

Dialogue with council tenants continues – have your say

Time is running out for council tenants to give their feedback on rent proposals and information on the financial pressures they may face in the consultation which ends on 17 December.

Tenants across the capital are reminded to share their views on the rates which rent could be set at next year and how this money should be invested to create more and better housing.

The full scale of the city's housing challenge was highlighted earlier this month when the council officially declared a Housing Emergency in Edinburgh. This followed news that as many as 5,000 **households** a night are now living in temporary accommodation due to homelessness and a shortage of affordable housing.

A budget strategy report published last month also reveals the gap between the amount of funding Edinburgh needs to improve housing and the budget available to achieve this, which is primarily funded by tenants paying rent and government grants.

By raising rent levels, the council said it could ensure homes meet statutory energy efficiency standards set by The Scottish Government, build hundreds of new affordable homes to help people who are currently homeless and improve the landlord service it provides.

Up to 80% of tenants in Edinburgh receive assistance with

their rent, with costs covered by housing benefits or Universal Credit. The council intends to extend its Tenant Hardship Fund to support households who are not entitled to this support to access funding if they struggle to afford an increase in rent.

Cllr Jane Meagher, Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Convener, said: "Providing a better service to our tenants, improving their homes, and building more places for people to live is at heart of our housing budget strategy.

"We recognise that this year will be particularly challenging for all residents with rising inflation, spiralling prices, and the wider cost-of-living crisis. These price hikes are affecting us too and we're seeing the cost of running our housing services increase, at a time when we desperately need to invest in new and better homes and tackle rising homelessness. That's why we have declared a Housing Emergency, so we can work with partners to help everyone who needs a safe place to call home.

"In our last consultation tenants told us they want us to invest in homes to make them more energy efficient and that they need more affordable homes. So, we are looking forward to hearing from our tenants again and hope this consultation allows them the opportunity to have their voices heard."

Alongside charging a higher rent for newly built homes and newly modernised homes, the council is considering three possible rent increase options:

- 4.1% increase each year for the next five years to deliver the council's existing plan. This would help to deliver 2,000 new social rented homes and upgrade 5,200 existing homes to modern and high energy efficiency standards in the next ten years. The average weekly rent would increase by £4.31.
- 5.0% increase each year for the next five years to be in

line with inflation. It would help to deliver 2,300 new social rented homes and upgrade 5,600 existing homes to modern and high energy efficiency standards in the next ten years. The average weekly rent would increase by £5.25.

- 8.4% increase each year for the next five years to deliver the council's pre-Covid investment plan. It would help to deliver 3,560 new social rented homes and upgrade 12,400 existing homes to modern and high energy efficient standards in the next ten years. The average weekly rent would increase by £8.83.

No decisions on rents or how the council spends the Housing Revenue Account in the next financial year will be made until February 2024, when the council sets a housing revenue budget as part of its wider budget setting process.

[Find out more and share your views at the consultation hub.](#)

