”. This will depend on the property you live and whether essential services such as electricity are individually or communally metered. If you are required to pay a General Service Charge, this will be clearly explained to you as part of the Society making you an offer of housing. This brochure has been designed to assist you with understanding what a “General Service Charge” is.

What is a “General Service Charge”?

A “General Service Charge” is a weekly set amount that is not your rent which you are required to pay on a weekly or fortnightly basis as part of the terms of your tenancy agreement for services which are not individually metered in your home such as gas, electricity and or water. This means that the Society is required to pay for the service to the entire property or complex and then invoices each tenancy within the property or complex a proportion of the total amount to contribute to their individual usage of the service.

How does the Society set the amount of the “General Service Charge”?

The Society sets amount for “General Service Charge” by taking into consideration the following:

Pre-existing Properties

The Society regularly reviews the bills it pays for building that do not have individual meters and sets the General Service Charge as follows:

- Reviews the amounts it has paid for previous periods for an entire building or complex;
- Subtracts 10% of the annual costs to cover for communal areas;
- Then averages this amount out across all properties sharing the services;
- Rounds it down to the nearest dollar;
- Takes into consideration the number of adults in the property; and
- Then sets this amount as the weekly “General Service Charge” applicable to your tenancy;

New Properties

For new properties where the Society will not have access to a regular bill for the service. The Society will take into consideration other similar properties bills it is managing to determine a “General Service Charge”.

This charge will be reviewed after a full year of service bills for the property has been received by the Society for the premises to ensure that the amount of the General Service Fee charged is appropriate.

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What if I don't pay the "General Service Charge"?

If the General Service Charge is applicable to your tenancy, it is listed as part of the terms of your general tenancy agreement with the Society. Therefore if you do not pay your "General Service Charge" when it is due your household could be served with a "Notice to Remedy Breach" notice (Form11). What this means is if you do not pay your "General Service Charge" after receiving this notice the Society could take steps to end your tenancy.

If you receive a notice regarding the non payment of your "General Service Charge" you should contact your local Housing Officer before the expiry of any notices to discuss payment options.

What if you can't afford to pay the "General Service Charge"?

If you are unable to pay the "General Service Charge" you should discuss the matter with your local Housing Officer. The Housing Officer will advise you of what steps you may take to assist your household with meeting the terms of your tenancy agreement with the Society.

Remember the earlier you raise the matter, with your Housing Officer, the sooner the Society can identify ways to assist.

Where can I get more information?

If you have further queries related to the Society's "General Service Charges Policy & Procedure you can contact the Society's local Housing Office or you can contact the Society's State Admin Office at:

St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland

Housing Program

PO Box 3351

South Brisbane Qld 4101

Telephone: 3010 1000

Email: state.housing@svdpqld.org.au

