



# A guide to renting your home





## Your rent

The amount you pay will depend on the type of property. Most of our homes will be let on a social rent but homes built more recently might be let on an affordable rent. An affordable rent is set at 80% of the current market rent for that property.

## Will the rent change?

All rents are reviewed in April each year and we'll write to you in advance of making any changes. At the moment, rents are due to increase by the Consumer Price Index (CPI from the previous September) plus an additional 1% each year. The rent will increase only once in any 12-month period.

## Service charges

Some tenants have to pay a service charge in addition to their rent. This is included in the total weekly charge and pays for services we provide including maintaining and repairing communal areas.

## Your tenancy

When you rent a home from SHAL you get a tenancy for life. All we ask is that you pay your rent, look after your home and are a good neighbour.

If don't already have a tenancy with either a housing association or a local authority, you'll be given what's called a "starter" tenancy for the first 12 months.

Providing you haven't breached the tenancy (i.e. paid the rent, looked after your home and been a good neighbour) your "starter" tenancy will be converted to an assured tenancy at the end of those 12 months.

**We'll make sure you understand the terms and conditions of your tenancy agreement before you sign it.**

There are no hidden costs, fees or deposits required to rent a home from us. **All you need to do is make sure you pay your rent in advance.**

## Paying your rent

We encourage everyone to pay their rent by direct debit. This is the cheapest way to pay and collect rent and means we can spend more of your rent on the services we provide.

When we offer you a tenancy we'll confirm how much you'll need to pay and agree a payment plan with you. You can choose to pay your rent weekly or as regularly as you choose.

**However, you always need to be at least one week in advance.**

## What does my rent pay for?

We're only able to provide our services, invest in your home and build new homes because you pay rent.

Our services include housing and neighbourhood management, property investment, community investment and what you told us were your priorities in our most recent survey. It also includes our day to day repairs service, including access to a 24/7 emergency repairs service.

Either us or one of our specialised approved contractors will come out to you and make sure you're safe in your home if there's an emergency that's risking your health and safety. We'll then complete any necessary repairs as soon as possible during normal working hours.

## Regular safety checks

We will complete regular safety checks to ensure you and your loved ones are safe at home.

This includes servicing your gas/oil boiler every 12 months and checking the electrical installation every 5 years.

If your home was built before 2001 it may contain asbestos. This will also be re-inspected every 5 years.

## Repairs and maintenance

You'll be responsible for most day to day repairs in the property, but we'll be responsible for some.

Your tenancy agreement will explain what you're responsible for and we'll make sure you understand the terms and conditions before you sign it.

## Planned investment

Alongside our day to day repairs we also have a planned programme to invest in our homes. This includes replacing things like bathrooms, boilers, doors and kitchens.

We'll only charge you for a repair if it's something that's your responsibility.



## Treating tenants and homeowners equally

Experian's "Rental Exchange" means we can share your rent payment record with Experian to help your credit history in the same way mortgage payments do for homeowners.

We want to tackle the financial, digital and social exclusion challenges faced by millions of social housing tenants in the UK.



## How will you get the property ready for me?

When the previous tenant moves out we will initially change the locks and complete the necessary safety checks. Each property is different and we'll discuss our plans (and your requirements) with you when we view the property.

**We take a flexible approach to what we do so we can let the right home to the right people in the right condition at the right time.**

## How to apply

Homes available to rent will be advertised on Homefinder Somerset.

You will need to register with them and 'bid' for properties as and when they become available.

[www.homefindersomerset.co.uk](http://www.homefindersomerset.co.uk)

## Contact us for more information

Phone: 01278 444344

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Facebook: [@shalhousing](https://www.facebook.com/shalhousing)

“I trust SHAL and I love my home.”

