

CHANGES TO YOUR RENT FROM APRIL 2025

*** FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ***



Your rent and service charges are reviewed annually. The Regulator of Social Housing has announced that housing associations, such as EPIC, will be able to increase their rents by the rate of CPI inflation last September (which was 1.7%) plus an additional 1%. This means rents for social housing properties can increase by 2.7% with effect from April 2025.

What is CPI?

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is used as a measure of inflation in the UK. It measures the average change from month-to-month of prices for goods and services purchased by households.

Does EPIC have to increase my rent?

Like many organisations across the country, we have been affected by rising costs, such as energy prices, contractor costs and materials. If we did not increase our rents by the amount set by the government, we would have to make difficult choices about the services we deliver, for example, having to invest less in your homes and neighbourhoods - and we don't think this would be fair to our tenants as a whole.

The money we get from your rents is by far our largest source of income. It pays for the services we deliver and the investments we make in your homes and communities. You can learn more about how your rent was spent in 2023-24 in our *Tenants Annual Report*. For more information please visit:

<https://epichousing.co.uk/app/uploads/2024/11/Epic-housing-Tenants-Annual-Report-V10-Oct-2024-web.pdf>

When will my rent increase?

For tenants with a weekly tenancy the increase will take effect from Monday 7th April 2025. For those who hold a monthly tenancy the rent will increase on Tuesday 1st April 2025.

I pay service charges, do the same increases apply?

For 2025-26 we have seen an increase in service charges, due to rising costs and other related third party factors.

What will you spend the rental income on?

The income raised through the rent and service charge (if applicable) you pay ensures we can continue to provide our services, such as repairs, maintenance and improvements to all of our homes.

What can I do if I can't afford my rent and I'm struggling with the cost of living?

Our priority is to support our tenants to stay in their homes. If you have any concerns about being able to afford your rent, please email us at rents@epichousing.co.uk or call 01782 252575. We can offer budgeting advice, check your entitlement to benefits and also signpost you to organisations that can help you manage any debts. We can also set up an affordable payment plan to clear any rent arrears.

What if I disagree with the rent increase?

The rent increase has been set in line with government guidance and has been approved by our Board. The rent is set by a regulated formula based on your home's property type and location. For further information please read the rent increase notice you have received.

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How can I make a complaint about any services please:

visit www.epichousing.co.uk/manage-my-home/feedback-form

email us at mailbox@epichousing.co.uk

call us on 01782 252575.

I claim Universal Credit (UC)*: What do I need to do?

It is important that you notify the Department for Work & Pensions of your new rent (including any service charge) on, or as soon as possible after, Monday 7th April 2025 (or 1st April 2025 if you hold a monthly tenancy). Please note that any service charges which form part of your rent are 'eligible' for UC.

My rent is paid by Housing Benefit (HB)*: Do I need to do anything?

If you claim Housing Benefit with Stoke-on-Trent Council and this is paid directly to EPIC, we will inform the Council of the new rent on your behalf. Any service charges which form part of your rent are 'eligible' for HB.

* If there is any shortfall between your rent and your UC or HB entitlement you may be eligible for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP). To apply for this, you should contact your local authority. For further information email us at rents@epichousing.co.uk or ring 01782 252575.

What if I pay my rent via Standing Order?

If you pay by standing order you will need to notify your bank to adjust your payments.

Where can I get debt advice?

The following organisations offer FREE advice and access to debt counselling:



www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money

Debt Team (local): 01782 408625



www.stepchange.org

Debt helpline: 0800 138 1111



www.nationaldebtline.org

Helpline: 0808 808 4000