**How are our rents set?**

As a Council we can’t just choose to charge what we like. The formula for calculating rents is set by the Government in the Rent Standard 2019 Policy.

**What will this mean for my rent from April 2020?**

The Government have told us that we can start to increase rents again from April 2020. We can increase rents by the rate of CPI\* in September 2019, plus 1%. September CPI rate was 1.7%, meaning that your rent will increase by 2.7% from 6 April 2020.

\*The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) measures the change in prices of consumer goods and services bought by households, but doesn't include the costs of your home.

By now you should have received your Notice of Rent Increase letter confirming your weekly rent charge from 6 April 2020.

**I have received my rent letter but my rent is paid by Housing Benefit. Do I need to do anything?**

For residents who claim Housing Benefit, we send rent charge details to our Housing Benefit department at the same time as your rent change letter so you do not need to contact the Housing Benefit team unless you have any specific questions regarding your new Housing Benefit award.

## I have received my rent letter but I claim Universal Credit (UC). Do I need to do anything?

Yes. It is your responsibility to make sure that the Department for Work and Pensions is aware of the change in your rental charge and can adjust your payment. You need to update your online account with your new rent and service charges within **14 days** of your rent changing. This date is on your rent notification letter.

To do this, log in to your UC online account and in ‘**where you live and what it costs**’ input the new rent figures given to you in your letter. Then check your journal to confirm that it shows you have done this.

If you forget, do this as soon as possible. If you do not, you risk receiving an incorrect payment and falling behind on your rent.

**I have received my rent letter but I pay my rent by Standing Order. Do I need to do anything?**

You are responsible for making sure that your payment is correct.

If you pay by standing order, then you will need to contact your bank to advise them of the new amount payable from April 2020.

Monthly Payments by Standing Order

Please note that 2020/21 is a 52-week year and therefore you will pay rent for 48 weeks. This means that monthly payments will need to be calculated as follows:

* Weekly rent x 48 = total for the year
* Total for the year divide by 12 = monthly payment

## I have received my rent letter, but I pay my rent online. Do I need to do anything?

You are responsible for making sure that the payment is correct.

You will need to adjust your rent payment to take into account the increase in weekly rent from 6 April 2020.

## I have received my rent letter, but my rent is paid by Direct Debit. Do I need to do anything?

Your Direct Debit will be automatically adjusted, and you will receive a letter confirming your new direct debit amount.   
  
If you are on partial Housing Benefit and pay by Direct Debit, we will have to wait for the Housing Benefit department to tell us what your new entitlement is before we can make the change.

## What happens if I don’t pay my rent and/or service charge?

Payment of your rent must be first on your list of outgoings. This is because non-payment can result in you being evicted from your home.

You must contact us if there are any changes to your circumstances which affect your ability to pay your rent. Rent payments are **not optional** and they are your responsibility. You could be at risk of losing your home if you do not pay your rent.

We are here to help you, so please contact the Income Team on XXXXXX as soon as possible if you are having difficulty paying.