

Your Rent - Time to have your say



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IMPORTANT
PUBLICATION CAREFULLY!



Delivering value in everything we do – our rent review for 2021/22

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 this special section will find a lot of information, **but it is important that we 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, despite the difficulties that affect us all as a result of the worldwide covid pandemic. So, even in these difficult times, here is some background information that should help you to understand our thinking going forward. If there is anything that you need more information on or need to know, just ask us rent2021@thenuehousing.co.uk



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.

Most of this last year has been challenging for all our tenants and all of us here at Thenue and we are acutely aware of the stresses brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. 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.

Little did we expect to be at the forefront of organising food distribution in the spring and early summer, but we always aim to look after all our tenants as best we can at all times. But you might be surprised at how many other pressures we face in trying to ensure your rent is fair and affordable. This consultation 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. Two years ago we entered into a highly successful partnering model to deliver innovative reactive repairs, (day to day repairs), with Mears FM.

As a result we were able to offer a service where any number of repairs could be done in the same visit. Although that cuts down on inconvenience for you and cuts down substantially on our contractor's travelling time, the restrictions imposed on both Thenue and Mears meant that we had to prioritise emergency and more urgent repairs.

However, every single repair was and will be logged, and we have worked hard with our contractors developing safe working practices to enable these repairs to be completed in line with Government guidelines. To deal with and prevent accidents and health hazards, we have used our resources to make sure that just because the Council restricted their bulk uplift service, all of these items were safely removed and taken to re-cycling centres.



We understand that the Council are not planning to reintroduce this service, so rather than let our communities become unsightly and unsafe, we will do that work ourselves. At the present time this work has cost us around £47,000. We have had to use efficiency savings elsewhere to be able to pay for this. As the Council are definitely not re-introducing this service in 2021, we will be required to make a provision of some £77,000 to cover the cost of this work through next year.

In 2021/22 we anticipate spending £2.3 million on reactive repairs, and this aspect of our service to you in many respects is the most important one, 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 average time we took to complete emergency repairs was 2 hours, compared to the Scottish average of 3.6 hours.



Average time
2 hours
Emergency Repairs

The average time we took to complete a typical non-emergency repair was 5.9 days, compared to the Scottish average of 6.4 days.



Average time
5.9 days
Non-Emergency Repairs

We completed 96.9% of reactive repairs 'right first time' compared to the Scottish average of 92.4%.



Reactive Repairs
96.9%
Right First Time

94.6% of tenants who had repairs or maintenance carried out were satisfied with the service they received, compared to the Scottish average of 91.7%



Repairs or Maintenance
94.6%
Satisfied

Despite the fact that generally we are performing better than the Scottish average, we are not complacent. Being realistic, we will never achieve 100% during the current Covid-19 pandemic. Glasgow remaining in Tier 4, or a return to Tier 4 at some point in the future, may well compromise and frustrate our efforts to achieve that 100%. Although we can't guarantee 100% we can guarantee that we will do our best 100% of the time. In addition to cash we spend on day-to-day reactive repairs, next year we expect to spend £3.7 million on repair, replacement and improvement work, (which includes things like kitchen unit replacement, gas servicing, smoke detection installations, stonework repairs, window replacement, landscape maintenance, gutter cleaning), then this is the biggest area of expenditure.

Overall we expect to spend this year a massive £7.9 million, which is around one-third of our total operating expenditure, keeping all our properties in good order.

There is however a period of both uncertainty and unpredictably ahead, caused by external political and economic factors. Brexit dominated the news this time last year, and Covid has dominated the news this year. Brexit has not gone away, and to date there is no trade deal in place. We anticipate both the major repairs price index and our reactive costs per unit to increase at more than inflation going forward. Some commentators pitch this up as far as between 25 and 12% (Construction News October 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
13 days

On average, the time in between tenancies, (when we are not collecting rent), is 13 days, (the Scottish average is 31 days).

This time last year it was 24 days. This is saving over £133.50 per re-let.

Our rental loss is less than



0.4%

As a result the rental loss as a result of properties being empty is less than 0.4% of our rental income.

The Scottish average is 1.2%

Keeping you safe

Fire safety has always been a priority for us, but we're all even more mindful of it since the terrible tragedy at Grenfell Tower tragedy in London in the summer of 2017, when 71 tenants lost their lives. Our newsletters this year have given you various alerts 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 around 85% of

the way through this work, so we are well ahead of completing the work by March 2021. This will be a year ahead of the requirements of the Scottish Government.

We are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator, who also stress the importance of meeting our duties to keep tenants and residents safe. The Regulator's notice comes after it identified that some of Scotland's registered social landlords it 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). Anything untoward – please let us know. Rightly 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. The self-isolation and shielding caused by the Covid pandemic has resulted in some tenants not being able to allow us access to complete this work this year. However, rest assured, when we do turn up to complete this work all our operatives are fully compliant with safe distance working, have personal protective equipment and all carry ID.

Collecting the rent

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 Thenu and our tenants of working age are facing is the system of 'Universal Credit', which will normally mean tenants who get help with their rent will receive the money direct from the State, 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 has risen considerably during 2020 as some find themselves being made redundant or losing their job during the pandemic. We are always here to help in those circumstances. 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.

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.

Our Choices for Change and our 'CLIC' digital inclusion project have both come to an end, but we are excited to have attracted grant from the Energy Savings Trust in order for us to offer a new Energy Advice service. The service will provide free, impartial energy advice and information to all our customers on household energy issues. We can help:-

- Reduce your fuel costs
- Switch your supplier
- Help manage your fuel debt

- How to Use Your Heating System Efficiently
- Deal with fuel debt
- Pre-payment meters
- Smart Meters
- Top tips on Saving Energy
- Ways to Pay (for your energy)

For support or more information please e-mail Julie at energyadvice@thenuehousing.co.uk. This and all our Community Regeneration activities and opportunities are explained further at <https://www.thenuehousing.co.uk/about-us/Your-Neighbourhood/>

Being open and accountable to you

We need to make sure that you can get hold of us when you need to, and that when you need to make a complaint it gets looked into as quickly, and here we aim for a maximum of five days. These things are important to us and to our tenants, and so investing the right amount of resources is important.

We also know that as well as writing or e-mailing you when we need to, we send out regular newsletters. Our newly configured website is easy to navigate along with our hugely popular self-service app, so that you have the information to hand when you need it.



Building new homes

We see the building new rented homes as a really important way of helping to improve your local community. Indeed, our independent tenant survey earlier this year told us that 48% of our tenants support our development programme.

This work is funded by government grant and bank loans repaid with rent money. Last year we built 49, (at Monteith Row). Work on building 77 flats at Abercromby Street, (Calton) and 26 at Landressy Place, (Bridgeton) was halted in March, as a result of the Government lockdown. This has resulted in a delay at Abercromby Street of around 6 months, but a longer one at Landressy Place caused by both contractor liquidation and vandalism. No other new house construction has started, nor will it start until early 2021. 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 are 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 Charities 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 and bureaucracy, which unfortunately also has to be paid for through our rents.



**Scottish Housing
Regulator**

OSCR
Scottish Charity Regulator

Not everything costs money!

Our Board of Management is ultimately responsible for the overall governance of the association is made up entirely of unpaid volunteers. There are currently 10 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. E-mail us at Charles.turner@thenuehousing.co.uk.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK...

Overall we like to think that our rents are good value for money. Average property rents* in each of the following post-code areas are:-

Post code area	Monthly rent	Weekly rent
G40, (Calton, Dalmarnock, Bridgeton)	£676	£156
G33, (Cranhill)	£742	£171
G1, (Saltmarket, Glasgow Cross)	£1,014	£234
G45, (Castlemilk)	£532	£123
G23, (Blackhill)**	£550	£127
G14, (Scotstoun)	£637	£147

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

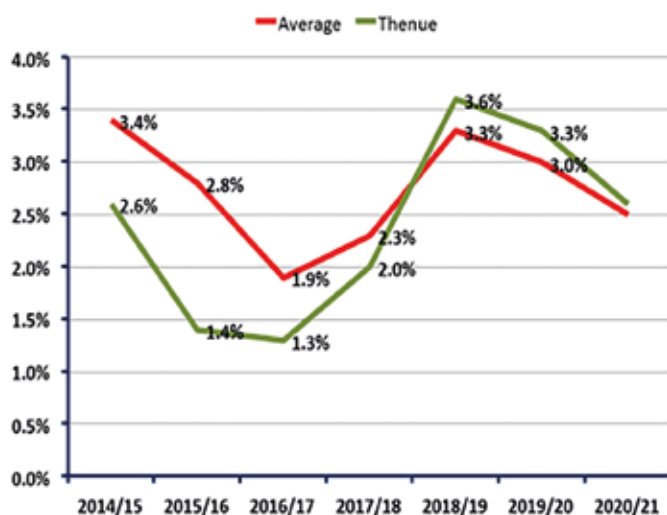
** <https://www.rightmove.co.uk/property-to-rent/G23.html>

You only have to look at the higher rents and poorer levels of service elsewhere. You only need to compare Thenue's overall performance with others, which was laid out elsewhere in this newsletter. 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 - 2020/21



	Thenue	Scottish average
Six years cumulative rent increases value	16.8%	19.3%

But overall Thenue are still more than 2½% lower over the seven six years.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK...

In 2021/222 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 1.1% from April 2021. What therefore this will look like for you, based on current average weekly rents is shown below:-

Size of home	Current average weekly rent	Proposed average weekly rent
1 apartment	£67.54	£68.28
2 apartment	£80.55	£81.43
3 apartment	£86.84	£87.79
4 apartment	£99.24	£100.33
5 apartment	£105.58	£106.74

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.



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www.thenuehousing.co.uk




Ways in which you can tell us what you think

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

 Text us on **07795 266376**

 Phone us on **0141 550 9535**

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

 Through the **self-service app**

ALL RESPONSES SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY 31 JANUARY 2021