

# Rent and Service Charge review - consultation survey inside

Scottish Borders Housing Association (SBHA) is reviewing the way that rents and service charges are calculated and reclaimed from Tenants. We would like to ensure that our charging system is simple, fair and consistent for all Tenants. The same set of rules would apply to everyone, ensuring that no one pays more or less than they should for the property that they live in and the services they receive.

**It is important to note that this exercise will not generate extra income for SBHA - it is only an opportunity to create a fair and easy-to-understand system for charging rents for the homes we provide.**

If you would like a copy of this document in larger print, or would like to receive the text of the document in a different language, please call 01750 724444

Jeśli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać kopię niniejszego dokumentu w formacie dużym drukiem lub w innym języku, prosimy zadzwonić pod numer 01750 724444

إذا كنت تريد نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بخط طباعة أكبر، أو كنت ترغب في تلقي نص الوثيقة بلغة مختلفة، فنرجو الاتصال بالرقم  
01750 724444

[www.sbha.org.uk](http://www.sbha.org.uk)

[www.sbhahomechoice.org.uk](http://www.sbhahomechoice.org.uk)



Rents are usually charged based on the characteristics of the home that a Tenant lives in, for example:

- property size (the number of bedrooms)
- property type (flat/house) or
- other property features.

A range of such characteristics could potentially be taken into account when setting rents. In addition, some Tenants also pay service charges for additional services that SBHA provides, e.g. stair lighting.



SBHA want to consult Tenants on how to set rents, and whether to include some service charges within the main rent for the property. This is a chance to have your say on whether you think this is a good idea. We want to hear your views on what you consider to be a simple, fair and consistent set of rules for rent and service charge setting. We want to test your ideas on which property characteristics should be considered to guide how rents are calculated. Your views are extremely important to us.

The information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only. Thank you for your participation and do please answer all questions as fully as you can.

To express our thanks for completing this survey, all **fully completed** questionnaires returned to SBHA will be entered into a prize draw. The first survey form drawn from completed entries will receive a **£75 Love to Shop voucher**. To be eligible for the prize draw and to ensure that we're able to include your views, please complete all questions in this survey including your contact details.

Please return this full newsletter to:

**Scottish Borders Housing Association**  
**South Bridge House**  
**Whinfield Road**  
**Selkirk**  
**TD7 5DT**

You can also complete the survey online using the QR code below:



If you would like to find out more about this consultation before completing the survey, please come along to one of the events listed on the back page of this newsletter - just email us on [enquiries@sbha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sbha.org.uk), call 01750 724444 or Freephone 0800 0193 222 to book your place. If you would like some assistance with filling in the survey, please get in touch with your Neighbourhood Housing Officer using the details above, or call 01750 724444 or Freephone 0800 0193 222 and someone will call you back to take you through the form.

Our thanks to Scottish Borders Tenants Organisation for their help in testing and helping to shape this survey and the consultation events.

**The closing date for completing this survey is 26th September 2023.**

Note:

- general needs housing is for Tenants with no or low support needs. There are no specific additional amenities offered with this accommodation type.
- amenity housing is for Tenants over the age of 50. Additional amenities can include communal areas and a personal safety alarm.

# Consultation survey



## 1. Are you a Tenant of SBHA? (Please tick one)

Yes

No

I live with a SBHA Tenant

I represent a SBHA Tenant

## 2. How many people currently live at this address, including yourself, any other adults and children?

## 3. What type of property do you live in? (Please tick the type that applies)

Flat / bedsit

House

4 in a block

Amenity housing

## 4. What size of property do you live in?

Bedsit

3 bedrooms

1 bedroom

4 or more bedrooms

2 bedroom

The following two questions will ask you to express your views on the general rules that SBHA should apply when setting rents and services charges. Please answer both questions:

## 5. Do you agree that SBHA should adopt a **consistent** approach to setting rents across all properties? This means that the same set of rules would apply to all property rents (please tick one box)

Strongly agree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

## 6. Do you agree that properties which have **similar characteristics** should have similar rents? (Please tick one box)

Strongly agree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

The next questions focus on how SBHA reclaim and collect service charges from tenants. Some Tenants will have noticed that in addition to your rent you are charged a service charge which covers the range of additional services that you may receive as a SBHA tenant. Current service charges include items like communal areas heating, lighting and cleaning, door entry and grounds maintenance.

**SBHA is considering trying to reduce the number of separate service charges that you are asked to pay. This would result in a simpler charging system but might result in less detail on what you are being charged for. It will not involve adding any new charges. SBHA would do this by adding these charges to the main rent charge for the property. This is similar to the way other social landlords in Scotland set rents and collect service charges.**

**Please answer all of the questions:**

**7. Do you agree that where possible service charges should be included within the main rent charge for the property? (Please tick one box)**

- |                                                     |                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree |                                            |

**8. Which of the following service charges would you like to see included in the main rent charge? (Please tick all that you would like to see covered by the rental charge)**

- Amenity housing: cleaning communal areas
- Amenity housing: communal area electricity costs
- Amenity housing: communal area heating costs
- Amenity housing: maintenance provision & maintenance of laundry equipment
- Amenity housing: lift maintenance costs
- Amenity housing: fire extinguisher testing and maintenance costs
- Amenity housing: window cleaning costs
- General needs housing: door entry systems maintenance
- General needs housing: stair lighting costs in shared stairwells
- General needs housing: stair cleaning costs in shared stairwells
- General needs housing: grounds maintenance costs



Most social landlords in Scotland vary the rents between properties by measuring the differences between them. The next set of questions will ask you which property characteristics should be measured and taken in account when setting rents.

**SBHA are considering measuring the differences between properties to guide how rents are set. For example, the rent could vary according to:**

- **property size (e.g. the number of bedrooms)**
- **property type (e.g. flat, house etc.)**
- **if the property was recently built**
- **how energy efficient the property is**
- **the level of amenity (e.g. amenity housing, parking)**
- **the area that the property is located in**

**9. Do you think that the rent charged should vary depending on the size of the property, e.g. that more rent should be charged for a 3 bedroom property than a 2 bedroom property? (Please tick one box)**

- |                                                     |                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree |                                            |

**10. Do you think that the rent charged should vary depending on the type of property, e.g. that more rent should be charged for a house than a flat? (Please tick one box)**

- |                                                     |                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree |                                            |

**11. Please rank the following property types in order of your personal preference, with 1 being most desirable and 4 being least desirable.**

- |                                 |                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bedsit | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 in a block |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flat   | <input type="checkbox"/> House        |

**12. SBHA has different types of flatted accommodation available for rent that includes maisonette, tenements and flats. Do you think the rent for these different types of flatted accommodation should be the same, assuming the same number of bedrooms?**

- |                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

**13. If you disagreed that that all flatted accommodation should have the same rent value for the same property size, how would you rank these property types in terms of preference, with 1 being most desirable to 3 being least desirable.**

- |                                          |                               |                                        |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maisonette flat | <input type="checkbox"/> Flat | <input type="checkbox"/> Tenement flat |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|

**SBHA provides a range of accommodation types with varying levels of amenity for tenants with a range of support needs. This includes:**

- **general needs housing (for Tenants with no or low support needs. There are no specific additional amenities offered with this accommodation type).**
- **amenity housing (for Tenants over the age of 50. Additional amenities include communal areas and a personal safety alarm).**

**14. Do you think that rent charges should vary depending on the accommodation type of the property and therefore the amenities provided, e.g. that more rent should be charged for amenity housing than general needs housing? (Please tick one box)**

- |                                                     |                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree |                                            |

**Some SBHA properties are in more rural locations than others, some are more energy efficient than others, some benefit from access to off street parking and some have been built in more recent years to higher building regulation standards. The next set of questions relates to these attributes.**

**15. Do you think rents in more urban areas should be higher than in more rural areas reflecting that it could mean access to cheaper transport options and supermarkets for example? (Please tick one box)**

- |                                                     |                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree |                                            |

**16. Do you think rents should be reduced where properties have lower energy efficiency ratings? (Please tick one box)**

- |                                                     |                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree |                                            |

**17. Do you think rents should be higher where there is access to an off street parking space?**

- |                                                     |                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree |                                            |



**18. Do you think rents should be higher for properties built in more recent years where higher building regulation standards have applied?**

- |                                                     |                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree |                                            |

**19. Are there any other criteria that you think should influence how rents are charged for a property?**

- Yes (please tell us what they are)
- No

Comment

**20. Summary questions.**

**Are there any other criteria that you think should influence how rents are charged for a property?**

	Yes	No
Wherever possible service charges should be included in the rental charge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Only those directly receiving services should be charged for services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service charges should be shared across the whole tenant population where possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rents should vary depending on the size of the home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rents should vary depending on the type of the property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rents should vary depending on whether the home is general needs or amenity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rents should vary depending on whether there is off street parking available to the property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rents should vary depending on how rural the area is that the property is located in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rents should vary depending on how recently the property was built	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rents should vary depending on how energy efficient the property is	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**21. If any changes are made to the rent and service charge structure, do you agree that it should be implemented in one go, phased over time or capped by a maximum or minimum limit?**

	Yes	No
Implemented in one go	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phased over time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No more or less than a capped amount e.g. £10 a month	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No preference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**22. Would you be interested in attending a tenant consultation event to learn more about the rent and service charge restructure? (Please select the event you would like to attend)**

- Wednesday 20th September, 10am-12pm - Abbey Row, Kelso
- Wednesday 20th September, 1pm-3pm - Rutherford Square, Kelso (Residents only)
- Wednesday 20th September, 4:30pm-6:30pm - Heart of Hawick, Hawick
- Thursday 21st September, 10am-12pm - Hazeldean, Galashiels (Residents only)
- Thursday 21st September, 1pm-3pm - Focus Centre, Galashiels
- Thursday 21st September, 4:30pm-6:30pm - Eastgate Theatre, Peebles
- (Online) Tuesday 26th September, 6pm-8pm via Microsoft Teams

**23. If your preference is to attend the online event please provide your email address below.**

**24. Your details**

Name .....  
 Address .....  
 Post Code .....  
 Telephone Number .....  
 Email address .....