

Rent Harmonisation – Consultation Update

A big thank you to tenants who have already returned their surveys and equalities forms. Some of you have come back and asked for a bit more information so we thought we'd share the most frequently asked questions and answers with you.

Q: Why have you said my property is a cottage?

A: We use the term cottage to cover any type of property that is not a flat (including 4 in a block) or maisonette. So if you live in a terraced house, or an end terrace or a semi-detached house we refer to it as a cottage. However, we agree that the term cottage can be confusing so moving forward we'll try and use the word house instead.

Q: What is the difference between Apartment (Apt) and Bedroom?

A: An Apt is any room in your home that isn't a bathroom or kitchen. Normally a 4 Apt property would be 1 living room and 3 bedrooms but sometimes it might be 2 living rooms and 2 bedrooms.

Q: Why are you proposing to charge someone more if they have a garden?

A: When we consulted with tenants on what property characteristics they thought should be used to set rents the feedback was that we should keep things as simple as possible. However the focus group and surveys also told us that access to a self contained garden / outside space was an important amenity and someone without access to their own outside space shouldn't be paying as much rent as someone who did.

Q: Why can't a single person have a discount on their rent?

A: Rent is set against the property and not the household. So – for example – a single person renting a 2 bedroom property would have the same rent charge as a childless couple or a family. In some cases a single person can get benefit help with the element of their rent considered to be for the bedrooms they 'don't need' and our tenancy management team would be happy to discuss this with you.

Q: Why is my proposed increase so high?

A: At present we have 1450 properties and 322 different rent levels, the proposed changes will see the number of rent levels reduce to 22 and even out the differential between highest and lowest rents. This is as well as making sure that rents for smaller properties aren't higher than rents for larger properties. We know that some

of the higher increases will have a negative impact on tenants. This is why when the final rent setting policy is taken to committee for approval we will be looking at the options for phasing in the increase – for example capping increases to a maximum of £25 a month over a 3 year period. We will also be looking to see if we can recalculate to cap increases and decreases. However it is important to stress that we have looked carefully at the proposed rent levels and are confident that they remain affordable with the highest rent levels for each apt size being lower than they are at present.

CURRENT RENT LEVELS

Apt Size	MIN	MAX	DIFFERENTIAL	AVERAGE
1	£310.61	£317.94	£7.33	£315.19
2	£283.56	£468.12	£184.56	£351.39
3	£309.99	£555.28	£245.29	£390.11
4	£349.85	£700.29	£350.44	£445.69
5	£435.00	£594.02	£159.02	£514.61
6	£437.83	£664.94	£227.11	£562.71
Total	£283.56	£700.29	£416.73	£409.31

PROPOSED RENT LEVELS

Apt Size	MIN	MAX	DIFFERENTIAL	AVERAGE
1	£258.00	£278.00	£20.00	£260.50
2	£278.00	£378.00	£100.00	£334.96
3	£358.00	£449.63	£91.63	£399.06
4	£398.00	£489.63	£91.63	£443.63
5	£458.00	£498.00	£40.00	£496.92
6	£518.00	£538.00	£20.00	£534.67
Total	£258.00	£538.00		£410.20

There's still time to return your survey to us, or if you want to discuss some more please phone us on 01324 664966 or email enquiries@paragonha.org.uk