

## CHARGES

There are some issues to do with rent or service charges that the Housing Ombudsman is unlikely to be able to investigate including those about the amount or level of rent or service charge increases charged by a landlord. However there are other organisations that may be able to help or advise you.

### Rent

If you are a tenant and you want to query the level of your rent or the amount it has risen by you may have the right to apply to the First-tier tribunal – Property Chamber (Residential Property). However, it is important to remember that the Tribunal may decide to put the rent up if they think it is lower than comparable properties in the area.

You can find out more information and contact the Tribunal by using the following link: [www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/residential-property/applications](http://www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/residential-property/applications)  
If you are a shared owner, the level and frequency of rent increases should be detailed in your lease agreement. For advice about your lease you could contact the Leasehold Advisory Service at [www.lease-advice.org](http://www.lease-advice.org)

### Service Charge

If you are a tenant you may pay a service charge to your landlord. This may be one of two charges - a 'fixed' service charge which is fixed by the landlord according to the landlord's own estimates and costs or a 'variable' service charge; this a charge that the landlord can alter depending on costs incurred, but it must give you notice of the variation. Your tenancy agreement should specify what if any service charge you must pay.

If you believe a fixed service charge is too high you may be able to have it assessed as part of an appeal to the Tribunal in relation to overall rent. Appeals about the reasonableness or increase of a variable service charge may also be consider by the Tribunal. For more information go to:

<https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/tribunals/residential-property/rent-assessment-guidance.pdf>

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For advice on service charges if you are a leaseholder or shared owner you could contact the Leasehold Advisory Service at [www.lease-advice.org](http://www.lease-advice.org). If you are a leaseholder or a leaseholder who buys a share of the property and pays rent on the remainder you may be able to appeal the reasonableness or increase of service charges to the Tribunal. For more information about this go to:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/residential-property#leasehold>