



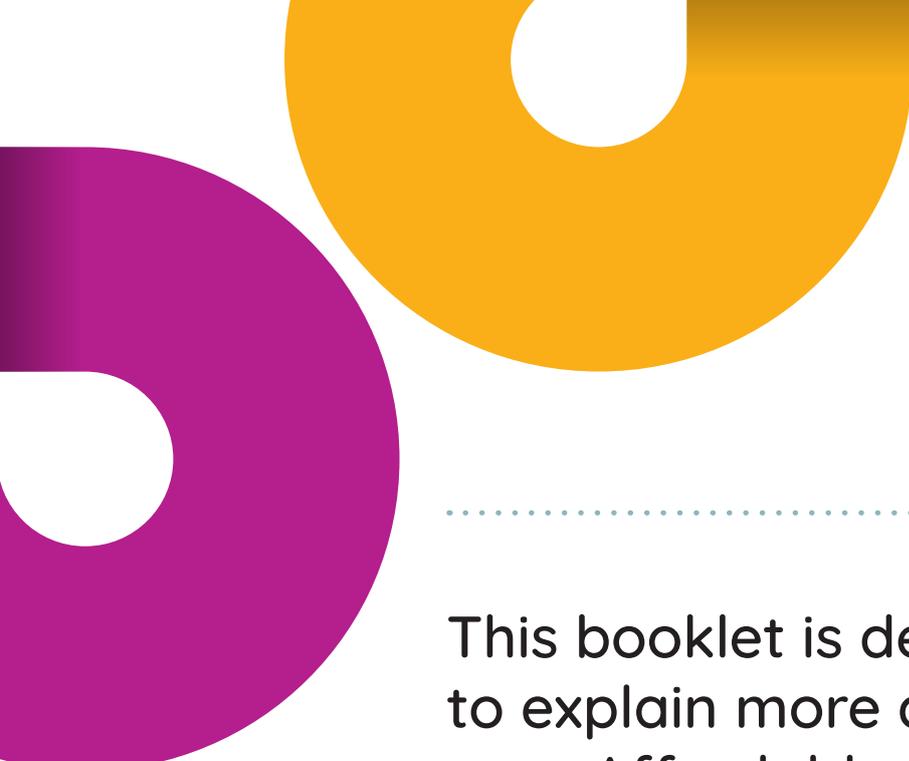
Your Rent Explained

# Affordable Rent



2019





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**This booklet is designed to explain more about your Affordable Rent and service charges.**

When you receive your annual rent and service charge notice, you may have questions to ask.

This guide provides answers to most common questions.

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# YOUR RENT

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Rent is payable on your property for the cost of providing, managing, maintaining and improving your home. The money we raise through rent collection goes back into providing services, maintaining and building new homes.

Your rent helps to pay for the following services:



Repairs,  
maintenance  
and buildings  
insurance of homes



Improving homes  
to make sure they  
reach government  
standards



Office and  
staff costs



Management costs,  
i.e, dealing with  
neighbourhood issues  
and collecting rent

# HOW IS AFFORDABLE RENT REVIEWED?

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Rental charges are based on Government guidelines. These vary for each type of rental product. The product you have is detailed in your review letter.

This booklet is about Affordable Rent.

Affordable Rent is charged weekly or monthly.

If you've had the same weekly tenancy for more than one year, we'll leave at least 52 weeks between rent reviews.

If you're within the first year of your tenancy, your initial rent review will be in April.

All subsequent reviews will be at intervals of 52 weeks or more.

# HOW IS AFFORDABLE RENT CALCULATED?

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Affordable Rent

$$\text{Current Rent} - 1\%$$

Government guidelines set the formula for reviewing Affordable Rent as current rent minus 1%.

With Affordable Rent, the rent was initially set at 80% of the market rents in your area, including service charges.

## Service Charges

(where applicable) are included in the overall rent. A breakdown of the services you receive is shown on your rent review letter.

[Read more on page 7.](#)

Your total rent figure will be reduced by 1%.



# SERVICES EXPLAINED

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In addition to services and maintenance to your home, your rent charge includes the cost of providing and maintaining communal areas and services outside your home.

You only pay for the services you receive.

Examples of services covered could include:

- Employing a caretaker
- Cleaning shared areas, including windows, and removing dumped rubbish
- Cutting grass and looking after planted areas
- Repairs to shared facilities such as door-entry systems, television aerials and lighting
- Providing and repairing lifts
- Providing fire fighting equipment, including repairing and testing emergency lighting and smoke alarms
- Providing water, electricity and gas supplies to shared areas

Details of the services you receive are shown in your Notice of New Rent letter.

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**Charges are based on the actual costs of providing services, together with the cost of future replacement where necessary.**

Where we provide a service such as grounds maintenance, the amount charged is the total cost of providing the service, divided by the number of people who receive the service.

The letter you have received reflects the services you should be paying for. But if you feel this is incorrect, let us know and we will check the information we have on your property.

We work hard to provide a good quality service at an affordable price, but please contact us with any concerns:

 Email: [\*\*rent&servicecharges@bpha.org.uk\*\*](mailto:rent&servicecharges@bpha.org.uk)

# HOW TO PAY

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There are a number of ways you can pay your rent, so you can use whichever method is most convenient for you.



You can set up a Direct Debit form by calling us on 0330 100 0272. Payments will be adjusted automatically if your rent amount changes.



Set up an online account on our website at [www.bpha.org.uk/myaccount](http://www.bpha.org.uk/myaccount) to pay your rent quickly and easily.



Set up a Standing Order with your bank, paid to bpha on a date of your choice. You'll need to adjust the payment if your rent amount changes.



You can set up a recurring payment against your debit card on a weekly, fortnightly, four-weekly or monthly basis. Simply call **0330 100 0272** to arrange.



Call **0330 100 0272** select **option 2** and pay by debit card - Automated 24 hours.



Send a cheque payment by post to us at bpha Limited, Bedford Heights, Manton Lane, Bedford, MK41 7BJ.



You can pay at a **Post Office** with your rent payment card. Don't have one? Call us on 0330 100 0272 to register.

# OTHER PAYMENT METHODS

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By PayPoint - in local shops and where advertised



Via allpay - log onto [www.allpayments.net](http://www.allpayments.net) and pay your rent online anytime, free of charge (or download their free app)



We accept most major credit and debit cards

## Worried about paying your rent?

Contact our Financial Inclusion Team on **0330 100 0272** for free, confidential advice on benefits you might be entitled to claim and help with budgeting and debt management.

If you currently have a payment arrangement with us in relation to rent and service charge debt, please ensure that any adjustments made include payments to clear your debt.

# HOUSING BENEFIT AND UNIVERSAL CREDIT

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If you are on a low income, you could get Housing Benefit or Universal Credit to help pay your rent.

- Housing Benefit / Universal Credit can pay for part or all of your rent.
- How much you get depends on your income and circumstances.
- You can apply for Housing Benefit / Universal Credit whether you are unemployed or working.
- You are responsible for claiming any benefits to help you to pay your rent.

All our tenants pay rent, but we do not mind if some or all of it is paid from Housing Benefit / Universal Credit. It is your responsibility to make sure you understand your claim and keep it up to date. You must also respond to any letters that you get from Housing Benefit / Universal Credit. We cannot do this on your behalf.



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If you receive Housing Benefit you must take your notice of new rent letter to your Housing Benefit office or the DWP for Universal Credit.

Payments made by the Housing Benefit Office or by the DWP will be made in arrears but your rent is due weekly or monthly in advance and it is your responsibility to make sure your rent is paid on time.

If your Housing Benefit or Universal Credit is cut, it is your responsibility to cover any shortfall. Please be aware that you are in danger of losing your home if your account is in arrears. **If you are struggling financially see page 10.**

Please click the link below for further details about Housing Benefit

 [www.gov.uk/housing-benefit](https://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit)

Please click the link below for further details about Universal Credit

 [www.gov.uk/universal-credit](https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)

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# HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

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Email us at: [info@bpha.org.uk](mailto:info@bpha.org.uk)  
Web-chat at: [www.bpha.org.uk](http://www.bpha.org.uk)



Call us on: **0330 100 0272**



Write to us at: bpha Limited, Bedford Heights,  
Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7BJ



Need help to understand this? For large print,  
audio or Braille, or community languages,  
please call **0330 100 0272**.

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