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## How we set your rent and service charge



beech



This document is available in other languages, larger text, Braille and on audio cd or cassette.



This leaflet aims to help you understand how we set your rent and service charge. Not everything we show here may apply to your tenancy.

If something usually applies to a certain type of tenancy we have highlighted this.

## How we set your rent and service charge

### For Assured Tenancies

Most of our tenancies are assured tenancies, so if you have a tenancy agreement with us it is likely to be this type. Please check your tenancy agreement to make sure.

# What is rent and what are service charges?

Put simply, the rent pays for:

- Your right to use your home
- Our costs in keeping it maintained in reasonable repair and doing any improvements
- Our costs in managing the property

We will use some of the rent to repay money we borrowed to buy property. One of our aims is to charge rents that are lower than those for similar properties on the open market.

If you are on a low income, you may be able to claim Housing Benefit from the local council, which may pay some or all of the rent.

We may provide you with services that we charge you for. Often these services are near, but not in, your home. The charge is usually fixed for the year so you know how much you will have to pay for the year. Here are some examples of services we may charge you for:

- Maintaining the grounds of a block of flats or an estate, such as looking after the grass, trees and shrubs
- The cost of electricity to light communal areas
- The costs of cleaning communal areas or windows
- Counselling and support if you have a support agreement with us

There are many other services you may receive, depending on the type of accommodation you live in and the type of tenancy agreement you have with us.

We review rents and service charges each year and we usually send out letters or notices (or both) telling you about the new amounts in March.

The service charge could go up or down depending on how much it has cost us to provide the service in the previous year.

Each year we will send you a schedule of how the charge has been calculated and you will get an opportunity to comment on the cost and quality of the services.

Please let us know if you need help understanding your rent or service charges.

## How do you know how much rent to charge me each year?

This depends on many things, including our plans for the coming years, but we also have to follow rules that the Government has set for rent levels for social housing landlords like us.

Each year we have to calculate any new rent levels by using a formula that takes into account:

- The value of the property you live in
- Earnings in the county
- The size of your property
- The national average rent for registered social landlords

The rent we set using this formula is sometimes called a formula rent. Each year the formula rent increases by the increase in the Retail Price Index plus 0.5%. For a more detailed explanation of how rents are set please contact your Housing Officer.

## How will this affect me?

At any given time, the rent you pay could be the same as the formula rent or it could be higher or lower. Using the limits set by the Government, we are working towards adjusting your rent so that by 2012 it will match the formula rent as closely as possible.

The limit set for increasing your rent each year is work out using:

- The increase in the Retail Price Index, plus 0.5%, plus £104 per year.

If your rent is higher than the formula rent, we will use the same formula, but deduct up to £104 a year:

- The increase in the Retail Price Index plus 0.5%, minus £104 per year.

## Secure tenancies – Miles Platting

If you live in Miles Platting your home is owned by Manchester City Council so you have a secure tenancy. Manchester City Council sets the rent every year following the same principles described above.

## For other secure tenancies

For secure tenants – usually tenants who have been with us since before 1989 – rents are set by the Rent Officer Service who are a government body. These rents are called ‘fair rents’.

We can apply for a fair rent to be reviewed every two years or after we make substantial changes to the property. In making their decision, the Rent Officer will consider:

- The age and state of repair of the property
- The cost of any services provided
- The level of fair rents on similar properties in the area

The Rent Office then notifies us of the amount that we are allowed to charge for the property.

## For assured shorthold tenancies

The rents and service charges are calculated annually when we consider our business plan for the coming year.

## Will my rent or service charge change more than once a year?

Not usually, our rents and service charges are increased or decreased once a year in April. Whatever type of tenancy agreement you have we will give you at least four weeks notice of when the rent is going to increase. When you get a notice about the rent going up you should make arrangements for the new amount to be paid from the date that is set. This may mean telling your bank or contacting your Housing Benefit Office.

## How can I contest an increase in my rent or service charge?

Most Beech tenants have the right to appeal against rent increases to the Rent Assessment Committee (check with your Housing Officer). Assured tenants can also appeal about the service charges they pay to the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal.

Both of these are independent bodies and can set new amounts which may be higher, lower, or the same as those first proposed.

For secure tenants, the Rent Officer Service can override the service charge we set.

## Getting in touch

## Långüagê Liñè

**Head office: 01942 608715**

Turner House, 56 King St  
Leigh, Lancs WN7 4LJ

**West office: 01942 263630**

82 Railway Road,  
Leigh, Lancs WN7 4AN

**North office: 0161 230 4070**

Elizabeth House, off Victoria St,  
Openshaw, Manchester M11 2NX

**Neston & Parkgate office:**

**0151 353 0917**

43 Liverpool Road, Neston,  
Cheshire CH64 3RB

**South office: 0161 232 6030**

Parkway 5, Parkway Business Centre,  
Princess Road, Manchester M14 7HR

**Bootle office: 0151 284 5756**

34 Eleanor Road, Bootle,  
Merseyside L20 6BR

### ARABIC

هذه الوثيقة متاحة باللغة العربية  
عند الطلب.

### BENGALI

অনুরোধ করলে এই ডকুমেন্টটি  
বাংলা ভাষা ও উপলব্ধ

### CANTONESE

本文件可以應要求，製作成中文  
(繁體字) 版本。

### FARSI

این مدرک در صورت درخواست به فارسی  
موجود است.

### FRENCH

Ce document est disponible en français  
sur simple demande.

### GUJARATI

આ દસ્તાવેજ વિનંતી કરવાથી ગુજરાતીમાં  
મળી રહેશે.

### HINDI

अनुगोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ हिन्दी में भी  
उपलब्ध है

### KURDISH

ئهم بەلگهیه به پێی داواکاری به زمانێ  
کوردی ش دەس دەکەوێت

### MANDARIN

本文件可以应要求，制作成  
中文(简体字)版本。

### POLISH

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany  
w języku polskim.

### PUNJABI

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ  
ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ

### SOMALI

Dokumentigaan waxaa lagu helaa Soomaali  
haddii la codsado.

### URDU

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز اردو میں بھی مل سکتی ہے۔

### VIETNAMESE

Tài liệu này có sẵn bằng tiếng Việt khi  
được yêu cầu.

