

2022/23

Rent and Service Charge Consultation



Why are We Writing to You?

Every year Dalmuir Park Housing Association undertakes what's known as a rent & service charge consultation process before our Board of Management meets to decide what the rent & service charges should be in the coming financial year.

With the information contained within this leaflet we want to hear your views about either a **3.9%, 4.5% and 4.9%** rent increase. This represents an increase of between £15.45 and £18.04 per month based on an average rent of £350.67 last year.

As part of the rent review, we will also be reviewing our service charges and the detail of the changes are contained in this leaflet on page 4.

DPHA reviews its rent and service charge levels each year to make sure we can deliver the promises we have made in our Business Plan and provide services that really matter to our tenants such as repairs, property improvements and delivering all our other services.

Any approved rent and service charge increase will come into effect on 28 March 2022 for the year ahead. Keeping our rents and service charges affordable, especially during these challenging times is a priority for us.

Why rent setting is so important?

Our main source of income is from the rents that we charge for our properties. Like other housing associations, we are a not-for-profit organisation. This means that the money collected from rents is invested directly back into the Association, which in turn allows us to spend money on maintaining and improving tenants' homes and the environment; as well as managing our housing, now and in the future.

The annual rent review is linked to our annual budget setting process. Each year the Board agrees a Budget for the forthcoming year. We need to make sure we have enough income to cover the costs we have identified in our Budget to run the Association on a day-to-day basis and to make sure we can carry out the work and investment we have identified in our Business Plan and property investment plans.

Supporting the Association's Business Plan

Rents are our main source of income. Our income determines what we can spend on our services now and in the future. The Association is committed to supporting our existing and future tenants, to be able to access affordable housing in their local area. The Scottish Housing Regulator requires all Registered Social landlords (RSL's) such as DPHA to produce a 30 year Business Plan and our rent strategy is a central part of the business planning process.

We use our Business Plan as a planning tool to demonstrate our financial viability in terms of our ability to keep providing our key services. We focus on providing services to all our tenants whilst continuing to improve the quality of all of our homes through capital investment works such as replacing windows, boilers, kitchens and bathroom replacements. This capital spend also includes significant investment in all of our homes to meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH), which ensures our homes are as energy efficient as we can possibly make them for our tenants.

How was your rent spent during 2021/22?

Covid-19 has impacted on the volume of investment that we could safely carry out this year. We did manage to carry out window upgrades, kitchen, and bathroom replacements as well as heating system upgrades. We also installed heat and smoke detectors to the majority of our properties with the remaining properties due to be completed by the date of legal compliance which is February 2022.

More information about our legal obligation to instal new heat and smoke detectors can be found here <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fire-and-smoke-alarms-in-scottish-homes/>

Other than the investment works we completed in properties, your rent was also spent on day to day property maintenance which we call reactive repairs, such as maintaining and repairing boilers, heating and hot water repairs; heating breakdown and repairs; plumbing issues such as pipes, sinks, showers and taps; Joinery repairs for windows, doors; lighting within closes and backcourts; controlled entry doors; and much more.

What are we planning for 2022/23?

Investments to our properties this year have already been identified as they are planned years in advance to allow us to prepare and pay for them. The improvements we hope to carry out (depending on the ongoing impact of COVID19) include:

- Kitchens upgrades
- Bathrooms upgrades
- Windows and Doors replacements
- Boiler replacements
- Roofs renewals
- Door entry systems upgrades
- Stonework preservation

The costs to you: 2022/23 Rent Increase

Just like the budgeting you do at home, there are choices we can make based on your views. The important thing is we need to hear your thoughts on our proposals.

The Board has agreed that we consult with you on 3 rent increase options. These are: **3.9%, 4.5% and 4.9%** for 2022/23.

In our approved Business Plan, the Board had assumed that rents may increase by CPI (Consumer Price Index) plus 1% for next year. If the Board was to approve an increase at this level it would mean looking at a potential rent increase of around 5.2%, as October 2021's CPI was 4.2%. However, the Board has already agreed that it will not consider a rent increase as high as this is on the basis that we are committed to keeping rents as low as possible without detriment to the long term financial viability of the Association.

Here is an indication on how the 3 rent increase options will affect the average rent we charge with effect from 28 March 2022.

	Current Average weekly rent* 2021/22	3.9% Increase to average weekly rent	Weekly Overall Increase
1 Apt	£63.99	£66.48	£2.49
2 Apt	£80.19	£83.31	£3.12
3 Apt	£81.50	£84.68	£3.18
4 Apt	£91.29	£94.85	£3.56
5+ Apt	£107.70	£111.90	£4.20

Increasing the rent by **3.9%** generates additional income of **£99,746** for the Association and this is representative of 32 bathrooms or 23 kitchens.

	Current Average weekly rent* 2021/22	4.5% Increase to average weekly rent	Weekly Overall Increase
1 Apt	£63.99	£66.87	£2.88
2 Apt	£80.19	£83.80	£3.61
3 Apt	£81.50	£85.17	£3.67
4 Apt	£91.29	£95.40	£4.11
5+ Apt	£107.70	£112.55	£4.85

Increasing the rent by **4.5%** generates additional income of **£107,419** for the Association and this is representative of 34 bathrooms or 24 kitchens.

	Current Average weekly rent* 2021/22	4.9% Increase to average weekly rent	Weekly Overall Increase
1 Apt	£63.99	£67.13	£3.14
2 Apt	£80.19	£84.12	£3.93
3 Apt	£81.50	£85.49	£3.99
4 Apt	£91.29	£95.76	£4.47
5+ Apt	£107.70	£112.98	£5.28

**Exclusive of service charges*

Increasing the rent by **4.9%** generates additional income of **£115,092** for the Association and this is representative of 37 bathrooms or 26 kitchens.

This additional income generated by either of the 3 rent increase options noted above will ensure that we continue to deliver our planned maintenance programme in the next financial year, although the higher

option will allow us to invest more in our properties. The Association continues to seek Value for Money and strives to keep costs as low as possible.

Your Service Charges for 2022/23

Service charges are set based on the actual cost of delivering each of the service elements to you. Service charges are recharged back to tenants in arrears, in other words we pay the invoices for the work and services, and we then recharge the costs back to you through a service charge. That's why services charges can go up or down from one year to the next.

We have used the actual costs for delivering services during the financial year 2020/21 to prepare the revised 2022/23 service charges.

The table below details the monthly service charges and the changes that will be applied from **28 March 2022**.

Your Service Charges for 2022/23 will be:

Service Charges – Monthly	Current Charge 2021/22	New Charge for 2022/23	Change
TV Aerial maintenance	£0.45	£0.28	- £0.17
Door Entry Systems	£1.07	£1.20	+ £0.13
Communal Fans	£4.64	£4.48	- £0.16
Estate and Environmental Management	£20.80	14.44	- £6.36
Stair Cleaning	£15.43	£15.49	+ £0.06
Stair Lighting	£5.69	£6.34	+ £0.65
Housing Support (Sheltered Housing)	£188.97	£175.61	- £13.36

In recent years we have experienced an increase in fly tipping of bulk items such as furniture, carpets and white goods being left by tenants in shared back courts and on pavements. Last year seen the introduction of the Environmental Charge along with the Estate Management Service charge

This service charge has allowed the Association to remove excessive bulk that has been left in our common areas. Every time that the Association has to remove bulk from the areas surrounding our properties it is recharged back to tenant through the service charges the following year.

If tenants' and residents disposed of bulk appropriately in line with local authority refuse guidelines and recycling centres we would not need to remove nor recover the costs spent to ensure our estate is clear of unwanted bulk items.

We do this to ensure the overall look of our area and preserve the Health & Safety of our tenants, families, and members of the public

How our rents compare to other landlords in 2020/21

Here is how our current rent levels compare with local landlords and West Dunbartonshire Council for 2020/21.

DPHA	Trafalgar HA*	Clydebank HA*	Cordale HA*	Knowes HA*	Dunbritton HA*	Faifley HA*	WD Council*
£350.67	£329.62	£322.05	£373.58	£347.63	£337.49	£368.16	£331.18

**information taken from the Landlords Performance from the SHR website*

Here are some additional things we take into account when reviewing our rents and service charges:

- **Will the increase be affordable?** We use a tool-kit produced by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations to ensure that our rents and service charges are affordable from our single person properties right up to family homes.
- **Do you think our services offer value for money?** We consider the feedback we receive from our tenants.
- **Do our rents compare to those charged by other local landlords?** That's why we compare our rents against those charged by other landlords.
- **Do our staff have the resources available to them to deliver excellent services to you?** We make sure this is the case through our approved Budget.

How can you tell us your views?

It is important that we hear your thoughts on our proposed rent increase options of **3.9%, 4.5% and 4.9%**; changes to our service charge levels. You can give us your views on our 2022/23 proposals in a number of ways:

- There is a short survey on the last page of this leaflet which you can fill out and return to us in the free post envelope provided.
- There is an online survey on our website at www.dpha.org/housing/rent-setting
- Our Office at present remains closed to the public. If you wish to make an appointment and speak with a member of staff regarding the increase you can do so by calling us on 0141 952 2447. Option 2.
- The closing date for your responses is **Friday, 28 January 2022 at 10am.**
- All tenants who provide their contact details with their feedback will be entered into a prize draw for vouchers to the value of 1x £50 prize and 2x £25 prizes. This will be drawn by the Board of Management on 28 February 2022.

RENT ISSUES— WE'RE STILL HERE TO HELP

As you know our office remains closed to the public, however we are continuing with business as usual whilst our staff work from home. Our staff are available during normal working hours to help during the on-going pandemic.

It is more important now more than ever to speak to us especially if you know that you are in arrears but have been struggling to find help, or are just too worried to deal with it. Please don't stick your head in the sand and ensure you **continue to read this leaflet**.



There may be times when you have difficulties paying rent including due to Covid and unemployment or illness etc.

As soon as you get into difficulties with your rent, you should contact your Housing Officer who can discuss making a realistic arrangement with you to pay your rent, or offer advice on other agencies to contact for support. We understand that rent arrears maybe only one problem that you could be facing.

Get help at an early stage and don't let your arrears get out of control.

Our Housing Staff are here to help and support you. We can only do this if you call or get in touch with us. If you are in arrears due to Covid may not take legal action if you have been in touch with us to talk about your arrears and tried to make a suitable arrangement to repay the debt.

MAKE AN ARRANGEMENT

If you are aware that your rent account is in arrears and you have not set up an arrangement with us, it is now more important than ever that you contact us and discuss your situation with us. We can only assist you if you call or get in touch.

We may start to take legal proceedings against you to recover your tenancy so it really is in your best interests to contact us. We don't want you to lose your home. **The sooner you get in touch the better.**

We will not take court action against customers who have made an arrangement to pay their arrears with us and have maintained their agreed arrangement.

GENERAL RENT ISSUES

If you get into general difficulties with your rent, contact your Housing Officer as soon as possible. We may be able to help you to sort out the problem by, for example:

- Changing monthly payments to fit in with your salary cycle e.g. Weekly/fortnightly
- Coming to an arrangement which allows you to pay off arrears in installments
- Give advice on whether you may qualify for any benefits

All discussions we have with you are confidential. If a genuine problem exists, we can usually work out a realistic arrangement for repayment of the arrears taking all your circumstances into account. However, if we make an arrangement with you it is important that you maintain it.

IF YOU DO NOT MAINTAIN YOUR ARRANGEMENT, OR AGREED AN ALTERNATIVE ONE WITH US, WE CAN ULTIMATELY TAKE LEGAL ACTION TO REPOSSESS YOUR HOME.

PAYMENTS

Both tenants and sharing owners can make their payments by phone, direct debit, standing order, allpay or bank transfer.

Our bank details for online payments or standing orders are:

Sort code: 80-13-15
Account Number: 00134921

To help us identify your payment please include your account reference number when making a payment.

If you do not know your rent reference number please contact a member of the Customer Services Team who will be happy to help.

We Want to Help

There are many ways that we can help you to begin resolving any financial problems that you may be facing, but we are unable to do this without you speaking to us. We remain committed to doing everything we can to support our customers whose finances have been affected by the pandemic or other issues.

So please call us on 0141 952 2447
or email us at housing@dpha.org.uk



You can call any of the Housing Staff directly on the following numbers:

Kimberley Tennant – 0141 435 6532 or 07930 401433
Jennie Cameron – 0141 435 6535 or 07376 589464 (Wed – Fri)
Kirsty Swan – 0141 435 6531 or 07930 401447
Paul Gupta – 0141 435 6529 or 07949 323 450
Please note that we can also be contacted via **WhatsApp**.



TENANCY SUSTAINMENT



DPHA are working in partnership with Knowes and Clydebank Housing Associations and have recruited a Tenancy Sustainment Officer, Fiona Campbell.

Fiona can offer assistance in many areas some of which include the condition of your home/decoration, fuel poverty, community care grants, crisis grants, welfare assistance & food parcels. She also works in conjunction with other agencies such as, Working4u, Recycle Rooms and some organisations that can offer befriending etc.

There could be support and assistance available that you may just not be aware of, and Fiona could discuss all you options with you.

If you feel you have an issue Fiona could assist with, she can be contacted directly on 07494 170426. Any discussions you have with Fiona are in confidence and will not be shared with DPHA unless you give Fiona permission.



OTHER HELPFUL CONTACTS

You can also contact for the following for advice and assistance:

West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau on 0141 435 7590

Independent Resource Centre 0141 951 4040

Universal Credit 0800 328 5644

Scottish Welfare Fund 01389 737640

Working4u Support Services 01389 738296

Find out if you can claim any benefits at www.entitledto.co.uk



Rent & Service Charge Consultation Survey 2022/23

Given the information provided within this leaflet what would be your preferred increase? Please tick one option only		
3.9%	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4.5%	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4.9%	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comments		
		Yes
		No
Do you think that your rent represents Value for Money?		
Comments		
Did you think the information provided in this leaflet was easy to understand?		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments		
Would you like to be a member of our Tenants Panel or the Board of Management?		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
What business priorities do you think we should we be considering for the future?		
Comments		
Name		
Address		
Contact Details		

Please return this form by **Friday, 28 January 2022 at 10am**, by either posting it back using the pre-paid envelope, posting it by hand through the office letter box, scanning/taking a photo of the form and emailing it to us using the following email [**housing@dpha.org.uk**](mailto:housing@dpha.org.uk)

All tenants who provide their contact details with their feedback will be entered into a prize draw for vouchers to the value of 1x £50 prize and 2x £25 prizes. This will be drawn by the Board of Management on 28 February 2022.