

Frequently Asked Questions

What will my rent and service charge increase be from 7th April 2025?

In line with the government policy on social housing rents, your rent and service charge will increase by 2.7% from 7th April 2025.

How do CGA's rents compare to other landlords?

Our rents are some of the lowest in the area and based on the latest information we have; they are on average 9% lower than those of other social housing providers operating in the local area. When you compare our rents to those charged by a private landlord, our rents are around 30% lower. We're pleased to hear that based on the latest survey data we have available, over 80% of our tenants believe our rents provide value for money.

Why do I pay a service charge on top of my rent?

Service charges cover the cost of any additional services you receive from us, for example maintaining the green spaces and lighting around your neighbourhoods.

We are committed to making sure that you only pay for the services you receive and, where they are charged, these services are provided effectively and efficiently.

The costs of delivering these services continues to increase; however, we are keen to make sure service charges remain affordable and have limited the increase this year to 2.7%.

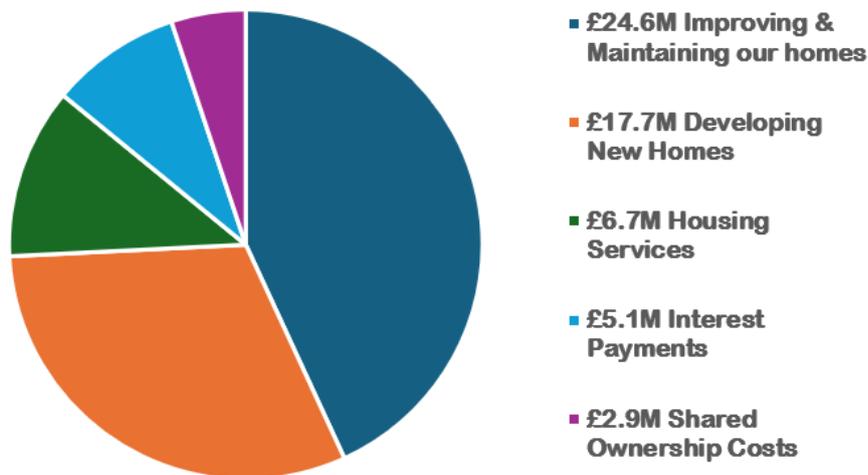
It's important to note that the cost of providing these services is not covered by the charge we levy, so we will review these services over the coming year to make sure everyone pays a fair price for the services they receive. If you have any questions on how your rent or service charge is calculated, please contact us on **0800 953 0213 (Option 3)**.

What will my rent be spent on?

You have told us that investing in your home is extremely important to you, along with a high standard of repair and maintenance. You also informed us that some key support services, such as assistance with welfare benefits and the support we provide you with during your tenancy are valued by you. Your rent will continue to fund the provision of these services. You have also told us that investing in your communities is important and we will continue to do this by building more than 100 new homes a year up to 2026. This means that we will be increasing the availability and choice of much-needed new homes across Preston and surrounding areas to meet the needs of existing and future tenants.

A central theme in our plans going forward is to provide great customer service. We are currently undertaking a thorough review of the way we deliver all our services. You have told us that you want us to get the basics right. Our service review will look to ensure that we deliver ‘brilliant basics’ We aim to provide the services you want from us in an efficient and customer-friendly way that meets your needs. The feedback you give us, through a variety of means, will be a key part of the process so that we can tailor our approach and consistently deliver great services. In summary the following pie chart shows how we spend our money. (Based on our 2024/25 forecast spend).

Where Does CGA Spend its Money - £M



I currently receive Housing Benefit, what do I need to do?

If your Housing Benefit is paid directly to Community Gateway, your entitlement will be reassessed automatically. However, if your Housing Benefit is paid directly to you, it is your responsibility to let the council know that your rent has changed.

IMPORTANT: If your Housing Benefit payment does not cover all of your rent, you will need to make additional payments from your other income to ensure you don't fall into arrears. If you are unsure of the amount you will need to pay, please contact our Rents Team on **0800 953 0213 (option 3)** or e-mail:

rentrecovery@communitygateway.co.uk

I claim Universal Credit, what do I need to do?

If you currently claim Universal Credit, it is important that you contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), via your online journal to advise them of the change in your rent charge so that they can amend your claim. It is important that you update the change on Monday 7th April 2025 or before this date if a task appears on your 'to-do' list. Failure to do so could result in you receiving less benefit than you are entitled to. If you try and update your change before this date it may not take effect.

If you would like further advice on Housing Benefit, Universal Credit, or any other welfare benefit, you can call our Tenancy Support Team on **0800 953 0213 (option 4)**, who will be happy to help. This service is available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

I pay my rent by Standing Order, what do I need to do?

You will need to notify your bank of the change to your payment. It is essential that you quote your rent account number when paying by standing order; failure to do so could result in payment not being allocated to your account.

I'm struggling to pay my rent and services charges, what can I do?

Our priority is to support our tenants to manage their tenancies and remain in their homes. If you are struggling to pay your rent and essential household bills, please talk to us. Our Tenancy Support Team can provide advice on a variety of topics, such as welfare benefits, assistance with energy bills, obtaining household items, and budgeting.

If you would like a free welfare benefit health check to ensure you are claiming everything you are entitled to, or for more information on the support available, contact our Tenancy Support Team on **0800 953 0213 (option 4)**.

Get Involved

We are proud to be a tenant-led organisation, meaning our tenants are at the heart of everything we do.

We actively encourage all tenants to get involved with us and have your say on how we do things. There are lots of ways to have your voice heard and many opportunities for tenants to influence our services.

We have a strategy that sets out our commitment to engage with our tenants and residents, whilst setting out our priority areas, which are:

- Amplifying the Tenant Voice – increased influence and accountability.
- Accessible Engagement – supporting tenants to engage.
- Tenant-Led Activities – to influence and scrutinise strategies, policies and services.
- Keeping you informed about things that matter the most to you.

In-Person - We have a range of groups who meet in person to review our performance and make recommendations about how performance might be improved. We know how important it is for tenants to see change when something isn't right, so we make sure that any feedback we get is listened to and act upon where possible.

In your community – There are also plenty of ways to get involved within your communities to help make positive changes in your neighbourhood.

Online – You don't have to come along to events to get involved, there are plenty of digital opportunities too.

To find out about all of our current involvement opportunities, visit

www.communitygateway.co.uk/get-involved-1 or scan the QR code below using the camera on your smart phone.

