

News about your rent

Each year, social rent levels are set out in the **Rent Standard published by the government's Regulator for Social Housing. Social rents usually change in line with the cost of living.**

Rising energy costs along with higher prices in shops and supermarkets have caused the cost of living to rise. Although the costs that we face are rising too, we support the government's decision to cap social rent increases at 7% this year.

Enclosed with this bulletin you will find information about your own rent and any changes taking place from April 2023.

If you receive Housing Benefit

The Housing Benefit office has been notified of the new rental charge for 2023/2024 and will re-calculate your Housing Benefit entitlement from April 2023. If you currently receive Housing Benefit and your circumstances have not changed, you do not need to take any further action.

If you receive Universal Credit (UC)

It is your responsibility to inform the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) of your new rent amount by signing into your Universal Credit Journal or by calling the Universal Credit helpline on **0800 328 5644**.

Please do this by 3 April 2023.

We are here to help

As well as being a trusted provider of affordable homes, we offer our customers **free and confidential employment and money advice.**

Our support includes help with:

- CV writing
- Interview techniques
- Job searching
- Applying for vacancies online

Helpful tips and information about saving money, keeping homes warm and how to stay safe can also be found on our website and Facebook pages.

See www.homesplus.co.uk/keep-well-and-warm

**KEEP
WELL &
WARM**



Safeguarding

Are you worried about a child, friend, family member or neighbour?

While it can often be hard to identify abuse or neglect, if you have any concerns, please **Speak Up**. Just contact your local Safeguarding team and they will take it from there.

Find your local Safeguarding team - www.homesplus.co.uk/safeguarding





How to make a complaint

We know that sometimes things go wrong or the service you receive falls short of your expectations. When this happens, we want to hear from you so that we can put it right and improve our services to prevent similar problems from happening again.

You can make a complaint by contacting us in the following ways:

- Complete our online form at www.homesplus.co.uk/feedback
- Call us on **0800 048 8955**
- Email feedback@housingplusgroup.co.uk
- Send us a private message at www.facebook.com/MyHomesPlus

You can find more information about our complaints policy by visiting www.homesplus.co.uk/feedback

We are registered with the Housing Ombudsman and are committed to complying with their Complaints Handling Code.

Please be aware that you can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage of your complaint for further advice and assistance:

- Tel: **0300 111 3000**
- Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

ASB: report it

We understand that anti-social behaviour (ASB) can have a significant impact on people's mental health and sense of security.

Our dedicated community safety team works closely with our Neighbourhood officers, local councils, police and other agencies to ensure that reports of ASB are acted on quickly, to try and reduce incidents of ASB and improve neighbourhood safety.

If you experience ASB, you can report it 24/7 on our website www.homesplus.co.uk/asb.

Please remember that if you are in immediate danger, you should always call the police on **999**.

Contact us out-of-hours

Our out-of-hours service can be contacted on 0800 048 8955. You should only use this service in an emergency, so that we can direct our resources to where they are needed the most.

An emergency repair is a problem that represents an immediate risk to safety, security or health, such as:

- No heating or hot water
- Major damage to the structure of your home
- An uncontrollable water leak
- A dangerous electrical fault
- A gas leak - If you smell gas or fumes, you must immediately call the National Gas Emergency Service on **0800 111 999** and ensure you are safe before reporting it to us
- Unsecure front door or window causing a security issue

All non-emergency repairs can be reported 24/7 online at: www.homesplus.co.uk/report-a-repair

My Homes Plus

News, updates and advice by email @

We are reducing our environmental footprint and looking carefully at where we can deliver the best value for money.

Now that so many of you prefer to hear from us by email, **we will no longer be routinely printing and posting My Homes Plus customer newsletters.**

If you prefer to receive a printed copy of all customer newsletters, it is important that you let us know, by getting in touch with our customer services team on **0800 048 8955**.

You can also read all editions of **My Homes Plus** online. Please see the Customer Documents area of our website.

My repairs

We are responsible for most, but not all repairs. Here is an easy reminder.

Our responsibility

- ✓ Lighting in communal entrance or landing
- ✓ Blocked guttering*
- ✓ Window won't close or open
- ✓ Broken shower (if we fitted it)
- ✓ Leaking roof
- ✓ Loss of power
- ✓ Problem with your hot water or heating
- ✓ Decorating the outside of your home*
- ✓ Repair tap or kitchen unit
- ✓ Misted glass in windows*
- ✓ Damaged electrical socket

*Undertaken as part of the 5 yearly MOT programme

Your responsibility

- ✓ Condensation - see back page for more information
- ✓ Blocked sink, bath, shower or toilet
- ✓ Replacement toilet seat
- ✓ Lost key
- ✓ New bulb for lighting inside your home or for your security lighting
- ✓ Cracked/smashed windows
- ✓ Fixtures and fittings (e.g. curtain rails)
- ✓ Minor cracks to plaster inside your home
- ✓ Replacing a blown fuse
- ✓ Decorating the inside of your home

Repair timescales: what to expect

Emergency repairs - within 4 hours
(Immediate risk to safety, security or health)

Heating and hot water repairs - within 6 hours
(No heating or hot water, uncontrollable water leak)

Routine repairs

Less than one hour to complete
– within 24 hours (Monday – Friday)

All other routine repairs
- within 17 days

Make sure you are Gas safe



This winter, we are asking all our customers to take three steps towards gas safety.

Step 1

Help us to keep you safe. As your landlord we have important legal duties and obligations. Most of these responsibilities involve safeguarding you, your home and family.

Essential checks include electrical testing and communal area fire door and fire risk assessments as well as important gas safety checks.

It is a condition of your tenancy that you give us access to your home to carry out this work.

If you need to reschedule an appointment, please contact our customer services team on **0800 048 8955** as soon as possible.

Each year we spend more than **£64,500 on missed appointments**, reducing our budget for home improvements and energy efficiency.

Step 2

Look out for warning signs your gas appliances aren't working correctly - lazy yellow or orange flames instead of crisp blue ones, black marks on or around the appliance and too much condensation in the room.

Step 3

Know the six symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning: headaches, dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, collapse and loss of consciousness.

If you smell gas, you should immediately call the National Gas Emergency Service on **0800 111 999**.

As temperatures fall and we spend more time indoors, you can find more advice to make your home gas-safe on our website www.homesplus.co.uk/HUKYS

We're hiring

Homes Plus careplus Property Plus



Visit www.housingplusgroup.co.uk/careers to see our latest vacancies

Fire safety in communal areas



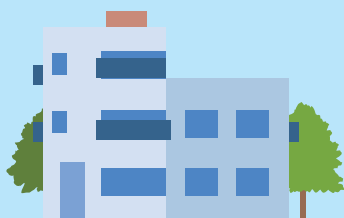
A fire in a communal area can spread between homes. It could make it more difficult for the emergency services to reach you and might prevent you from leaving the building in an emergency.

Communal areas are places in your building that other people share, like landings, entrance lobbies, corridors, meter cupboards, lifts, open walkways and balconies.

If you live in a building that includes any of these spaces, you must ensure that you don't keep or store anything that could:

- Stop you escaping quickly
- Prevent emergency services reaching you or your neighbours
- Give off toxic smoke or gas when burning
- Explode in high temperatures
- Cause fire to spread more quickly

We carry out regular safety inspections in apartment blocks and as part of that work, we remove objects left in communal areas. To find out more please visit our website – www.homesplus.co.uk/my-home/communal-areas



Damp and condensation

Condensation is particularly common in kitchens and bathrooms.

If severe condensation is ignored, it can become a major problem in your home.

It happens when warm, moist air reaches cold surfaces like windows or walls.

If there is a clearly defined damp stain in your home, this might be penetrating damp or a water leak **you need to report this to us - 0800 048 8955.**

If you can see a 'tidemark' on ground floor room walls, extending to around 900-1000mm above the floor surface **you need to report this to us - 0800 048 8955.**

If you have any concerns about damp and mould in your home please contact us.

Find out more at www.homesplus.co.uk/damp-and-condensation

Fire safety in apartment buildings

Nothing is more important to us than the safety of our customers.

As a responsible landlord we have an extensive ongoing programme in place to check our buildings and carry out any work required, to ensure that we comply with government regulations and guidance.

In line with our safety-first approach, we have appointed **Building safety managers** for each of our 500+ complex buildings. These managers are responsible for ensuring the safety of the buildings they manage and our residents. They actively engage with residents, encourage them to get involved and raise any safety concerns they may have, and keep them informed about building safety in an open and transparent way. This information is available on our website at www.homesplus.co.uk/building-safety.

Working together you can help us to keep you safe.