

FAQs – Section 20: External and internal decorations Long Term Qualifying Agreement

What is a 'long term agreement'?

A long Term Qualifying Agreement is the legal phrase used to identify a contract between the landlord (freeholder of the property) and (usually) a totally independent contractor or organisation to deliver services or works for a period greater than 12 months

Why are you changing the service I currently receive?

The current agreement for external decorations ends on 31 March 2018. We are therefore taking this opportunity to ensure that we have an appropriate supplier providing the services required. This is to ensure a continuation of the required works.

We already pay into a sinking fund for this work, will this be affected?

Some of the cost for the works undertaken as a result of this process may be paid for from the sinking fund. Your leasehold team will advise you closer to the time of the works what you are expected to pay and whether any sinking fund is available to pay for this work.

What are cyclical decorations and repairs- what is included?

These are the painting and repairs carried out to maintain the common/communal areas of the block in which your property is located. These are carried out on a cycle in line with your lease, usually every six years. We would include anything which has been previously painted and is the responsibility of the landlord. This can include, but is not an exhaustive list:

Painting

- External render
- Windows (timber)
- External doors (timber/metal)
- Internal plastered walls
- Fascias, soffites, bargeboards formed of timber

Repairs

- Scarf repairs to timber (cutting out of rotten timber renewing with new sound timber)
- Render repairs externally (up to 30% of elevation)
- Roof tile renewal re-fixing
- Plaster repairs internally
- Localised repointing and brickwork repairs

We would not normally carry out any glazing renewal/repairs

Are there any financial implications?

This will be dependent upon your lease. It is usual for you to be responsible for a proportionate contribution towards the work. In line with your lease you would generally pay one equal share and any itemised repairs specific to your property. This does vary from lease to lease, and will be confirmed on a property by property basis prior to works commencing.

Who are Westworks Procurement Limited?

Westworks are a collaborative group of Housing Associations and local authorities, based in the South and South West of England and Wales. Members include Knightstone, Winchester City Homes, Oxford City Council, Sovereign Housing Group and Selwood Housing.

Westworks are a not for profit organisation whose aim is to provide value to the group members, which singularly they would not be able to access or negotiate themselves. Members have in excess of 200,000 properties in management.

A not for profit business means that any profit generated will be invested back into the business for instance by means of expansion or training of group members.

Is the service level agreement between Westworks and Aster confidential or can residents have sight of it?

The SLA (service level agreement) is a controlled, commercially confidential document.

It can be viewed by appointment at any principal Aster office (Wells, Wareham, Andover, Devizes) but can not be copied or photographed. Alternatively you can access it online here . <http://www.westworks.org.uk/>

My property has recently been painted externally. Does this mean it will be painted again this year?

No. This is a long term contract covering all of our properties. Your home will only be painted in line with our decorations program every six years.

I can see no costs in the document?

That is correct. We will issue estimated costs prior to any works starting. We will also allow you the opportunity to make any observations regarding those costs.

I own my own flat will I still need to pay?

Whilst you own the leasehold to your flat, we are responsible for the freehold and as such are responsible for the decorations to the exterior and any internal communal areas.

I rent my flat will I still need to pay?

No. Please pass this document to the person who is the leaseholder.

How and when will I need to pay?

The successful contractor(s) will be responsible for undertaking the works - we will pay this bill. We will contact you to recover the costs of your contribution for this work.

How much will this cost me?

This is not a demand for payment at this stage.

We receive these services and pay for them already – are you just changing contractors? If so why?

The contracts we currently have in place are due to expire. Due to the financial value of these contracts we are required to carry out an Official Journal European Union (OJEU) tender with a view to the new contract(s) starting in April 2018.

You say this is a legal consultation, are you now going to add legal costs to my service charges?

No. Although this consultation process is required by law there are no legal costs involved.

Please send more information about the services you are looking to provide

A description of the services to be provided under the agreement can be found on our website www.aster.co.uk – search for 'Have Your Say' or inspected by appointment at our main offices. Alternatively we can email this specification to you.

I am not happy with the current services provided

Under this consultation process we are unable to deal with complaints about quality of current provisions. Please visit our website or contact us to log any issues you are experiencing as a formal complaint.

I am planning to sell my property before the work described in the Section 20 notice is completed

You should keep the documents safe and pass them to your solicitor when you have accepted an offer. Any potential purchaser needs to be aware of works that are planned at your property.

Where can I go for advice?

You can contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau for independent advice. The following websites also have useful information about the Section 20 process:

<http://www.lease-advice.org>

<http://www.leaseholderadvicecentre.co.uk>