

## **Changes to your rent**

As a social housing provider, we follow rules set by the government when we calculate any changes to your rent.

The government usually allows your core rent (not including service charges) to increase based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September, plus 1%. The CPI is a commonly used measure of inflation which measures changes in the prices of goods.

This year the CPI was very high (10.1%) and the government has agreed that supported housing providers can increase core rents by 11.1%.

The government has also confirmed that benefits will increase in line with CPI inflation.

If you use Housing Benefit, Universal Credit or another form of benefits to pay your rent, you will see these payments rise from April onwards. Please make sure that you inform your Housing Benefit authority or Universal Credit of your new rent and service charge.

## **How will the money be used?**

We are a not-for-profit organisation, so all of the money we make is invested back into homes and services.

Increasing rents means that we can keep providing you with high quality repairs, maintenance and other services, as the prices we pay for these have gone up too.

## **Service charges**

Your service charges are based on the expected cost during the year ahead. Most of these have increased by inflation or less.

However, if your rent includes **utilities charges** (gas & electricity) these have gone up a lot more. This reflects the big rises in gas and electricity prices that everybody is facing. There was a large rise in these charges last year when we had to sign a new contract for electricity at a much higher rate. This year we are in the same position with signing a new contract for gas.

There has been some government help with these costs. Where we have received any refunds, we have taken these amounts off your charges for next year. For some people (particularly in shared housing) there should be some more government money to come, but the details of how and when this will be paid have not yet been confirmed.

*Please turn over ...*

## **Support during the cost-of-living crisis**

We know that many people will be facing financial difficulties at the moment because of rising prices and energy bills.

If you are struggling to pay your rent or service charge, please speak to us as soon as possible, by contacting your Regional Housing Officer or Outreach Worker.

There is also lots of useful information on our cost-of-living webpage:

[www.advanceuk.org/existing-customers/cost-of-living](http://www.advanceuk.org/existing-customers/cost-of-living).

## **Advance Hardship Fund**

From April 2023 we are introducing a hardship fund for the first time. If you are struggling with the day-to-day cost of living and experiencing financial difficulty you will be able to apply for a one-off amount of funding to assist with essential items such as:

- Utility Costs
- Food
- Clothing

The details are currently being finalised and will be published on the Advance website before 1<sup>st</sup> April. Follow us on Facebook (@AdvanceUK.org) for updates Your Regional Housing Officer or Housing Outreach Worker will also be able to help you to apply.