

Hillcrest Homes

Rent Consultation

2024/25



Dear Tenant

It is at this time of the year that we are now thinking about our budget for the next financial year, starting 1 April 2024. Writing to you about increasing rents this year is more difficult than normal given the pressures all households continue to face. As an organisation, we have had a particularly challenging year with interest rates and inflation rising far above what we expected.

How will we set your rent for next year?

An important part of our financial planning is deciding on what level of rent you will pay from April 2024. As a key part of that, we're starting our consultation with all our tenants about a possible 7.75% rent increase. The rent increase we propose has not been an easy decision and please know that is only suggested out of absolute necessity. Last year we increased rents by 5.5% which was much lower than inflation at 11.1%. This means we have had to pay a much higher price for the services and goods we have bought.



Hillcrest is a charity and is not allowed to make a profit. Our job is to provide good quality, safe homes with affordable rents and we will always do our best to keep rent levels as low as possible. However, we need to make sure we have enough money to cover the costs of running the organisation, providing our tenants with all the services they need, and building new homes. Importantly, it means we can provide services to support you such as our Tenancy Sustainment Service, Hillcrest Energy Advice Team, and deliver neighbourhood initiatives. It also means we can carry out repairs, replace kitchens and bathrooms, and improve the energy efficiency of our homes.

Getting your opinion

The information in this letter explains what we are considering for 2024/25, and we are keen to get your feedback. We hope you will reply to let us know if you agree or disagree.

If you are worried about paying your rent, please get in touch with us straight away, so we can talk about how we can help.

You can phone us on **0300 123 2640** or email us at customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk.

All responses will be entered into a prize draw to win one of three £100 supermarket vouchers. Please make sure you include your name, address, and contact number with your response.

Yours sincerely,

Angela Linton

Group Chief Executive



Your possible rent increase for 2024/25

This year we are not giving you a range of rent increase options to choose from. This is because we want to consult with you about the lowest rent increase needed. If we increase rents any lower than 7.75%, some of the services we provide to you will have to be reduced or stopped in 2024/25. It will also reduce our ability to modernise homes in line with the new energy efficiency standards that will help lower your energy bills. It would also mean we could not deliver much needed new affordable homes for rent.

How do we spend rent money?

Please [click here](#) to see our Annual Performance Report, which explains how we spend rent money.

How do we work out how much rent to charge?

We work out your rent charge according to the number of bedrooms in a property, the size of those bedrooms, whether it's a flat or a house, and which local authority area it is located in e.g., Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Fife, etc.



How do we work out the yearly increase?

We use the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) measure to work out our rent increase. [Click here for more information.](#)

How do we make sure rents are affordable?

Every year we carry out a check to make sure our rents are affordable for our tenants. We need to make sure that the rent charges come to less than 30% of average earnings. We also compare our proposed rent increase with other similar housing associations and local authorities to check they are similar.

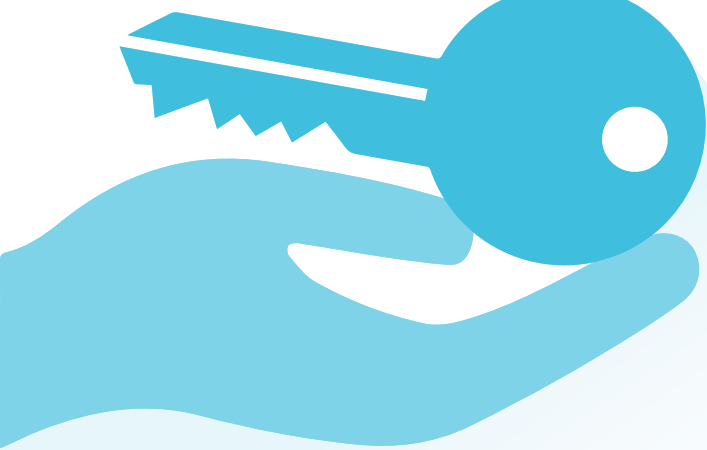
Is my rent good value for money?

Since 2019, our rent increases have been based on the Consumer Price Index measure of inflation, and last year, the rent increase was 5.6% lower than CPI.

The table shows how much we have increased our rents since 2019/20 compared to other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Scotland.



% Increase	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
National Average Rent Increase (RSLs)	3.0%	2.4%	1.2%	3.3%	5.34%
Hillcrest	2.45% (CPI + 0.25%)	1.5% (CPI only)	0.7% (CPI only)	3.5% (0.7% less than CPI)	5.5% (5.6% less than CPI)



How can I take part in this year's consultation?

We are keen to hear from you. We want to know your opinion on the rent increase figure we are suggesting.

To take part in the rent consultation and find out more about our services:

1. Watch our video [here](#).
2. Then, fill in the survey online [here](#).

For more information, or if you require any support to take part, contact our Customer Service Team on **0300 123 2640** or email us at customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk.

The rent consultation will close on 2 January 2024.

What happens next?

We will gather your responses and present these to the Hillcrest Governing Body on 23 January 2024.

Their decision will be published on our website and our Facebook page.

We will then write to you at least one month before the rent increase takes effect on 1 April 2024, to let you know your new rent charge.

All responses will be entered into a prize draw to win one of three £100 supermarket vouchers. Please make sure you include your name, address, and contact number with your response.

We can produce information in braille, audio tape, large print, and community languages.

*Please call **0300 123 2640** to find out more.*



Hillcrest
Homes