



Fact sheet on rent increase - April 2015

Q1. How is my rent increase calculated?

A. Rents are being increased in line with a national social rent setting formula set by the government.

This is how the government's formula works:

- We start with your current weekly rent
- We then add an amount for inflation which is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as at September 2014. CPI inflation last September was 1.2%
- We add a further 1%, which makes a total of 2.2%

Most rents will be increased by 2.2% but the actual increase in your rent will be less than 2.2% if your current weekly rent is already close to the maximum rent chargeable under the government's rent setting formula.

Overall, the average increase in rents will be 2.19%.

The council is increasing rents in line with the government formula so that we can:

- continue to improve our customer service and the management of our estates, keeping them clean, safe and welcoming
- meet our investment plans to ensure the housing stock is maintained to modern standards
- regenerate and transform some of our estates that are most in need of investment
- build 600 new affordable homes to meet local housing need

Q2. How does this affect my service charges?

A. Your service charges have been re-calculated based on the cost of providing the service. Your water rates have also been increased by Thames Water.

Q3. Will I get housing benefit for the higher rent?

A. If you currently receive full housing benefit, providing your circumstances do not change, housing benefit should cover the cost of your new rent automatically. Please contact us if you experience any difficulties with your benefit claim when your new rent is applied.

You will need to pay for any increase to charges which are not eligible for housing benefit, such as water rates and heating and hot water fuel costs. If you are on a low

wage or pension, you should check with your local estate office to see if you now qualify for housing benefit.

Q4. What can I do if I am struggling to afford the new rent charges?

A. If you are finding it difficult to pay your rent you should contact your estate office straight away. You will still need to pay your weekly charges but you can come to an agreement to pay off any rent arrears over a period of time.

Q5. What other help is available?

A. We work with a partner agency who offer independent debt and welfare benefit advice to CWH tenants. We can make an appointment for you to meet with an adviser for help with prioritising debt repayments and to check if you are eligible for any additional financial support. Other agencies who can help are:

- National Debtline - Freephone: 0808 808 4000
- Citizens' Advice Bureau - Advice Line: 08444 771 611