

Tenant Question Time – rent setting

We were happy to welcome so many residents to our latest Tenant Question Time (TQT) on rent, which took place on 18 February 2026 with a strong turnout both online and in person. A total of 19 people joined us for the session, and we were especially pleased to be engaging with several residents for the first time.

Attendees represented a wide mix of communities, from Independent Living to general needs residents, as well as several shared owners and leaseholders. This helped to spark a well-rounded conversation with different perspectives and experiences.

What residents asked about

Throughout the session, residents shared thoughtful questions and observations. Key themes included:

- How rent levels are set for different tenures
- Affordability and management of garage rents
- The value for money of service charges and the quality of the services delivered
- How we calculate estimated service charges versus actual service charges
- How contracts are tendered and reviewed to ensure value for money
- Guidance for leaseholders looking to set fair rents when subletting

These topics helped us explore how we communicate about financial information and how we can make things clearer and more transparent for everyone.

Summary of key topics

Social rent

- Calculated using the government's Rent Standard formula – social housing providers, including us, cannot deviate from this government guidance
- Actual rents charged today are mainly lower than formula rent due to past government mandated rent reductions
- Our social rents are on average 32% of the equivalent market rent

Shared ownership

- Governed by each property's lease and we must follow the terms of that lease

Affordable rent

- Can be up to 80% of market rent, inclusive of service charges, however, our policy is to charge the lower of 80% of market rent or the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) – which is a welfare benefit designed to support with housing costs

How are rent changes calculated?

Rent increases are calculated by the government's Rent Standard formula, which is Consumer Price Index (CPI) as of September of each year plus an additional 1%.

How are service charges calculated?

Service charges are based on the actual cost of services provided, but our policy is to cap this to ensure our services remain affordable for our customers.

Garages

Garage rents are set with reference to the open market and are managed by a third party on our behalf. They are available for rental by anyone, not just our tenants – although any tenant which lets a garage with us is exempt from the VAT charge, which a private hirer is obliged to pay.

What financial support is available?

We have many ways of supporting our residents with money worries – this includes our Financial Inclusion team, our partnership with Citizens Advice, and our Welfare Fund which has supported 65 tenants so far this year. With the hard work of our teams, we have secured £1.45m additional income and £429k debt relief for tenants in last 12 months.

Positive feedback and helpful suggestions

Residents also shared constructive feedback and compliments. Many praised the achievements of our Financial Inclusion team, and attendees found the session to be helpful, and easy to follow.

We also heard some practical suggestions, including:

- Adding a “monthly total due” line to weekly rent statements to support residents who pay monthly via Direct Debit
- Providing online access to annual statements as part of our upcoming digital strategy

We're grateful to everyone who attended and contributed. Your questions and suggestions help us shape improvements to our services.