

## HELP SHEET: RENT

### What is rent?

In return for living in your home as a Tenant (Assured or a Secure) you have to pay rent to Hanover.

The money that we receive is used towards the maintenance and management of your home.

There are two kinds of tenancy;

### Secure Tenants

If you moved into your Hanover home **before 15 January 1989** your rent charge has to be approved by the independent Rent Officer Service. If the Rent Officer does not agree with our proposed rent we have to set the level they recommend even if it is lower than our proposed rent.

Your rent will usually be set for a fixed period of 2 years although Hanover can apply for an increase earlier if there has been a substantial change in the accommodation/living space provided. We will give you one month's notice of a rent increase.

### Assured Tenants

If you moved into your Hanover home on or **after 15 January 1989** Hanover sets the rent for your home. In a small number of cases, although you can't use the Rent Officer Service you can ask a Rent Assessment Committee to review your rent.

Your rent will be reviewed each year on 1 April and we will contact you in February each year to give you a month's notice of the increase.

### How does Hanover calculate rent?

Rent is set in accordance with a Government Policy called rent restructuring which aims to make sure that all Housing Association and Council rents are set fairly. The Government created a formula to set a "target rent" which accounted for some common factors detailed below;

- Value of the property
- Size of the property
- Average income levels in the area

As you would expect in 2003 there were lots of different rents when the Government decided to make this change so they agreed that rents would be increased to a “target rent” over a number of years.

It is expected that by 2013 most of Hanover rents will be at the target rent level. Dependent upon where you are in the phased increase or decrease you might pay more or less than the target rent now. Our staff will be able to advise you whether this is the case.

### **How to pay?**

Hanover’s preferred method for payment is direct debit but you can also pay by;

- Standing order
- A rent swipe card which means that you can pay your rent at a Post Office or payzone outlet
- Debit card
- Cheque

Your rent is due in advance on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month and more information on this can be obtained from your Estate Manager.

### **What if I am struggling with rent payments?**

If you are struggling with your payments tell us straight away. We will try to offer you help and if appropriate we can give you advice on whether you can claim help with your payments. You can talk to your Estate Manager or contact our Payment Advice team on 01480 226589.

Our aim is to do our best to help you to deal with the matter before it becomes a serious problem.

If you do not contact us and you do fall behind on your rent you will be contacted by a member of our staff to talk about the reason for the arrears. Our aim will be to agree a realistic payment plan for you to repay the arrears.

Once you have fallen into arrears we follow your account very closely – residents who do not pay rent are in danger of loosing their home.

Related documents: Rent Restructuring – a guide for residents

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Advice about Welfare Rights – Help