



City of Westminster

## **Local Management Agreements**

### **What you need to know!**

The following information will give you an overview on what is involved in taking on a local management agreement. The City Council in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Housing produced a detailed guidance document (Cashback Toolkit) for both landlords and residents. This document along with this information can be found on our webpage below.

Westminster City Council 0800 358 3783 [housing.enquiries@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:housing.enquiries@westminster.gov.uk)  
<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/yourhousing/your-community/get-involved/local-management-agreements>

## What is a Local Management Agreement?

With a Local Management Agreement, residents take on responsibility for services such as window cleaning, gardening, estate cleaning, minor repairs or any other day-to-day service previously provided by the City Council.

Local Management Agreements can give you a taste of real control in managing your estate. We encourage these agreements because residents know and care about their estates and are in a good position to provide an effective, value for money service. An agreement can bring many advantages:

- a personal and prompt service
- control over the quality of the work undertaken
- you can alter the agreement to suit your needs
- reduction in estate costs.

There are currently eight local agreements set up in Westminster across five resident groups. For example, residents of Charfield Court have started to manage the grounds maintenance and cleaning within their block. A committee of residents have appointed a contractor directly and they administer the contract on behalf of the City Council.

### How do agreements work?

If you and your neighbours are interested in setting up a Local Management Agreement, you should approach us to agree the services you wish to take over. You will need to decide whether to do the work yourselves, employ somebody or give the work to a local contractor. Most Local Management Agreements have been set up where there is an established Residents' Association.

### Who pays?

We will help you to draw up a 'specification', which sets out the standards the service must meet, and tell you how much we can pay you for doing the work. This is likely to be about the same amount, as it would have cost us to provide the service through a contractor.

Once we have agreed the price and specification, we will identify the insurance risks and confirm who is responsible for providing the insurance and that Health & Safety conditions will be met. The Management Agreement will be drawn up with the help of our Legal Services Directorate. Although it is a legal document, the process is quite straight forward because we have already made several agreements with residents.

## Consulting all residents

Before you can set up a Local Management Agreement, we will consult residents that are affected by the agreement to identify if is enough support. Prior to doing this we often encourage residents' groups to liaise with the residents themselves, so they have the support mechanisms in place already. We have normally found that if residents object to any LMA, it's because they don't know anything about it!

## Does the agreement cover the whole estate?

It's up to you. We want to be as flexible as possible about what the residents take on. For example, you may be interested in taking on the gardening of all the flowerbeds on an estate but not the grassed areas. You may want to do the window cleaning for only some of the blocks on your estate or you may want to do some minor repairs.

Whatever your idea we will be happy to look at it and discuss the options with you. The only caveat to this, is that the service is already being provided by the City Council. If the service is not provided (e.g. you may live in a street property) then we will need to see if there is a budget available to support your proposals.

## Getting started

If you are interested in a Local Management Agreement you should give our service centre a call 0800 358 3783. They can arrange for someone from the City Council to visit your estate and find out what you want to do. They should be able to give you a good idea of how much money is available for doing the work. The Housing Manager can then help to sort out the details and give you advice about how to monitor the work and any other concerns you may have.

We can also put you in touch with other residents' groups who have taken on Local Management Agreements or who are thinking of doing so.

## Setting up an LMA - the steps

Local Management Agreements give you 'hands on' control of a given aspect of management. To set up an agreement the following steps should be taken:

- Identify a reason for doing it and the likely benefits it will bring.
- Contact the landlord, who can appoint a member of staff to advise and help you.
- Draw up an outline plan and send it to the landlord. The landlord should look at your ideas and give you comments and any information you need including an idea of what the landlord will give you to provide the service.
- Test support for the idea in your area by talking to your neighbours, maybe holding a meeting or door knocking and assess the skills and resources you

have to do the job.

- If your neighbours support the idea, work with your landlord to draw up and agree a more detailed plan for the service you want to provide.
- Get prices and details from contractors or suppliers if you want to use them; or work out how you and other residents will provide the service. Organise any training or other help you need to be ready and able to take over the service.
- Once you and your landlord are clear about how you intend to provide the service, your landlord will formally consult with residents who may be affected by the scheme
- If you need to, create a formal body (for example, a residents' association or community interest company) to run the service.
- Draw up, agree and sign a Community Cashback Agreement with the landlord which will set up the details of the arrangement.
- Take control and monitor and report on the service. Review the success of the service each year, and change/renew the Community Cashback Agreement as necessary.

### **What does an agreement contain?**

The agreement is between the City Council and the residents. It contains details about:

- the type and duration of work you are taking on
- the amount of money we will pay you for undertaking the work and the dates when you will receive payment
- a detailed specification of the nature of work which can be tailored to suit your needs.

The agreement does set out your responsibilities and those that remain with the City Council. It advises you of the need to take out insurance and public liability to cover theft, damage and injury. Finally; the agreement advises you to keep receipts for all items purchased, as you may be liable to show us that you are administering the scheme properly.