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Small Apartment Scheme Leaseholders to Benefit With New Lite Property Management

A new residential management scheme has been launched to reduce service charges for leaseholders in buildings with 10 apartments or less based on a pay-as-you go arrangement, designed to save small building residents hundreds of pounds each year.

Chainbow Lite, the new service from Chainbow, will only bill residents for services conducted when leaseholders have requested maintenance, gardening, cleaning or any other building-related jobs. The reactive service is designed to show leaseholders how their money is working for them, bucking the mainstream trend of paying service charges and seeing no work done.

The new property management scheme was established following comments from several leaseholders Chainbow engaged who expressed their preference for a company which manages building insurance and only carries out maintenance when needed.

Roger Southam, Chairman of Chainbow commented: "The fewer the leaseholders in a building, naturally the more each will have to pay for service charges. Often it is the case that smaller buildings require less maintenance so why bother paying for things that are not needed or services that do not need doing.

"This is how the concept of Chainbow Lite came about and already we have several buildings signed-up. Leaseholders will call if they need lights changing or railings fixed. Moreover, we will not charge a fee for the extra jobs we do but only charge the cost of engaging a contractor and the contractor's work. Not only is this arrangement saving leaseholders money but it is one of the most transparent ways to show residents how fairly Chainbow operates."

Patricia Shaw is one leaseholder who has signed-up to Chainbow Lite through her Forest Hill building. Ms Shaw is one of five leaseholders in her building who has experienced poor property management for more than eight years by old managing agents.

Ms Shaw explained: “I moved into my apartment in 2000 and since then had experienced a nightmare situation with my old managing agents which led to me almost losing my home. The reason being is that I stopped paying my service charges because no work was being done and no one would return my calls and liaise with me. In turn, I was threatened with legal action for breach of my tenancy agreement which cost me a fortune and led to me almost having my house repossessed.

“The company also had such a high turnover of employees so information about our building history was constantly lost. For example, another leaseholder in our building constantly complained about the lintel on her window being loose and on the verge of falling down. Nothing was done to fix this. In addition, because the lintel wasn’t fixed, dampness came through to the apartment interior. She couldn’t rent her apartment because no one wanted to live in it due to the dampness.

“Once when the old agents actually did repair something on the outside of the building, we were billed thousands of pounds for renting scaffolding for about six weeks when the actual maintenance job only took three days.

“Through our bad experience with property management companies, no one in our building really trusted managing agents which is why we were happy to have Chainbow Lite because we can physically see what our money is being spent on. Chainbow also post all bills on an intranet for us to see and we have a breakdown of charges. It is a huge relief to finally deal with a company that works efficiently and honestly and can connect with them on a regular basis.”

Since 2006, Chainbow has advocated for tighter regulations of the property management industry and have called on the Association of Residential Managing Agents (ARMA) to licence operators to ensure they are educated about legislation and leaseholder rights and penalised when they do not comply.

Chainbow was founded by Roger Southam in 1989 and specialises in residential property management on behalf of owners, freeholders and developers. Chainbow aims to provide real value for money for its customers as well as changing their perceptions of property management. Chainbow does this through the provision of a clear charter aimed at setting

out its values and promises to leaseholders, as well as an annual customer satisfaction survey intended to benchmark progress and identify areas for improvement.

Chainbow currently manages over 40 sites with 3,800 leaseholders across Greater London and intends to become the provider of choice property management and consultancy services in London. For further information on Chainbow contact Tel: 020 7928 9944, email: property@chainbow.com or visit www.chainbow.com