



Your rent - frequently asked questions

1. Why have you increased my rent?

We have increased your rent in line with the terms of your tenancy agreement and the Government Rent Standard.

We're determined to make a positive difference in our neighbourhoods and offer good value for money, and these changes will help us to do that. The increase is vital for us to continue to manage and maintain your homes, build new homes to rent and invest in and support the neighbourhoods we serve.

The details of your rent increase will be within the letter you received in February.

2. What is the Government Rent Standard?

The Rent Standard is an economic standard that the Regulator of Social Housing expects registered providers, such as Onward, to comply with. It sets the requirements around how registered providers set and increase rents for all their social housing stock in line with government policy.

3. How have you calculated the rent increase?

Rents have increased by Consumer Price Index (CPI) +1%, according to government guidelines. The applicable CPI figure was announced by the Government in September 2021 and was 3.1%, so the total increase is 4.1%.

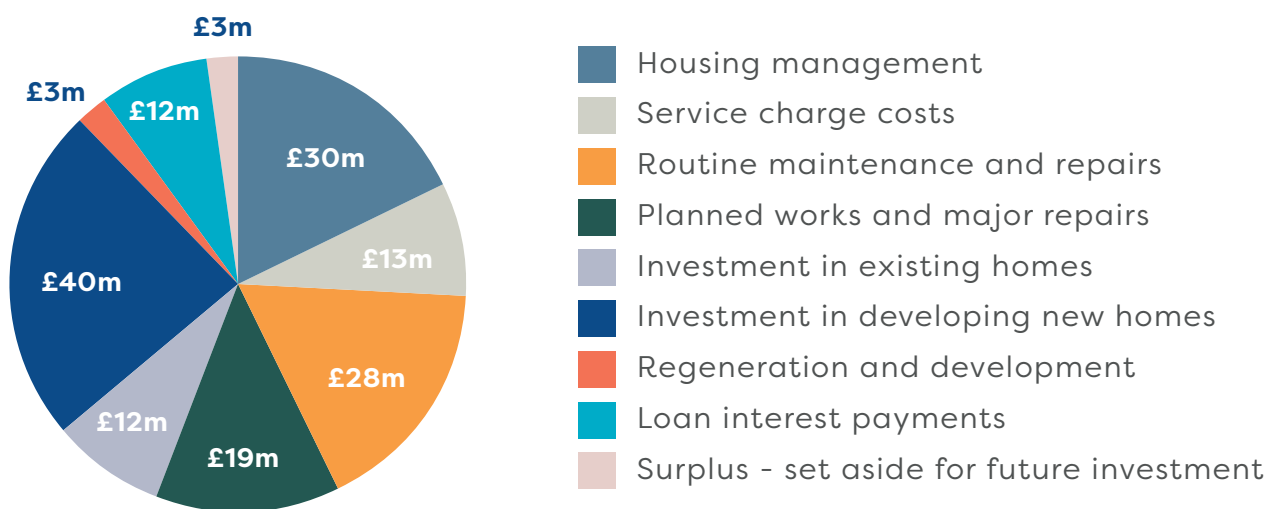
4. How will I benefit from the rental increase?

We will invest the additional income into delivering our key customer objectives; keeping you safe, keeping your homes in good condition, building new homes, and investing in our neighbourhoods.

You can see the investment in your homes, services and neighbourhoods in our Neighbourhood Plans which can be seen on the Onward website, here.

We have provided a breakdown below of how we spent your rent over the last 12 months. This way, you have our assurance that we're using the income to deliver on our commitments.

How we have spent your money this year:



5. I claim Universal Credit. Do I need to do anything?

Once you've received the letter confirming your rent charges in February, you will simply need to inform the DWP of this via their online portal after the rent increase has been applied. It is important that you do this on your review date in order to avoid issues with receiving your benefits. If you do not have access to your portal, you need to contact the DWP by phone.

For support in doing this contact our Income & Financial Inclusion team.

6. I claim Housing Benefit. Do I need to do anything?

If your Housing Benefit is paid directly to you, then you will need to inform Housing Benefit of your rent before 1 April 2022 to make sure you receive the correct payments.

If your Housing Benefit is paid directly to Onward, you do not need to take any action. Onward will inform Housing Benefit of your new rent.

7. What do I do if I can't afford the increase?

Our priority is to support our customers to sustain their tenancies, and we want to help prevent rent arrears as much as you do.

We have a dedicated Financial Inclusion team working alongside the Income team who are trained to ensure you get the most out of your income and benefits, help you manage your finances and support you through changes in circumstances. Their services are free, friendly and confidential.

Please get in touch with them as early as possible if you need help to pay your rent. You can do so by emailing financialinclusionteam@onward.co.uk Alternatively, there is advice and support available from the local Citizens Advice Bureau.

8. What if Universal Credit or Housing Benefit doesn't cover the rent increase?

If your Universal Credit allowance or Housing Benefit isn't enough to cover the additional rent increase, we strongly recommend that you make an appointment to see a member of our Income & Financial Inclusion team who can help you find a solution.

9. What if I am affected by the under-occupancy charge?

You will need to make sure that your payments cover your benefit shortfall. You may find that your payments must increase to avoid falling into arrears. If you have any questions about that, please speak to our Income & Financial Inclusion team.

10. Do I have to adjust my Direct Debit mandate or Standing Order with my bank?

Your Direct Debit will be adjusted automatically by our Income team – you don't have to do anything. We may increase your Direct Debit by an additional amount on top of your usual payments if you are not paying fully in advance.

However you will have to contact your bank to amend your Standing Order to the new amount before 1 April 2022.

Getting in touch.

You can contact us in one of the following ways:

Online	via the 'My Onward' portal
Over the phone	0300 555 0600
Email	customerservices@onward.co.uk
In writing	Onward Homes, 2 Christie Way, Renaissance Court, Manchester M21 7QY

If you would like to work with us to improve our services, why not join our Customer Engagement community? Email us at: customerengagement@onward.co.uk

If you would like a printed copy of these FAQs, contact our call centre on 0300 555 0600.