



Rents and Benefits

RENT

The rent is due on the first day of each month in advance, and can be paid by direct debit or directly to our office by cash or cheque. If you pay by cheque, please ensure that your address is written on the reverse and that the payment is clearly marked "rent". Also, **DO NOT SEND CASH BY POST.**

The rent is reviewed each year on 1st April. Each Sharing Owner will receive a Rent Review Notice detailing the new charge at least 28 days before the change.

SERVICE AND FACTORING CHARGE

This is included in the overall monthly rent charge, and goes towards the cost of maintaining the building fabric to ensure that it is kept wind and watertight. This includes external painting, roof maintenance, external walls, doors and windows, upkeep of common stairways and landscaping, if applicable. All maintenance and repairs of heating installations, extract fans and security systems are also included - for further information see the Maintenance and Repairs section.

These costs are also reviewed annually in April and any unused monies are set aside for future maintenance liabilities. If funds prove insufficient the Association, in consultation with sharing owners, would consider alternative ways of funding repairs, although ultimately sharing owners have full financial responsibility for all repairs.

RENT ARREARS

If you experience any difficulties at all in paying your rent it is best to contact the Association, as soon as a problem arises. Your Housing Officer will be able to discuss your situation and the options you have to pay the rent and arrears.

The Association is always willing to help prevent arrears arising or increasing. **However, we can only do so if you contact us as soon as you have a problem. Whatever you do, do not ignore the problem - it isn't likely to go away.**

HOUSING BENEFIT

Housing Benefit is a government scheme run and administered by local councils, which provides assistance with rent payment for any sharing owner deemed to have a low income. Depending on your income and savings you may qualify for some or all of the rent to be paid, although other factors taken into account are your age, the monthly rent charged and who is actually living in the household. You do not have to be unemployed to qualify, as many people receiving pensions, and those with low earnings also qualify for Housing Benefit.

If you think you may qualify, but even if you are unsure DO fill in an application form. Forms can be picked up from your local council office, or from the Association's office. Your Housing Officer or the Welfare Benefits Office can give you further advice or assistance in completing the form. If you are in receipt of DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) benefits you **MUST** complete an additional form available from the DWP Office in order that your application can be assessed.

If you are a new sharing owner with the Association you should apply for Housing Benefit as quickly as possible, and before your purchase takes place so that any payment covers from the start of your occupancy. Claimants will receive payment from the Monday after Housing Benefits receive the form. Your claim can only be processed if all the evidence requested is supplied within four weeks of the form being submitted, and providing that you are residing in the property.