



Rent Consultation

YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON OUR PROPOSED RENT INCREASE FOR 2017/18

Each year the Association invites our tenants to have your say on our proposed rent increase for 2017/18. We have put together this newsletter as you have indicated that this is the preferred way of consulting with you.

Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 tenants have the right to be consulted on a range of policy issues that affect them. One of these issues is the setting of your rent. As a housing association we are required as part of our business planning procedure to look at our rental income and assess what that needs to be for the forthcoming year in order to allow us to carry out all the work we have planned.

There are factors we must consider when looking at the extent of our rental income

- Our operating costs such as repairs, cyclical maintenance, staff costs and office overheads
- The continuing programme of planned maintenance such as new kitchens and bathrooms
- To allow us to have sufficient reserves to ensure the business is protected against unforeseen risks

As costs keep going up we have to continue to look at our income in order to meet these increases and still be able to provide a good service.

Each year we carry out improvements to a range of flats such as new kitchens, boilers, bathrooms or windows. So if you haven't benefitted personally from a past rent increase you will at some stage in the future.

How do we calculate the increase?

We look at our budget figures for the coming year and discuss in detail with our Committee about work planned for next year. We consider whether there are likely to be any other significant costs such as renewal of equipment etc and we take into account what the current level of inflation is.

Another significant issue we look at is what other housing associations are proposing to charge for their rents.

From the figures available to us at the end of December from other Glasgow Housing Associations we are confident that for the 7th year in a row we are proposing one of the lowest increases in the city.

The proposed Rent increase for Cathcart & District Housing Association is 1.5% which we are pleased to announce is the same as last year.

To illustrate what this will mean we have provided the comparison table below.

	2016/17	2017/18
Studio flat	213.79	217.00
1 bedroom flat	259.33	263.22
2 bedroom flat	318.94	323.72
3 bedroom flat	373.96	379.57

These costs are only a guideline some flats will fall into slightly different categories depending if they have dining kitchens parking spaces provided.



CONSULTATION

We now want to hear your views on this rent increase. If you would like to comment on our proposals please call in to our office if you wish to discuss this with your housing officer or email us at info@cathcartha.co.uk and tell us what you think or complete and hand in the form attached prior to 27 January 2017.

WAYS TO PAY YOUR RENT

We provide a range of options for you to pay your rent:

You can.....

- Pay by Allpay at the post office or Paypoint outlets in local shops
- By standing order
- By direct debit
- By phone to the office using your debit card
- By attending at the office using a debit card
- By Housing Benefit direct

PAYING YOUR RENT

We are very aware that in times of economic constraints paying your rent can be difficult. The aftermath of Christmas sometimes means that people will have to make difficult choices as bills fall through the door. We would like to remind everyone that your RENT is really the most important payment you make each month. It protects the roof over your head and provides the cornerstone of your family life.

Times are difficult though and if you find you are having to make choices about how to spend your income please make an appointment to see our welfare rights officers or our Money Advice service. Both services provide specially trained staff to assist in all areas of financial concern from sorting out your housing benefit to avoiding fuel poverty and managing your bills. All appointments are completely confidential and our representatives will carry out house visits if you cannot or prefer not to come to the office.

We will largely be sympathetic to anyone who experiences financial problems and your housing officer will work with you on a payment

plan if you do experience temporary arrears. However if payment plans are not adhered to and contact is not maintained with your housing officer we will pursue outstanding arrears and that can lead ultimately to you losing your home. It is always with regret but we have carried out evictions in recent years due to non payment of rent.

We therefore cannot stress enough the need for early contact if you struggle with your rent.

- The majority of our tenants pay their rent or ensure that housing benefit is in place to do so
- Of those who do experience problems, most seek assistance and with the assistance of the Association manage their account.
- It is only the minority who do not meet their financial problems and unfortunately put their tenancy at risk.

This good out-turn means that we are able to keep our rents low and carry out your improvements. Please don't let yourself become one of the minority!

GAS SERVICING IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS WELL AS OURS!

As you will be aware each year we are required by law to service your gas installation. This means that our Gas service engineer will call at an appointed time to service your boiler and/ or your gas fire. Our maintenance staff will arrange these visits for you and you as the tenant must provide reasonable access for this Annual Gas Check to be done. We start the process of gaining access approximately two months before the deadline date for the service to be carried out. This means that there is plenty of time to change an appointment if the first one is unsuitable.

Our engineers are very flexible and will accommodate people who are working by calling in the early evening or as a very last resort on a Saturday morning.

Once again there is a very small minority of flats that we have difficulty getting access to and ultimately, we will force entry under the terms of our tenancy agreement to carry out this work. If we require to take this course of action the expenses involved will be charged back to the tenant. So please when you receive your letter make access available or contact us for an alternative suitable time.



Backcourts

Many of the backcourts within the Association stock are already kept in a very good condition and Cathcart & District Housing Association are keen to ensure that the backcourts are clean, healthy and safe places that its tenants can use so please read the undernoted to find out who is responsible for what, and do your bit to make the Cathcart, Battlefield and Mount Florida areas even better places to live.

Refuse

Glasgow City Council is responsible for emptying the rubbish bins and any other bins provided for recycling etc. Your bins will not be moved and your rubbish will not be collected unless it is secured in tied bags and placed in bins provided. Any rubbish bags or rubbish discarded outwith bins or not disposed of correctly will not be uplifted.

Our Caretakers will clean out the binstores but it is your responsibility to keep the bin store tidy. If bin bags, bulk items, rubbish or other debris cause an obstruction or make it difficult for Glasgow City Council to remove properly filled bins from the bin shelter, they will not be moved.

Close Cleaning over Winter Period

Our Caretakers as part of their responsibilities regularly clean the common areas of the building and wash down the stairs. In the winter months in freezing temperatures on health and safety grounds we do not expect our Caretakers to wash the stairs in case of any slip factor at these times the decision would be taken to only sweep stairs down and revert to washing them when the temperature rises.

Bulk items

Bulk items should be left next to the bin area but not in bins or in the bin area itself. Bulk items should not be left anywhere which causes an obstruction to other residents. Reporting your bulk for uplift can be done by either calling 0141 287 9700 or by making a request online. Once reported this can take up to 4 weeks for the bulk to be removed.

Glasgow City Council will collect these items. For items to be uplifted they must be bagged or tied in manageable bundles, again any items added to bulk and not already requested for uplift will not be removed. Electrical items will not be uplifted as part of this schedule. If you need to dispose of electrical equipment contact Glasgow City Council on 0141 287 9700 to arrange for a special uplift.

Glasgow City Council **will not** uplift the following items:

- cast iron washing poles
- supermarket trolleys (contact the supermarket concerned)
- garage doors (metal)
- garden rollers
- gas cylinders (can be disposed free of charge at one of the recycling centres)
- safes
- paint (can be disposed free of charge at one of the recycling centres)
- oil (can be disposed free of charge at one of the recycling centres)
- car batteries (can be disposed free of charge at one of the recycling centres)
- storage heaters (In order to ascertain whether asbestos may be present we require details of the make and model number. In the event that the heater does contain asbestos we will contact you).

RENT AND SERVICE CHARGE QUESTIONNAIRE

We want to hear your views on the rent consultation and proposed rent increase.
Please take a few minutes to fill in this form

1. Our policy is to increase rents on the Consumer Price Index and on this basis we propose to increase the rent by 1.5%.

Do you agree with this? If you disagree, please tell us why?

Agree ☐

Don't mind/Not sure ☐

Disagree ☐

Comments:

2. Do you think the rent you pay is good value for money?
If you disagree, please tell us why?

Agree ☐

Don't mind/Not sure ☐

Disagree ☐

Comments:

3. By increasing the rent the Association can continue to deliver existing services and invest in its stock. Do you think the Association is proposing a fair rent increase?
If you disagree, please tell us why?

Good Idea ☐

Don't mind/Not sure ☐

Disagree ☐

Comments:

4. Are you happy with the level of consultation and information you get about the annual rent increase? If you disagree, please tell us why?

Happy ☐

Don't mind/Not sure ☐

Disagree ☐

Comments:

Please use this space for any questions or comments.

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone Number