

Ark Housing Association

Tenant Rent Consultation 2025/26

You have until 10 January 2025 to share your views



Complete the survey for the chance to win one of 4 x £50 shopping vouchers

Your views and feedback

We want to hear your views on our proposed rent increases for next year, your feedback is important to us, it will help us to finalise our priorities for next year and the rent we will charge from 1 April 2025. We encourage you to share your thoughts on the proposed rent increase by **Friday 10 January 2025**.

There are several issues we need to consider in setting rent levels. We need to ensure sufficient funds are available to help deliver

our obligations to you under your tenancy agreement. We need to ensure our services perform well, meet your needs and are continuously developing and improving. We also need to invest and maintain the quality of your home and meet Scottish Government standards and regulatory standards set by the Scottish Housing Regulator. Importantly we need to consider how we can balance all of that with making rents as affordable as possible to you.



Rent increase options for next year

This is the time of year where we are thinking about our finances for 2025/26. As a key part of our financial planning, we are asking tenants to tell us what they think about the proposed rent increase options from April 2025.

In determining whether, and at what level, to increase rent charges, there are 4 main factors we consider: **1.** Inflation; **2.** Where we need to spend the money to maintain and improve our housing stock and meet longer-term energy efficiency and net-zero commitments; **3.** How we compare to other landlords; and **4.** Whether the increase is affordable to tenants.

1. Inflation

In setting our rent levels, the September 2024 inflation rate of 1.7% is a key benchmark, as this is generally used as the rate at which a range of benefits, including Housing Benefit and Universal Credit, are updated by the following April.

2. Stock Investment

To improve the quality of your home and sustain the delivery of our repairs and maintenance service, it is important that the rent increase is set at a level that takes account of inflation, external property related costs and staff costs.

3. Comparison

We have consulted with other registered social landlords similar to Ark to understand what they're considering for next year's rent increase. Our peer organisations are proposing increases ranging from 4 to 5%.

4. Affordability

We know rent is a major household expenditure for most social housing tenants and where possible we will minimise rent increases and continue to develop our services to be as efficient as we can.

This year we are asking you to consider two options for the proposed rent increase from 1 April 2025: **4%** and **5%**.

How do the different options affect our plans for next year?

OPTION 1 – 4% Annual Rent Increase

OPTION 1 retains the current repairs and maintenance service and investment expenditure we forecasted last year and continue to support Arks Tenant Hardship and Community Benefit Fund. It will enable Ark to invest £1,012,000 into our existing homes to improve and enhance the homes and communities for 224 of our tenants. A list and proposed number of component replacements and improvements are summarised below:

- 9 Bathroom Replacements
- 15 Kitchen Replacements
- 23 Window Replacements
- 17 External Doors Replacements
- 9 External Common Door Replacements
- 3 Roof upgrades
- 42 Extractor upgrades
- 35 Fire safety upgrades
- 29 Boundary fence upgrades
- 11 Boiler Replacements
- 3 Central heating upgrades
- 22 Whole house energy efficiency upgrades

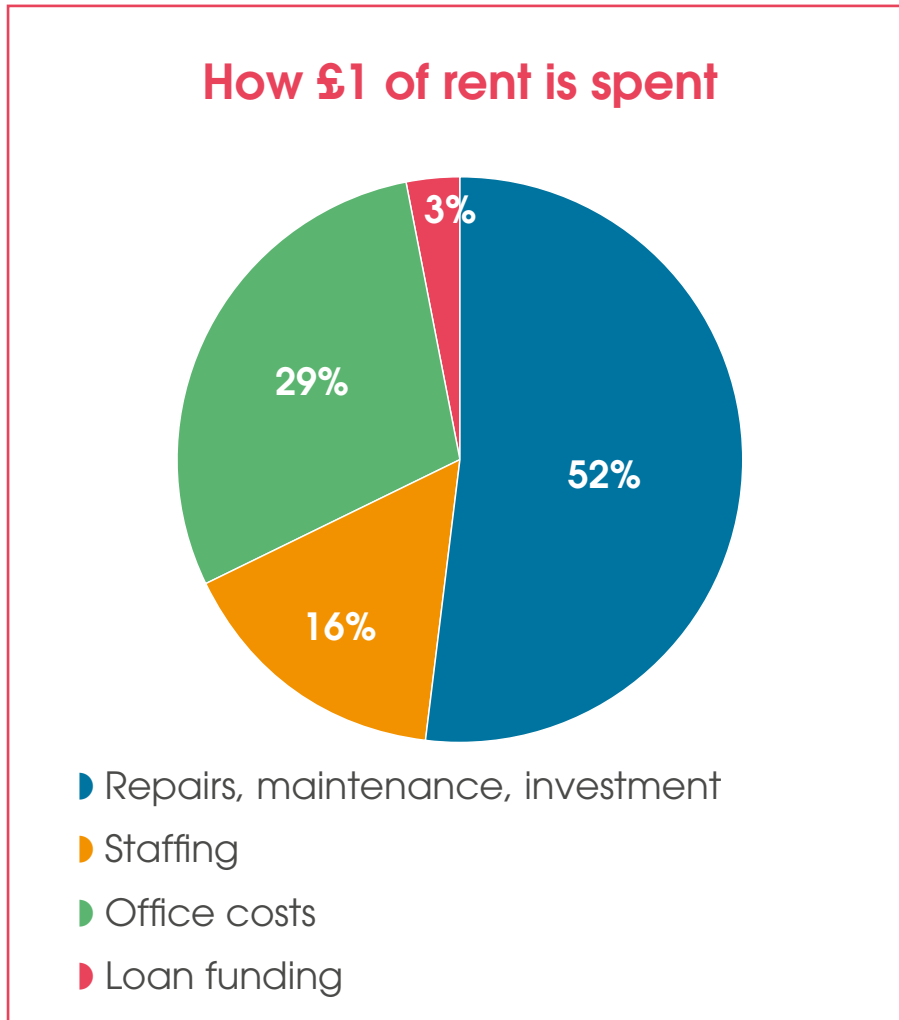
OPTION 2 – 5% Annual Rent Increase

OPTION 2 will deliver on option one's level of investment and services but will generate an additional £25,000 in 2025/26 to fund **one** of the following choices enabling Ark to offer improvements to additional tenants this year.

- CHOICE 1** 8 External Door Replacements
- CHOICE 2** 4 Window Replacements
- CHOICE 3** 3 Kitchen replacements
- CHOICE 4** 3 Bathroom Replacements
- CHOICE 5** 2 Whole house energy efficiency upgrades
- CHOICE 6** Additional funds invested into Tenant Hardship Fund

As part of this consultation, you will be given the opportunity on the feedback form to choose your thoughts on where the additional funds should be directed.

What does your rent pay for?



- ▶ 52% of your rent pays for property repairs, maintenance and investment in our existing homes and services
- ▶ Last year we invested a total of £1,201,000 to repair, maintain and invest in our homes and this year we have a budget of £1,210,000, which includes a £417,000 capital allocation to invest and improve by replacing ageing and/or failing components, such as boilers, bathrooms and kitchens.

What does this mean for you and the rent you will pay?

We understand that some tenants will find a rent increase difficult to afford. The table below shows examples of how much your rent might increase depending on the option chosen.

Size of home (bedrooms)	Current average rent per week	With 4% new average rent per week	With 5% new average rent per week	With 4% additional cost per week	With 5% additional cost per week
Room	124.16	129.12	130.37	4.97	6.21
0 bedroom	121.31	126.16	127.38	4.85	6.07
1 bedroom	108.18	112.51	113.59	4.33	5.41
2 bedroom	112.18	116.66	117.79	4.49	5.61
3 bedroom	116.47	121.13	122.30	4.66	5.82
4 bedroom	118.47	123.20	124.39	4.74	5.92

If you have any concerns about your tenancy or affordability with your rent, your Housing and Neighbourhood Services Officer or our Customer Services Officer are here to help, and can be contacted on **0131 478 8143** or **customer.services@arkha.org.uk**

Other customer and neighbourhood services and investment

We wanted to highlight areas of additional support we have been able to provide our tenants in the last two years.

Community Benefit Fund

Welfare Benefits Advice

Tenant Hardship Fund

Our team also secured external funding to assist with the cost pressures associated with the rise of energy bills and funding to adapt tenants' homes.

Energy Fund

Medical Adaptations



Tenant Satisfaction Surveys 2023/24

Based on the feedback received over the last 12 months, we have used the results to develop our services further and prioritise our investment for 2025/26.

Introduction
of Contractor
appointments

Improve energy
efficiency of
homes

Home
improvements

Improved repair
response times
and job updates

New Build Homes

Over the last 3 years, Ark have started to build new homes again, our plan is to build 108 affordable homes over the next 5 years.

Building new homes does not only create much needed affordable homes for people in housing need, but it also supports Ark to grow its housing stock to spread our operational costs over more properties which will help to limit future rent increases, and it generates additional rental income which is used to invest back into our existing homes and services.

We have already made good progress and in 2024 we have:

- ▶ In July, we completed 20 new homes including 6 flats for people with particular needs in Livingston; tenants moved into their new homes in August
- ▶ Started to build 12 new homes in Penicuik, which are designed and build using a modular construction technique and are due for completion in February 2025



What else is happening this year?

To ensure our rent increases are kept to a minimum, we continue to monitor and review how we can deliver services more efficiently.

Summarised below are some of our key achievements and plans for the remainder of this year (2024/25):

- ▶ Restructured our Housing and Asset Teams incorporating a new customer services team aiming to resolve enquiries at the first point of contact, this change included the introduction of one phone number and one email address for all customer enquiries
- ▶ Continuing to develop and enhance Rubixx our new housing and asset management system and the finance arm went live in November
- ▶ Currently developing digital portals for Customers and Contractors; the target is to go live with the portals in April 2025
- ▶ Arks Tenant Scrutiny Group completed their review of our reactive repairs service incorporating a tenant survey. This feedback has contributed to a proposed service redesign and tender document for procuring a new multi trade contractor for reactive repairs, out of hours service and void works
- ▶ We are in the process of procuring new contractor(s) and the target is to have a new contractor(s) in place to go live with our new reactive repairs and out of hours service from 1 May 2025



Have your say, what do you think?

Each year we consult with our tenants on the level of rent increase we are considering as it is vital we get feedback from you. Your feedback, as well as influencing the decision on the rent increase, will also impact on our annual budget and the money we have available to spend on your behalf, on our housing stock and housing services.

We have tried to make the rent consultation as accessible as possible so you can provide your feedback in a range of ways; phone, website, email, post and survey monkey; how to complete the survey is explained on the survey form on the last page.

We would also like to hear from you about any additional services you would benefit from.

Everyone who replies to this consultation will be entered into a prize draw for the chance to win one of **4 x £50 shopping vouchers**.



Contact us

If you would like to contact us or give us feedback, please phone **0131 478 8143** e-mail us at **customer.services@arkha.org.uk** or write to us at **Ark Housing Association Limited, Lochside House, 3 Lochside Way, Edinburgh, EH12 9DT.**

Otherwise here is a reminder of other ways you can stay connected with what we are doing:

www.arkha.org.uk

[f www.facebook.com/ArkPeopleHousingCare](https://www.facebook.com/ArkPeopleHousingCare)

[X www.twitter.com/Ark_PHC](https://www.twitter.com/Ark_PHC)

[i www.instagram.com/arkpeoplehousingcare](https://www.instagram.com/arkpeoplehousingcare)

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