

Consultation on changes to your Tenancy Agreement

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

We know changes to your tenancy agreement may raise questions. This sheet answers the most common ones.

1. Why are you changing the tenancy agreement?

We are updating the tenancy agreement to make it clearer, more consistent, and easier to understand. Some of the ways we currently collect rent and service charges are not written down clearly in the existing agreement. This consultation gives us a chance to put that right.

2. What is happening to my rent?

Your total yearly rent will not change.

- At the moment, we collect rent over 48 weeks of the year.
- We are proposing to collect rent over 52 weeks instead.
- This means there will no longer be 4 “rent-clear” weeks.
- Example, if your yearly rent is £5,200:
 - Over 48 weeks: £108.33 per week (with 4 rent-clear weeks).
 - Over 52 weeks: £100.00 per week (with no rent-clear weeks).
 - Yearly the total stays the same – £5,200.

3. What happens in a 53-week year?

Most years have 52 rent weeks, but occasionally the calendar year has 53. In these years, there will be 53 weekly rent charges instead of 52. This happens roughly every 5–6 years.

- In a normal year (52 weeks): You will pay your weekly rent as usual.
- In a 53-week year: You will have one additional week’s rent to pay. This means the total amount you pay in that year will be higher by one week’s rent.
- Housing Benefit usually pays for every week your rent is due, so it will normally cover the 53rd week.
- Universal Credit normally covers 52 weeks of rent each year. In a 53-week year, UC will only pay out for 52 weeks, leaving one week’s rent not covered.

4. Will my rent go up because of this change?

No, only the way it is spread out across the year is changing. The way we calculate your annual rent increase is not changing.

5. What are service charges?

Service charges cover the costs of maintaining and managing communal areas and - services within a building or estate, such as cleaning, grounds maintenance, lighting, etc. These are separate from your rent and help us maintain shared spaces to a good standard.

Importantly, service charges are not intended to generate profit — they are based solely on the actual cost of delivering these services. Social landlords are expected to ensure that all charges represent value for money, meaning services should be efficient, reasonably priced, and of a standard that meets residents' needs.

6. What is happening to service charges?

We have always calculated service charges on a fixed charge basis, not a variable one. The tenancy agreement will now explain this more clearly. We believe this approach offers tenants more stability and predictability, avoiding financial strain that can come with variable charges and year-end reconciliations.

All potential service charges are detailed in the tenancy appendix, explaining what the charge can cover. You will only be charged a service charge if you are in receipt of the service. The list is detailing all potential service charges across all our properties. Each year when notified of your next years rent, a list detailing the fixed service charges applicable to your property will be provided. It is also our intention to develop our internal housing management system to include a service charges module so you will clearly be able to see your service charges detailed within your rent account.

7. What is the difference between a fixed and variable service charges?

Fixed service charges stay the same throughout the year, which means they're more predictable for tenants and protect tenants from volatile changes in price e.g. the recent energy crisis. Tenants paying communal energy costs would have been protected in the first year by any spike in the energy price. Variable service charges are based on actual costs. Tenants pay an estimated amount at the start of the year, but this will be reconciled at the end of the year and any under/over recovery will be charged/refunded. This can lead to unexpected bills or refunds.

8. What do you mean by “general updates and tidying up”?

We are taking the opportunity to update the tenancy agreement to ensure it is up to date, complies with current legislation and reflects best practice.

9. Do I need to sign a new tenancy agreement?

No. We are consulting you on the proposed changes first. If the changes go ahead, we will let you know how and when the updated tenancy agreement will take effect.

10. Will these changes affect my Housing Benefit or Universal Credit?

Housing Benefit – If the proposal goes ahead, then we will notify Housing Benefits of any changes to the way your rent is spread out over the year.

Universal Credit – No, as your overall yearly rent amount is not changing.

11. What happens if I don’t agree with the changes?

This is why we are consulting. We want to hear your views before making a final decision.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire or contact us using the details provided in the letter.

12. What happens if I don’t reply to the consultation?

If you don’t respond, we will assume you have no objections and will move forward with the changes after the consultation closes. However, we strongly encourage you to give your views so they can be considered.

13. I remember changes being made in 2018/19 – is this the same?

Yes, this consultation is similar to the one carried out in 2018/19. At that time, older tenancy agreements were brought together into one. This consultation is about making sure that agreement is still accurate and reflects how rent and service charges are managed.

14. How can I give feedback?

- Fill in the questionnaire included with this pack and return it by 9th November 2025 using the prepaid envelope.
- Email: consultation@starhousing.org.uk or Online: <https://www.starhousing.org.uk/have-your-say/>

15. Can I speak to someone in person?

Yes, if you would like to speak to someone in person, we will be running the following drop-in sessions:

- Thursday 23rd October 2025, 10.00am to 12.00pm at Llwyn Fields Communal Room, Llwyn Fields, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 1HG
- Thursday 23rd October 2025, 1.00pm to 3.00pm at Jubilee Community Room, Aspen Grange, Weston Rhyn, Shropshire, SY10 7TS
- Thursday 30th October 2025, 10.00am to 12.00pm at Beech Road Communal Room, Beech Road, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 4PJ
- Thursday 30th October 2025, 1.00pm to 3.00pm at Sheldon Court Communal Room, Ash Grove, Albrighton, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV7 3QY