

Your Rent - Time to have your say



Please read this important publication carefully!

thenue
HOUSING

Your views matter to us and we listen to all that you have to say. Last year we applied a 3.5% rent increase after consulting you on the possibility of a 3.9% increase.

Delivering value in everything we do – our rent review for 2019/2020

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 lots 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 publication contains important information to help you understand what we are doing.





Looking great. The 18th century landmark at Chalmers Gate on the Gallowgate has been restored by us to ensure this iconic building will be looking good for decades to come. It is a rich and important part of Glasgow's heritage and dates from 1771.

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 level of rent you pay. This came into being because of the desire by local people to improve their communities

and to make bad housing and poor services a thing of the past. THIS 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 aims to highlight the different uses we make of the rent you pay.



We are building at London Road and Monteith Row. A brand new building is taking shape delivering much-needed new homes. Behind it the former Monteith Hotel structure is being preserved to create more new flats.



Our new housing at Castle Milk opened in the summer. The new homes are a welcome addition to the community and are located near the brand new Netherholm Hall which was a major achievement for the community led by the Netherholm Area Association.

Looking after your home

Repairs are your biggest priority and they always will be. Last year we entered into a new contract with Mears Ltd, and we can now do any number of repairs during the same visit. That cuts down on inconvenience for you and reduces substantially on our contractor's travelling time. This year we anticipate spending £1.9 million on these repairs.



Repairs - how we are doing

Day-to-Day repairs



The table below demonstrates the excellent repair service our tenants receive compared to the average housing association tenant in Scotland.

	Thenue	Scottish average
Time taken to complete an emergency repair	1.4 hours	4 hours
Time taken to complete a 'non-emergency' repair	3.9 days	6.4 days

This year we have introduced a new repairs service called a Complete Property Service (CPS) where instead of lots of different visits to your home for individual repairs we will come out and inspect your home for repairs needed and attend to all the necessary repairs on a single day – delivering a much more convenient service. To access this service please contact our repairs team on 0141 550 3581.

Major Repairs and Improvements

We also need to put a small part of your rent money aside to make sure we always have funds to carry out longer term repairs and improvements – this includes things as shown in the bigger table, along with guidance on how often we

renew them. This year we expect to spend £3.1 million on this type of work, along with repair work like gutter cleaning, gas safety inspections, general landscaping work, whilst making some savings on electrical inspections and testing and gas servicing.

Component	Replacement cycles
Bathroom suites and associated work	30 years
Boiler replacements and renewals	15 years
External cladding and external wall insulation.	20 years
Internal doors	30 years
Heating systems, (radiators and pipework)	30 years
Kitchen units and associated wiring and work	20 years
New roofs and structure	50 years
Replacement window frames and glazing	30 years
Re-wiring	30 years



KEEPING YOU SAFE

FIRE SAFETY

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 in London in the summer of 2017 which shocked and appalled the nation when 71 tenants lost their lives. The Scottish Government has set new standards for smoke alarms, kitchen heat detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

This work has to be done over the next two years, and 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 required to complete all of this work by March 2021.

New expenditure for 2019/20:

£735,000



GAS SAFETY

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% safety, we do not always get into every home at the first attempt. You can all do your bit by assisting us in this regard.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY

We try to respond as effectively as we can when anti social behaviour is reported to us, or a neighbour dispute arises. Indeed, 94.7% of all cases were resolved within targets whilst the national average is 87.9%. Sometimes we spend a lot of staff time trying to sort things out, and occasionally we'll need support from other agencies such as Community Safety Glasgow, the Police or even yourselves.

KEEPING YOU WARM

We can't control what the fuel companies charge, but we can try to make sure your home is as energy efficient as possible so that you're not paying for heat that's being wasted. Last year we spent £2.4 million completing external insulation work to our 400 or so tenements in Calton and in Bridgeton.

Currently all housing associations in Scotland are required to work towards meeting the Scottish Government's new Energy Efficiency Standards. This means that your home is much more energy efficient than housing which is privately owned and privately rented. It also means that you should be able to spend less to keep warm in winter.

HELPING YOU GET A BETTER HOME ENERGY DEAL

You may have read in our spring newsletter about the £100,000 that we have secured in grant income from the Bank of Scotland Foundation for our project CLIC, (which stands for Connecting Locally informing

Communities). This project helps tackle the issue of low digital skills among people living in our communities. We can now help you with things such as training on how to get online and delivering the skills needed for everyday life in a digital age. There are clear benefits to this including getting better energy deals which are often accessible only online and to comply with an increasing drive by many organisations for customers to access their online services. Just get in touch if you want some help in switching fuel providers and getting a better deal. To avoid big increases, you can compare tariffs from different suppliers to see if you could get a better deal and we can show you how!



Since June this year the energy saving team at CLIC have saved customers

£4,199



£2.4 million
spent on insulation works in 2018/19

HELPING YOUR FINANCES

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. One of the newer challenges both Thenue and our tenants of working age are facing is the new 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 digital 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



Financial Inclusion Officers to help make sure people are claiming what they're entitled to and make sure rent is paid. We also publish an occasional newsletter called "Cashpoint" which provides further support and advice on financial matters.



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 always endeavour to ensure that your own data is stored securely and used properly.

BUILDING NEW HOMES

We see the building of 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 77. This year we will complete another 58. In 2019/20 we expect the number to be 75. We always work very hard to ensure that building homes doesn't impact on the rents existing tenants pay.



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 volunteers. 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.

Our Rent Arrears reduced by around **£400,000** in last 4 years



HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

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 as possible. 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, and sending out regular newsletters, we want to make sure our 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.

Rent Review Choice for 2019/20 – Rolling Out Our Gardening Project Across Our Communities

When we pilot a successful new service in one of our communities we will of course want to deliver this across all our areas. This is the case with a very successful project which has been delivered in Calton for the last couple of years.

Our “Calton Gardening Project” has resulted in a dramatic reclaiming of the local neighbourhood by residents.

It has led to significant improvement in the physical appearance of the local area. The project employs a community gardener to work directly on increasing the ability of residents to take responsibility for their environment.

This grant funding has now ended however and if we are not successful with a new grant application then the

only way it can continue, not just in Calton, but across all our areas will be for us to apply a one-off small increase to our rents to meet this additional expenditure (this covers the cost of the gardener, a van, tools and other equipment etc). Without grant funding, our rent is our only source of paying for services.

What difference will this service make to your area?

The Calton pilot was developed in response to local feedback at several community consultations. The feedback told us that local people had real concerns about the state of local gardens, untidy/overgrown streets and green spaces, communal areas and derelict land. Working with volunteers, we have carried out extensive environmental work in Calton - all with the support and help of groups and residents. We are keen to extend and sustain the improvements we have already seen in Calton.

We have seen the benefits of the pilot project and the changes it has made so far. Residents report that they feel the streets are safer and public spaces are better used. The volunteers who work alongside the gardener feel less isolated, better connected and more confident about themselves and their newly learned skills. Public agencies such as the police have commented on how they feel more connected to and supported by the local community.

The project has transformed not only the local environment but local residents’

views about their area. Residents now report local issues and problems with far greater frequency because they don’t want it to return to how it previously looked. They want the project to continue for that reason and we want to extend it to all our areas so tenants in each of our other communities get the same benefits. We firmly believe once you get this service you won’t want to lose it!!

The pictures opposite show some of the work that has been done in Calton with our first images showing what a hedge looks like before and after being cut

For more “before and after” pictures visit us at [Thenue Housing’s Facebook page](#).

Our Rent Review Proposal for 2019/20 is that if we fail to get grant funding to continue and expand this project, then we will cover the cost of the gardener and equipment by increasing our rent by 0.5% above the standard inflation only increase.
Inflation = 3.3%



Here’s what people in Calton have been saying about the gardening work:

“What a difference! The tidying up is very noticeable and it makes the place look very smart”

“I am all for this scheme – several people have mentioned it to me and people are talking about how it keeps the place looking neat and tidy.”

Tell us what you think

Overall we like to think that our rents are good value for money – you only have to look at the higher rents and poorer levels of service in the private rented sector, (which currently averages around £749* a month). You also only need to compare Thenue’s overall performance with others, which was laid out in last month’s newsletter and Charter Report which 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.

	Thenue	Scottish average
Five years cumulative rent increases value	10.6%	13.7%

Although the rent increase last year was marginally higher than the Scottish average of 3.3%, overall we are still more than 3% lower over the last five years.

In 2019/20 our aim is to keep the increase to the minimum, whilst ensuring that our high standards of performance are maintained. Our proposal therefore is to offer you two options. They are that we increase rents by 3.3% from April 2019 OR alternatively we can introduce our Gardening Project across all our communities and this will mean a rent increase of 3.8%. The table below shows how this looks on a typical weekly rent.

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.

WHAT do the options mean for your rent from April 2019

Apt size	Current Average Weekly Rent	Rent Option 1 New Weekly Rent with Increase of 3.8%	Rent Option 2 New Weekly Rent with Increase of 3.3%
1 apt	£62.82	£65.21	£64.89
2 apt	£74.79	£77.63	£77.26
3 apt	£81.15	£84.23	£83.83
4 apt	£92.87	£96.40	£95.93
5 apt	£98.47	£102.21	£101.72

*City Lets data reproduced in The Times 26 April 2018

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



RETURN THE SECTION BELOW TO THENUE

Name.....

Address.....

YOUR VIEWS ARE IMPORTANT TO US AND WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY OUR BOARD WHEN MAKING THE DECISION

MY CHOICE IS: **OPTION 1: 3.8 PER CENT RISE (CONTAINS GARDENING PROJECT ROLLED OUT TO ALL COMMUNITIES)** — OR —

OPTION 2: 3.3 PER CENT RISE

Do you have any comments you would like to make on the proposal?

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WE NEED TO GET YOUR VIEWS NOW AND NO LATER THAN 18TH JANUARY

YOU CAN RESPOND IN A VARIETY OF WAYS:

- ✓ Hand in the tear off slip to any of our offices, or
- ✓ Email us on: rentreview@thenuehousing.co.uk
- ✓ Text us on: 07795 266376

- ✓ Phone: Brian Gannon on 0141 550 9509
- ✓ Online Rent Review Survey: www.thenuehousing.co.uk
A link to this will also be sent to users of our App