

Your Rent - Time to have your say



Please read this important publication carefully!



Delivering value in everything we do – our rent review for 2020/21

Welcome to our annual rent review consultation. This is designed to keep you informed about what is happening here at Thenue and how this affects the rent you pay. Inside you will find a lot of information, but what is important is that we want to know what you think before we make any

decisions with regard to next year's rent. Last year we asked you what you thought our priorities should be, so we have been working hard to achieve them. This special publication contains some background information which should help you to make sense of it all.



Keeping the rent as affordable as possible is important to us!

We always try our hardest to make the best possible use of your rent, and it's right that you should expect us to be as efficient as we can. Each year we look at the different challenges we need to meet, and then consult all our tenants on the options for reviewing the rent level. We came into being because of the desire of local people to improve their communities and to make bad

housing and poor services a thing of the past; and that continues to be our aim. But you might be surprised at how many pressures we face in trying to ensure your rent is fair and affordable. This consultation process on rent aims to highlight the different uses we make of the rent you pay.

Looking after your home

Repairs are your biggest priority and they always will be. Last year we entered into a repairs contract, (day to day repairs) with Mears Ltd so that we now do any number of repairs during the same visit. That cuts down on inconvenience for you and reduces substantially our contractor's travelling time. We only pay for the work they do, rather than the time they spend travelling from one location to another. This year we anticipate spending £1.9 million on these repairs.



This aspect of our service to you in many respects is the most important, because each and every tenant generally has first-hand experience of it. On average we call on you three to four times a year to complete a repair. We monitor how we perform and the results below demonstrate the excellent repairs service we provide:-



Average time

1.4 hrs

Emergency Repairs

The average time we took to complete emergency repairs was 1.4 hours, compared to the Scottish average of 3.6 hours.



Average time

5 days

Non-Emergency Repairs

The average time we took to complete a typical non-emergency repair was 5 days, compared to the Scottish average of 6.6 days.



Reactive Repairs

95.9%

Right First Time

We completed 95.9% of reactive repairs 'right first time' compared to the Scottish average of 92.5%.



Repairs or Maintenance

94.9%

Satisfied

94.9% of tenants who had repairs or maintenance carried out were satisfied with the service they received, compared to the Scottish average of 91.7%

Looking after your home

Despite the fact that generally we are performing better than the Scottish average, we are not complacent. We are aiming for closer to 100%, especially with regard to non-emergency repairs, 'right first time' and percentage of appointments kept, (currently 93%)


When we add up all our expenditure on repair, replacement and improvement work, (which includes things like kitchen unit replacement, gas servicing, smoke detection installations, stonework repairs, landscape maintenance, gutter cleaning), then this is the biggest area of expenditure. This year a massive £4.6 million, which is around one-third of our total operating expenditure, will be spent keeping all our properties in good order. In 2020/21 this will be £6.1 million.



There is however a period of both uncertainty and unpredictability ahead, caused by external political and economic factors. Brexit has dominated the news. Pushing back the date when the UK leaves the European Union from 29 March 2019, to 31 October 2019 and then to 31 January 2020 does little to provide business in general, and our contractors specifically, with the certainty they

desire. We anticipate both the major repairs price index and our reactive costs per unit to increase at more than inflation going forward at 4.3% and 6.2% respectively. We therefore need to take account of this into 2020.

We always look at ways to become more and more efficient however in everything that we do. A couple of examples we can show you are:-



Average time between tenancies
10 days

On average, the time in between tenancies, (when we are not collecting rent), is 10 days; this time last year it was 21 days.

This is saving over £133.50 per re-let.

Last year we re-let 289 properties, so the efficiency saving is around £38,500.

The speed at which we re-let properties minimises waste, and over the last year (measured in quarters), the percentage of properties re-let within two weeks has increased from 37% to 40% to 61% to 70%.

70%

61%

40%

37%

KEEPING YOU SAFE

Fire safety has always been a priority for us, but we're all even more mindful of it since the Grenfell Tower tragedy in London in the summer of 2017, when 71 tenants lost their lives. Our latest newsletter gave you a new alert over faulty tumble dryers. Last year the Scottish Government set new standards for smoke alarms, kitchen heat detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.



We started the work to ensure that we complied with this legislation this summer. We planned to complete the work over the next two years, and this means we'll be spending £735,000 making sure that every one of our houses complies with these new fire regulations. We don't have a choice. We are pleased to be able to tell you that we are already 40% of the way through this work, so we are well ahead of completing the work by December 2020. We are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator, who also stressed the importance of meeting our duties

to keep people safe.

The Regulator's notice comes after it identified that some of Scotland's registered social landlords they had been engaging with had been unable to show they met the required duties. This includes those around the management of asbestos and electrical safety. Rightly so, the Regulator requires all landlords to assure themselves that they are complying with all relevant duties around the safety of tenants' homes. If there is anything at all affecting your safety or you need an opinion on, then just let us

know. Our staff carry out regular inspections of property, environments, common areas and even areas that you don't look at, (water tanks, electrical equipment). If there is anything untoward – please let us know. We must by law make sure every year that your gas supply is safe, and we also need to do regular testing of your electricity supply. **We are proud of our record here, but in order to achieve 100% safely, we do not always get into every home at the first attempt. You can all do your bit by assisting us in this regard.**

Collecting the rent – Why it's important

We put a lot of staff time into making sure we collect the rent that's due to us. We know some tenants can run into difficulties from time to time, and we try to work with people to sort things out. From December 2018, one of the challenges both Thenue and our tenants of working age are facing is 'Universal Credit', which will normally mean tenants who get help with their rent will receive the money direct from the Government, instead of it being paid directly to us.

This means our staff will need to spend extra time to keep closely in touch with tenants to ensure they're still able to pay their rent each month. We have not recruited new staff to be prepared for this. The past savings we have made through by and large technological efficiency gains have been used to



redeploy resources and staff so that we are ready to help those tenants of ours that need that extra help. We have in place a team of welfare rights officers and money advisers to help make sure people are claiming what they're entitled to and make sure rent is paid. Around 10% of our tenants are in receipt of Universal Credit, but this will rise considerably from the summer of 2020 when we see the full roll out of Universal Credit across all our communities. 70% of tenants relying on Universal Credit find that they are behind with their rent, whilst waiting for their payments to come up to date. We are here, and always will be, to help each and every one of them. We also produce a publication called "Cashpoint" – packed with useful information on finance. The next one is due early next year.

Filling the gaps when other services decline

We are more likely than ever before to be providing services which the local council can no longer afford to do. This ranges from removing bulk items of refuse or grass cutting, hedge trimming and generally looking after open areas. What was a demonstration pilot project in Calton last year became a £100,000 National Lottery Community Fund project earlier this year. We can now do this work across all Thenu communities, so if something catches your eye and you think we should do some work there, just let

us know. Similar projects that we offer, because we have secured external funding include our 'Choices for Change' health and wellbeing programme and our 'CLIC' digital inclusion project. All our Community Regeneration activities and opportunities are explained further at <https://www.thenuehousing.co.uk/about-us/Your-Neighbourhood/>



BUILDING NEW HOMES

We see the building new rented homes as a really important way of helping to improve your local community. This work is funded by government grant and bank loans repaid with rent money. Last year we built 56. In January 2020, 49 families will get the keys to their new flat in our new Monteith Row development. Work has just started building 77 flats at Abercromby Street, (Calton), 26 at Landressy Place, (Bridgeton) and 18 at Craighead Avenue, (Blackhill). We always work very hard to try to make sure that building homes doesn't impact on the rents existing tenants pay.

Dealing with the bodies who regulate us

All housing associations have to meet important standards set out by the Scottish Housing Regulator, on issues such as how we were run and how our finances are managed, and this means providing a lot of information to the Regulator each year. We also are accountable to the Charity Regulator, and there's a wide variety of legislation on things like data protection which we must comply with.

We need to ensure that your own data is stored securely and used properly. From November 2019, we were also required to comply with Freedom of Information requests. What all of this means is that we are required more and more to have staff working on administration duties which also has to be paid for through our rents.



Scottish Housing
Regulator

OSCR
Scottish Charity Regulator

Tell us what

Overall we like to think that our rents are good value for money. Below you can see average city wide property rents for other landlords in each of our communities which are:

Post Code	Monthly rent	Weekly rent
G40, (Calton, Dalmarnock, Bridgeton)	£598	£138
G33, (Cranhill)	£652	£150
G1, (Saltmarket, Glasgow Cross)	£950	£219
G45, (Castlemilk)	£479	£111
G23, (Blackhill)	£628	£145
G14, (Scotstoun)	£560	£129

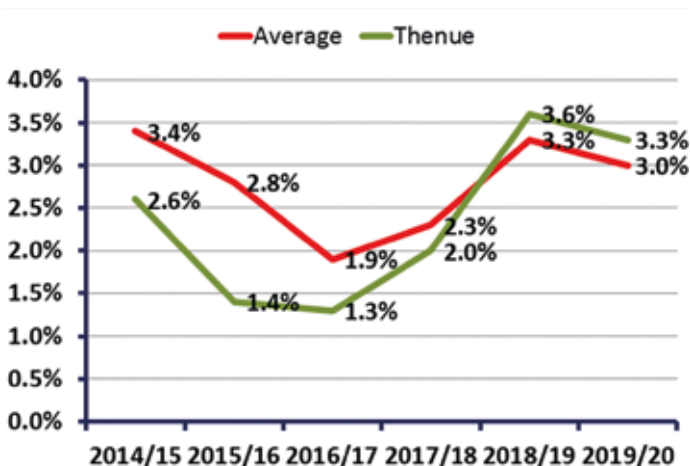
* https://www.home.co.uk/for_rent/

You only have to look at the higher rents and poorer levels of service elsewhere. You also only need to compare Thenue's overall performance with others, which was laid out in last month's newsletter and Charter Report we sent you.

But we are never complacent about value for money. We are always keen to get feedback from you on the rent, the services we provide – and perhaps on services you would like us to think about providing in the future.

Finally, over the years we have tried very hard to keep our rents as affordable as possible. Looking back, you can see how our rent increases have compared to the average increases in Scotland.

Average Rent increases in Scotland 2014/15 - 2019/20



	Thenue	Scottish average
Six years cumulative rent increases value	14.2%	16.7%

Although our rent increases over the last two years have been greater than the Scottish average we are still more than 2.5% lower overall over the last six years.

you think...

In 2020/21 our aim is to keep the increase to the minimum, whilst ensure that our high standards or performance are maintained. Our proposal therefore, is

that we increase rents by 2.6% from April 2020. What therefore this will look like for you, based on current average weekly rents is shown in the following table.

What does this increase mean for your rent from April 2020

Apt size	Current Average Weekly Rent	Proposed average weekly rent
1 apt	£65.34	£67.03
2 apt	£77.76	£79.78
3 apt	£84.03	£86.21
4 apt	£96.04	£98.53
5 apt	£101.87	£104.51

Not everything costs money!

Our Board of Management is ultimately responsible for the overall governance of the Association and is made up entirely of unpaid and dedicated volunteers. There are currently 13 Board Members, and we have capacity for an additional two people to join our Board. Over the years they – and the people who served before them – have given many thousands of hours of time and effort for no financial reward. Interested? Please let us know and we can talk to you about this.



English not your first language?

No problem. We are a 'Happy to translate' accredited organisation. Just let us know your language preference, and we'll do the rest.




Difficulty viewing the text in this newsletter?

No problem. Download this document from our web site, and electronically expand the text to a size that suite you.

www.thenuehousing.co.uk





Ways in which you can tell us what you think


 **In person** – hand in the slip below to our office at 423 London Road or to our service centres at Cranhill or Castlemilk

 E-mail us at rentreview@thenuehousing.co.uk

 Phone Lynne McKenzie-Juetten on **0141 550 9535**

 On-line survey at www.thenuehousing.co.uk

 Through the **self-service app**

 Text us on **07919 304124**

PLEASE RETURN THE SLIP TO US.
YOUR VIEWS ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO US.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PLEASE GIVE US YOUR COMMENTS :

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Return date deadline: 31/1/20

Finally, a choice option, that we can offer to tenants in our flatted properties, where we do not carry out a close cleaning service, is an opportunity to opt 'in' to this service. Currently 165 closes are included in the overall contract; 144 are not included. If you are a resident in any of these 144 closes and want us to do that work for you, the average cost is £2 per resident, per week. Just email us at Claire.nolan@thenuehousing.co.uk or phone us on 0141 550 9577, and we'll endeavour to organise that for you, effective from April 2020.