

Increases in charges for Curo leaseholders in Moorlands

This statement is made on behalf of leaseholders at Hillside Road and Moorfields Road in Bath, and more broadly, on behalf of other residents who may be affected by similar issues.

I want to highlight concerns about the sudden and substantial increase in service charges levied on leaseholders, which is underpinned by a long-term failure to build up adequate sinking funds and to plan for foreseeable works.

For residents at Hillside Road, for around ten years (between 2013/14 and 2022/23) leaseholders were asked to contribute an average of just £124 per year—or £10 per month—into the Sinking Fund.

However, in 2023/24, this figure rose abruptly to £1,767 per year (£147 per month), a 1,422% increase. Such a dramatic rise suggests not only a failure to plan but also a disregard for the financial wellbeing of residents who had not been warned or prepared for such costs.

The purpose of a Sinking Fund, as stated in a letter from Somer Housing in 2008, is to set aside money regularly to cover the cost of future maintenance and repairs to external and communal areas. This is specifically to avoid large, unexpected bills.

However, in this case, leaseholders were faced with exactly that—significant and unanticipated charges related to two major works carried out in 2023/24: the replacement of communal fire doors and the reroofing of the building.

Although the roof was known to be ageing and had required repairs as far back as 2016/17, no action was taken to review its condition regularly, increase Sinking Fund contributions, or revise the timeline for its eventual replacement.

Curo's own ten-year plan issued in 2022 made no provision for reroofing until 2032—by which time the roof would have been 64 years old, far exceeding the life expectancy of similar structures.

Despite the introduction of more stringent fire safety regulations following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, no steps were taken to ensure sufficient funds were available to meet these requirements.

Residents at Ascension House in Moorlands are facing a similar situation with bills for a roof replacement, fire safety work and internal decoration running to tens of thousands of pounds per household.

As a direct result of inadequate planning, leaseholders have been left to cover thousands of pounds in shortfall payments—costs they were neither prepared for nor fairly forewarned about.

This has placed an unfair and unacceptable financial burden on residents, who have limited opportunities to question the way their buildings are being managed, or the level of charges for the works.

I would like to ask Cabinet Members to raise these issues directly with Curo and other major landlords and to press for greater transparency and urgent improvements in how service charges and sinking funds are managed.

Please also raise this issue with local MPs and relevant Government Ministers, and support calls for further national policy reform to prevent leaseholders across the country from being exposed to excessive and unexpected costs.

This is not only a matter of financial justice, but one of fairness, accountability, and public confidence in social and leasehold housing management.