

Rents and Service Charges FAQs

Q1. Why has my rent changed so much?

In February this year the Council agreed two important changes to your rent. A new rent setting policy and the annual rent increase for April 2017. Most rents will have increased but a few will have decreased because of these changes.

Q2. Why did you change your rent setting policy?

Part of the reason for the change was a change in the law from Welsh Government that says how Councils should set their rent. But also because the old rent setting policy had been in place for many years and needed review.

Q3. How has the rent setting policy changed?

Rents are now assessed on three criteria:

- Property type (House, flat, bungalow etc)

- Property size (how many bedrooms it has)

- Heating type (gas central heating, electric storage heaters, oil, etc)

Smaller flats are charged a lower rent, larger houses are charged a higher rent.

Properties with the most efficient heating system will pay a higher rent than those with the least efficient heating system.

Q4. Why wasn't I told about this sooner?

All tenants were written to in December last year to explain what we were doing and why. Tenants were asked to comment on the proposal and those comments were included in the final decision.

Q5. Why do you put the rent up every year?

The Welsh Government set a guideline average rent for each local authority and it is important that the Local Authorities aim to set rents in line with this. The guideline rent for Powys has increased and so we need to increase rents.

Also, rents is the only revenue income the Housing team has to provide services to tenants. As costs of services increase so must rents. Rental income also allows us to continue to invest in your home, going a long way to funding improvements that benefit all tenants.

Q6. Why has my service charge changed?

Service charges are based on the cost of providing certain services to your home over and above the basic provision of a well maintained home. These costs vary year to year based on demand and so we vary the service charge to match the changing cost.

Q7. Why do I pay a service charge for a lift I never use?

The service charge for the lift is based on the block and not the individual tenant or leaseholder. Where a block benefits from a lift all the households will be expected to contribute to the cost.

Q8. I pay my water rates so why do I have to pay a service charge for sewerage to you?

The water rates you pay for will only be for the supply of fresh water and not for sewerage. Your sewerage is processed through a system owned by the council not the water company. The council needs to recover the costs of providing this service to you.

Q9. I can't afford to pay all of these costs.

Housing Benefit/Universal Credit should be able to support those on the lowest income. You need to get advice from the relevant team

Q10. My rent has gone down, is this right?

Some rents in smaller flats will see a small decrease in weekly rents as part of the new policy.