

# TownTalk

News and updates for Catalyst's leaseholders

- Works to your home
- Gas can kill
- Windows in flats

## Welcome

We all want to live in a place that looks nice and is well maintained. To make sure your properties are of a high standard, we carry out regular maintenance works to the outside and communal areas of blocks of flats where we own the freehold. On page 2 we tell you about this work and how we will consult you about it.

I'm delighted to tell you that Catalyst won the prestigious leasehold service of the year award at the first National Leasehold Conference 2013. The award recognises exceptional performance, dedication to professional development, positive levels of feedback, including communication with leaseholders, and excellence in all round service.

To help us provide you with a first class service, please send in your suggestions about improvements we can make (contact details on page 4).

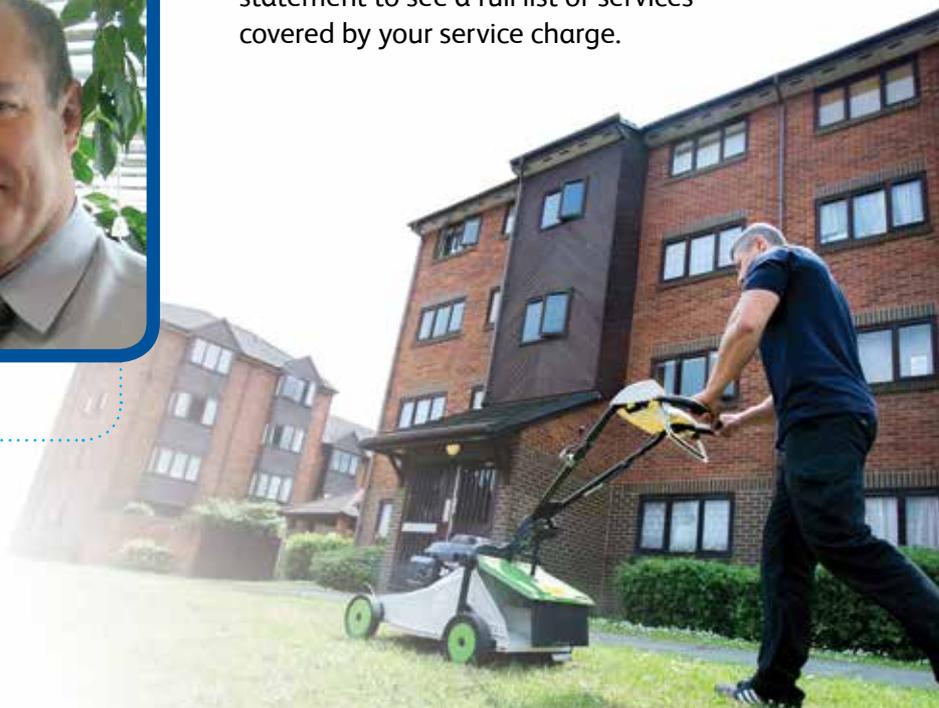


Best wishes  
**Steve Chapman**  
Leasehold and New  
Tenures Manager

## Service charges for houses

If you're a leaseholder living in a house on an estate, you more than likely pay a service charge. This pays for the upkeep and maintenance of the estate's communal areas such as shared gardens and play areas. Please remember that even if you buy all the shares in your home, you still have to pay this.

Service charges differ from estate to estate, depending on the services we provide in that area. Take a look at your service charge statement to see a full list of services covered by your service charge.



**Catalyst  
Housing**

# Major works to your home

At Catalyst we're proud of the high standards of our homes.

To make sure they stay this way, we carry out maintenance work to the structure of your building and the communal areas of blocks of flats where Catalyst owns the freehold. If you live in a house, it's your responsibility to maintain the structure of your home.



We do major works, also known as cyclical works, every six to seven years. The work usually includes:

- Roof, brick or window repairs and/or replacements
- External and communal decorating such as painting
- Repairing and maintaining guttering, downpipes, landscapes and boundaries

If the building you live in is on our cyclical works list, a surveyor and a technical inspector will visit it to carry out a survey on its condition. If we find the building is in reasonable condition, we may decide to defer the work for another year or two. If we need to do the work sooner, we'll consult you through a section 20 notice (see below for more details).



## Consulting you: a section 20 notice

Before we carry out any major works to your home, we will consult you through what is called a section 20 notice. Here's a summary of the process:

First we'll send you a 'notice of intention' which sets out the work we want to do. You'll have 30 days to respond to this notice.

We'll then send you a 'notice of estimates', which will include estimates for the work from at least two different contractors. We will also send you a summary of all leaseholders' comments and responses made to the notice of intention. You'll then have a further 30 days to respond.

If the contractor we decide to select is not one that was nominated or had the lowest tender, we'll send you a third notice. This will explain the reason why we went for this contractor.

Please remember that we will always try and take on board your views before we do any work to your home.

# Gas can kill

Faulty gas fires, boilers and cookers can be deadly. They can cause gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning.

If you own or part-own your home, it's your responsibility to make sure your gas appliances are safe. **So please get them checked every year.**

## What is a gas safety check?

A gas safety check takes about 40 minutes and involves a Gas Safe registered engineer inspecting your gas appliances.

A gas safety check involves:

- Checking all gas appliances to make sure they are burning and operating correctly
- Testing any gas flues (pipes which take fumes outside) to make sure they are working properly
- Checking that all safety devices are working

## How do I arrange the check?

Find a registered engineer who is legally qualified to work on gas appliances by contacting the Gas Safe Register:

Call **0800 408 550**

Visit [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)

# Replacing windows in your flat

Up until now, if you lived in a flat and your single-glazed windows needed replacing with double-glazed ones, this would be considered an 'improvement'. Many of our leases don't allow us to recharge leaseholders (through their service charge) for improvements, so we've not easily been able to carry them out.

Catalyst recently made an application to the First Tier Tribunal to see whether we could replace single-glazed windows with double-glazed ones and recharge you for this work. The tribunal ruled that this type of work is a repair rather than an improvement, so we can recharge you for it.

This means that when replacing single-glazed windows with double-glazed ones, Catalyst no longer has to apply to the First Tier Tribunal to vary your lease, which can be a lengthy process.

Please note that replacing the glass in your windows at all other times remains your responsibility. So if you break it or if it's damaged, you'll have to replace it.

## Contact us



### By phone

London customers:  
0300 456 2099

South East customers:  
0300 456 2090



### By email / online

Via our website at  
[www.chg.org.uk](http://www.chg.org.uk)



### By post

London customers:  
Ealing Gateway  
26-30 Uxbridge Road  
London W5 2AU

South East customers:  
The Farmhouse  
Nightingale Avenue  
Oxford OX4 7BU

See page 3 for details of the consultation process we need to carry out before doing any major work to your home.



**Catalyst  
Housing**