

Homeowner

Newsletter 2023



Welcome to our homeowner service update, where we'll outline all the new information involving our Homeowner team. We'll update you on our plans for the year, reveal ways you can get involved in shaping our service, and give you an opportunity to update your contact details.

Team members:

It's been three years since we introduced the RHP Homeowner team members in 2020, so in case you need a refresh, here's our team:

Homeowner Manager

Rebecca (Becca) Fury
Created / Joined the team:
March 2020

Role summary:
The role of the homeowner manager is to ensure that the homeowner team has a clear vision and set of service expectations that are consistently delivered. They are the advocate for homeowner customers across RHP and the other services we offer, and supports the Homeowner advisors in answering queries where required.

Homeowner Advisor

Francesca Kelly & Charlene Carver
Joined the team:
May 2021 (Charlene),
April 2020 (Francesca)

Role summary:
The role of the homeowner advisor is to assist leaseholders and shared owners with queries related to the legal aspects of their lease. This ranges from supporting customers through service charge disputes and answering observations raised through section 20 consultations, to supporting shared owners with resales and staircasing processes.

Homeowner Administrator

Sarah Drew
Joined the team:
March 2022

Role summary:
The homeowner administrator is the main contact for leaseholders completing lease extensions and selling their homes. They liaise with solicitors for sales enquiries, ensure all lease extensions run smoothly, produce all section 20 notices and manage our homeowner inbox and shared 'to-do' list.

Homeowner Income Advisor

Mohamed (Moe) Nemiri
Joined the team:
July 2023

Role summary:
The role of the income advisor moved to the homeowner team in January 2023. The income advisor is responsible for supporting customers who fall into arrears and setting up direct debits for payment plans. They work very closely with the homeowner advisors to resolve service charge disputes.

Services that we provide as your Homeowner team:

Service charge support

We respond to enquiries, resolve disputes, handle payments, and take care of arrears management.

Lease questions

We're here to advise you on clauses within your lease, confirm maintenance responsibilities, and confirm ownership to the different parts of your property, estate, or local area.

Lease extensions

We've supported over 300 homeowners with extending their lease over the past three years. Each homeowner has saved over £700 in fees, and completion times have decreased by over 50% following our change in solicitors and valuers in 2020. See the 'extending your lease' section below for more information.

Sales enquiries (leasehold)

Homeowners who own 100% of their property can sell without consulting RHP. This isn't the case for recent Right to Buy or Right to Acquire purchases as the discount is repayable. If you find a buyer for your home, we'll support you with a sales pack and liaise with your solicitors for any sale enquiries.

Resales for shared owners

Shared owners are required to consult RHP if they want to sell their home. If you're thinking about selling your shared ownership home, contact us for more information.

Staircasing for shared owners

We're here to support shared owners in purchasing more shares of their home, also known as 'staircasing'. As with lease extensions, we use carefully selected valuers and solicitors for the best rates.

'Section 20' major work or contract consultations

When we carry out major work on a block, we're required to consult the homeowners in relation to several aspects of the project. We work closely with the project managers to advocate for homeowners throughout.

When you receive notice for any work, there is a 30-day consultation period for you to raise any queries.

Compliant front doors

The current legislation requires a FD30S fire door set to be installed by a certified operative with third party accreditation. We're here to support customers going through the process of replacing their front door to ensure it meets all necessary regulations.

Working with homeowner residents' groups

We've backed the establishment of two recognised residents' associations for homeowners, as well as an informal group, which has deeply enhanced the connection we have with our customers. If you'd like information or support in setting up a recognised or informal group, please get in touch.

Other services

Any issues with repairs, anti-social behaviour, or services on your estate are handled by specialist teams across RHP. You can access these services by contacting customer.services@rhp.org.uk.



Contacting us

Email us at homeowner@rhp.org.uk, where we aim to provide a response within two working days. We may need to consult other RHP departments or external teams, but we'll let you know if we need any more time.

You can also reach us by phoning us at **0800 032 2433**. This will be answered by a customer service advisor, who will, in most cases, be able to put you through to one of our team straight away. If we're unavailable, we'll return your call within the same two-day period. If you'd prefer, you can email us and request a call.

If you would like to meet one of the team at our office in Teddington, please contact us in advance so this can be arranged.

Plans for 2023-24

One of our aims for 2023-24 is to visit more of our estates. Our homeowner advisors will be aiming to visit at least two estates per month, so if you'd like to meet to discuss anything in person, please email us and we'll let you know when they plan to be in your area.

We recognise that the recent service charge increases have been extremely challenging for many of our customers. We're committed to supporting you in handling these costs, and we offer payment plans to help with the rise in charges.

The service charge actual accounts for 2022-23 are being calculated over the coming months, and you can expect to receive these at the end of September. We'll be checking these accounts before they are signed off and will support you with any questions you have.

Ways to shape your service

Once you've contacted us, you may be asked to complete a quick, anonymous transaction survey where you can leave feedback on your experience. We use the answers to shape our service, so please take the time to tell us what you think.

We'll be carrying out randomised telephone surveys to review many of the services we provide. If you receive a request to answer one of these surveys, we'd really value your feedback. Please make sure that we have your most up-to-date phone number to take part.

This year we'll be launching a focus group to discuss various aspects of the service that we provide to homeowners. The first element will be the format and general layout of our service charge accounts letter. There are several customers who have signed up after completing the transaction survey, but if you haven't had the chance to put your name down and you'd like to get involved, please email us at homeowner@rhp.org.uk.

Where to find useful information

While you're always welcome to contact the homeowner team directly for support, the answers you're looking for may be available on the 'Homeowner' section of the Help & Advice page on our website. We update this information regularly and often signpost customers to the information held there, but if you have any suggestions of what you'd like to see, please get in touch.



Updating your details

When you purchase a leasehold property from a third party, we rely on your solicitors to provide us with all the relevant details via the 'Notice of Transfer'. Typically, this just contains a first name and surname, but we'd like to make sure we have your title, gender, date of birth and current contact details as well. To make this as easy as possible, we've created an online form for you to complete by using the link below or scanning the QR code <https://forms.microsoft.com/e/ZxicXbUPgn>.

Please enter as much information as you feel comfortable sharing, as this will help us with shaping our services and general communication. In the case of a name change, please email us with a copy of your marriage or deed poll certificate.



Extending your lease

As previously mentioned, we've helped hundreds of customers in the past three years with the straightforward, yet potentially costly process of extending their lease. As many were initiated in the early 1980s when Right to Buy was introduced, a lot of leases now have around 80 years remaining, meaning they'll soon struggle to attract a mortgage offer. We write to all customers who have less than 84 years remaining on their lease.

If you're unsure about the remaining duration of your lease or can't locate your lease document, please contact us and we'll gladly assist you. There is a guide on extending your lease on our website.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. Our Homeowner team are here to support you as best we can and look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

**Becca, Francesca, Charlene,
Sarah & Moe**