



## HELP PAYING YOUR RENT

### **Housing Benefit**

If you are on a low income and do not have more than £16,000 in savings or capital you may get help paying your rent through housing benefit. If you receive Pension Credit (Guaranteed Credit) and have more than £16,000 in savings or capital you may still be entitled to help paying your rent. For more information or to apply for housing benefit, phone 0141 577 3002 or email [benefits@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

There have been changes to the welfare benefits system as a result of the UK Government's Welfare Reform Act.

Since 1 April 2013, the way in which housing benefit is calculated has changed.

If you are of working age, receiving housing benefit and renting a property that's bigger than you need, it's likely that your benefit has reduced. This is referred to as 'under-occupying' your home.

If you have more bedrooms than you need then a percentage reduction will be applied to your housing benefit claim:

- 14% will be taken off if you have one more extra bedroom than you need, or
- 25% will be taken off if you have two or more extra bedrooms than you need.

**You will have to pay this additional money for your rent directly to the Council on a weekly basis.**

For more information or to discuss your current circumstances, please call 0141 577 3649 or 0141 577 3002. You can also email [benefits@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

### **Discretionary housing payment**

If you receive housing benefit and there is still a shortfall in your rent, you may be able to get extra help with your housing costs by applying for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP). This is short-term assistance we can make to claimants who we consider need further financial help to pay their rent. For more information email [benefits@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

### **Online benefits calculator**

You can quickly check your possible entitlement to housing benefit using our online benefits calculator at [www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/benefit-calculator](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/benefit-calculator)

This calculator will provide information on housing benefit only, and will not provide any information on Council Tax reduction (CTR).

More information on Council Tax reduction is available by calling customer services on 0141 577 3002, and a quick guide is available on our website [www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/benefits)

The quick guide will give an indication of whether or not you will qualify for CTR.

### **Universal Credit**

From 15 February 2016 if you are a new benefit claimant who is single, of working age and have no dependants your claim will be considered under Universal Credit. A new benefit which is designed to replace a number of existing in work and out of work benefits. Amongst other things this will change the way in which the rent element of your benefits is paid. It will be paid directly into a bank or credit union account and you will be responsible for paying this to the Council.

If you have any questions about Universal Credit or wish assistance in setting up a bank or Credit Union account call **0141 577 3704/3664**

### **East Renfrewshire Credit Union**

Membership of East Renfrewshire Credit Union is open to all residents of East Renfrewshire. Members can choose to have any income and /or benefit payments paid directly into a Credit Union account. The Credit Union will provide a debit card which you can use to withdraw your money at any ATM or to make purchases in stores or on-line.

**The Credit Union can arrange to pay your rent for you directly to East Renfrewshire Council.**

For further information call **0141 577 8354**

### **Need Help with Benefits or Debt problems?**

**Contact MART team today**

**What we do: We offer Free, Independent, Confidential, Non-judgemental Advice**

**Help to Budget:** · We can look at a range of solutions such as payment plans, bankruptcy, DAS, or Mortgage 2 Rent.

If you need to attend court for your debt we may be able to attend with you and represent your case. If you need help to manage your money our staff can help you prepare and stick to a weekly budget.

**Help to apply for benefits:** · We can carry out a full benefit check to make sure you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to. We can help you to complete applications for all benefits and council tax discounts. We offer a specialist service to anyone with a diagnosis of cancer, including applications for MacMillan Grants. We can also identify any charitable assistance that may be available to you.

**Help to challenge benefit decisions:** · If you get a benefit decision that you are unhappy with we will assist you with the appeal process. If you have to attend a tribunal we can attend with you and represent your case.

**Contact Details: Phone: 0800 052 1023**

**Email: [mart@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:mart@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)**

**Text: MART to 80800 followed by your name**

### **East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau**

The East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau can provide advice and support. You can visit them at 216 Main Street, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire or phone **0141 881 2032**.

# YOUR RENT

## 2016/2017



This leaflet tells you about the rent charges for the year beginning 4 April 2016.

It also provides information on how rent income was spent in 2015/16.



[www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/rents](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/rents)



## YOUR RENT

### Has there been a rent increase this year?

Yes. The average council house rent has increased by 4.9% (an average weekly increase of £3.52 based on 48 weeks or £3.25 based on 52 weeks).

The increase will allow the council to improve the quality of housing stock and maintain a high standard of housing service. The increase will take effect from 4 April 2016.

### How much does the council collect in rents?

The total amount due from council house rents in 2016/2017 is estimated to be £10.770 million. The council housing service is funded entirely by income from rents. No money is received from Central Government or from Council Tax.

### How are rent levels set?

Each year, we decide on the level of rent by taking into account the costs associated with providing the housing service together with the investment required in our housing stock.

Additional investment has been funded from the following sources:

- income from rents
- receipts we obtain from council house sales

### How will my rent be used?

The rent is used for three main areas

- Day to day maintenance, servicing and repair of all council houses
- Providing the housing service, such as maintaining a waiting list, allocating empty houses, dealing with tenancy issues, neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour.
- Repaying borrowing used to invest in council houses

In addition to the repairs, maintenance and housing management funded directly from the rents (known as "revenue" funding) we also borrow money, a bit like a mortgage, to renew and improve different elements of our houses (known as "capital" funding) This is invested to make sure all our housing continues to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).

In 2015/2016 we invested nearly £5 million in our existing housing, and nearly £1.4 million in new council housing.

The Table and Graph below shows how we invested this money over the year.

**This leaflet is available in Braille, audio tape, large print and via e-mail on request. Please contact customer first on 0141 577 3001. Information on housing is also available from the council website at [www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/housing](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/housing)**

इस सूचना-पत्र में उल्लेखित सूचना यदि आप हिन्दी अनुवाद में चाहें तो कृपया सम्पर्क करें।

如果您想得到该资料所含信息的译文，请联系：

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਲੀਫਲੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਇਸੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ اس لیفلٹ میں درج معلومات کا ترجمہ اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو ہم سے رابطہ کریں



## INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS

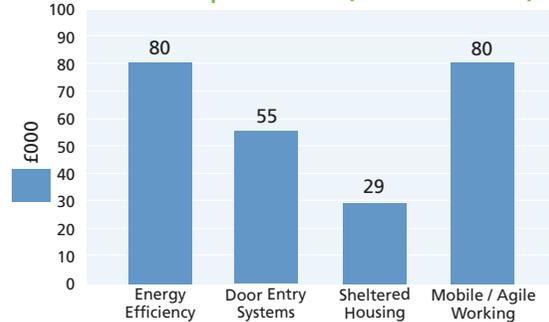
### New Council Properties in 2015/16

In 2015/2016 we invested nearly £1.4million, part funded by the Scottish Government, in the building of new council housing and purchase on the open market of existing flats to increase the number of council houses available for rent.

### Major Improvements in 2015/16

Major Improvements (More than £100k)	£000s
External structural works	2,609
Internal element renewals	468
Central heating systems	578
Aids and Adaptations	313
Re-wiring and other electricals	284
Renovation of properties	268
Communal paths, walls, lighting, estate works, bin stores, drying areas etc	180

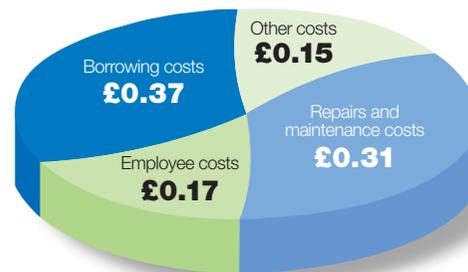
### Minor Improvements (Less than £100k)



### Major Investments and Improvements

In 2016/2017, and in addition to our ongoing day to day repair service, we intend to continue to renew and improve elements of our housing. The level of investment is still to be finalised by the council but is likely to be similar to the investment in 2015/16. It will be used to continue to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and to start to meet new energy efficiency requirements that the Scottish Government require all our housing to meet by 2020 – the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH).

### Each £1 of your rent is spent as follows:



## PAYING YOUR RENT

### Ways to pay your rent

You can pay your rent by the following methods:

- by standing order (ask at your local council office for a form)
- online payments at [www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/rents](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/rents)
- by phoning the 24 hour automated telephone line on 0141 577 3030.
- by debit card (at the Barrhead Office or Council Headquarters, Eastwood Park or phone 0141 577 3002 during office hours)
- in person at the Barrhead Office or at East Renfrewshire Council Headquarters, Rouken Glen Road, Giffnock
- at your local Post Office

If paying by cheque, please ensure that your cheque is made payable to East Renfrewshire Council and that your rent account number (taken from your rent card) is detailed on the back of the cheque. Post to East Renfrewshire Council, 211 Main Street, Barrhead G78 1SY.

### Payment difficulties

We know that people can find themselves in rent arrears for all kinds of reasons and can find it difficult facing up to the problem.

If you are having difficulties paying your rent:

- advise staff at your local office in advance if you have a problem
- do not wait until you receive an arrears letter
- do not ignore letters you receive about your rent account
- make an agreement with the rent recovery team to pay what you are able to reduce your arrears and keep to it.

Rent recovery staff can offer assistance to tenants who have an arrears problem. They will assist you in calculating a reasonable recovery agreement.

We will make every effort to help you deal with your rent arrears – but, if our attempts to reach agreement with you fail or you do not keep up your repayment agreement, we will take further action.

This might include:

- Deducting payment from your benefits
- Court action leading to the Council obtaining the right to evict tenants for non payment

We will do everything we can to help you stay in your home, but remember we have no legal obligation to house you if you do not pay rent arrears.

**If you are in arrears, please let us help you.**

**Contact us now by phone on 0141 577 3704/3664 or 0141 577 3707 or email [rents@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:rents@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)**