

Geoff Raw – Chief Executive  
Brighton & Hove City Council

21<sup>st</sup> May 2018

Dear Geoff

I am submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the Housing & New Homes Committee meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

In May 2017 point of use water heaters were installed in flats at Elwyn Jones Court to alleviate the risk of legionella's disease associated with the communal heaters. Following those installations residents queried why they were still being charged via their service charge for communal hot water when the point of use heaters were being supplied by electricity that residents paid directly for to their own electricity provider.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017 the Council confirmed that the service charge would be reduced. The Council have further confirmed that insufficient consultation with residents took place, that lessons needed to be learnt and that a meeting to explain this would be held with residents. The Council offered to reduce the service charge by 20% but have yet failed to provide any justification to this arbitrary value.

For over a year the Council have dragged their heels in dealing with this matter, have yet to adjust the service charge, yet to have the meeting, yet to explain the discount offered and yet to refund any residents.

It is scandalous for this situation to exist and for elderly and vulnerable residents in the Council's care to be treated this way. It is entirely unacceptable for the Council to procrastinate over the discounts due and the refunds to be withheld.

In a letter copied to me by a resident they signed off by saying (name withheld), "aged 86 and trying to stay alive long enough to get my refund and reduced charges". It is a shameful and disgraceful situation that compels residents to say this.

To that end, I respectfully request that The Executive Director – Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing be requested to bring an immediate end to this protracted debacle, provide residents with a fully justifiable discount to their future bills and refund all monies improperly and inappropriately taken from pensioners in this Council's care together with commensurate compensation.

It is further requested that The Executive Director – Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing prepare a report for Audit and Standards Committee fully explaining the background to this matter, consider the lessons learnt and consider appropriate changes to prevent a repeat of this wholly unacceptable situation.

Yours sincerely Cllr. Lee Wares

