



## Rent and Services Explained

This booklet is a guide to understanding your new rent charge and explains how your money is spent on the services provided by North Devon Homes.

## Message from Chair of the Board:

Since becoming Chair of the Board at North Devon Homes in early 2022, both prices and inflation have continued to rise, leading to increasing challenges in the cost of living.

In the midst of these challenges, one thing that has not changed is our commitment to providing the best support and services possible. Recognising the growing strain on household budgets, the Board has made it a priority to keep rents as low as possible. However, this commitment must be carefully balanced against the increasing costs that we, like many organisations, are faced with.

To help us manage our costs but without compromising the quality of the services we provide, we have looked at how we might be more cost efficient in some areas. For example, we now handle kitchen deliveries ourselves which has helped cut down the cost of installing new kitchens; we have been training our staff so that we can do more legal work in-house rather than paying external companies; and we have been setting up long term agreements with some of our suppliers to ensure that prices will not

change for the duration of the agreement and that we have products available as we need them.

NDH is dedicated to the well-being of the people and communities we serve, so we have helped our customers by increasing our Hardship Fund to help those in the greatest need, including delivering 64 hampers at Christmas. We have supported customers with the cost of moving house through our Home Movers Fund, helped older customers to access over £400,000 of additional income through our Independent Age funded project and invested in Energy & Wellbeing services which support around 150 households a year to keep warm and well in their home.

Regrettably, to maintain our service standards, it is necessary for us to increase our rent. As a not-for-profit charitable housing association, we operate with the goal of providing quality housing and services. Increasing rent is a challenging decision but is one of the ways we

can ensure NDH remains a resilient and responsible landlord.

If you find yourself facing challenges in meeting your rent payments, please reach out to us. Our team is here to provide support and assistance. These are undoubtedly difficult times, but together, as a community, we will navigate these challenges and emerge stronger. Thank you for your understanding and continued support.



**Colin Dennis,**  
Chair of the Board

## Message from Customer representatives

Each year there is a consultation process to discuss the rent increase proposals and we, as your customer representatives, meet with Directors, Managers and Board members at NDH as part of this process to discuss how the rent increase will affect customers.

We use this opportunity to have an open conversation about what services we value and need to retain in these tough times, and which changes we think could be acceptable. Our focus is always on what customers need and value, and on letting the Board and Managers know how to spend our money wisely.

We have always given feedback on how NDH deliver our services, but right now making sure

that you get good value for money has never been more important to us. This is why we have highlighted in this booklet what you are getting for every pound of your rent. Whilst any increase in rents is not welcome, we know it is necessary and NDH's average rents are lower than other South West housing associations and well below private sector landlords' rents, especially in North Devon.

We know it's a tough situation, but it's happening everywhere. However, no matter what, NDH will always be here to support us when we need it.





# How is my new rent calculated?

From April many rents will be increased by 7.7%. Your total rent is calculated as a full year and then equally spread to give you your new regular rent amount.

- If you are on a weekly tenancy, your yearly total from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 is divided into 48 charges which leaves 5 rent-free weeks in the year. Although no rent is charged to your account on these dates, if you have fallen behind on payments it is your opportunity to catch up with any arrears.
- If you are on a monthly tenancy, your yearly total is divided into 12 equal charges from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

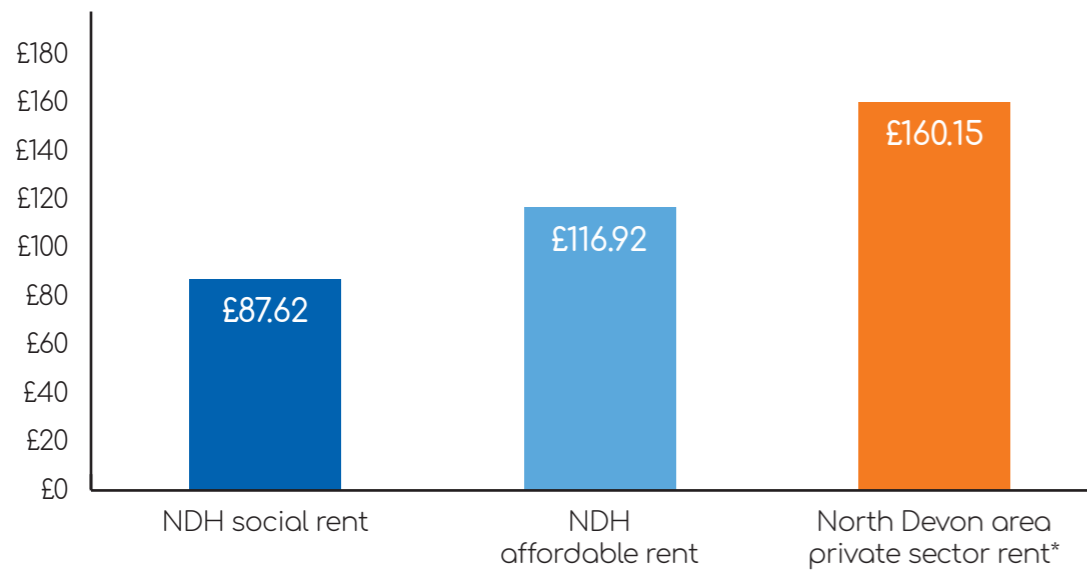
\*Please note that there are a total of five rent-free weeks in 2024/25, in addition to 1 April 2024 you also have 11, 18 and 25 March 2024 remaining from this year's dates. If you have fallen behind with your payments, these weeks are your opportunity to catch up with any arrears.

## Rent free weeks

- 1 April 2024
- 10 March 2025
- 17 March 2025
- 24 March 2025
- 31 March 2025

## Average Rents

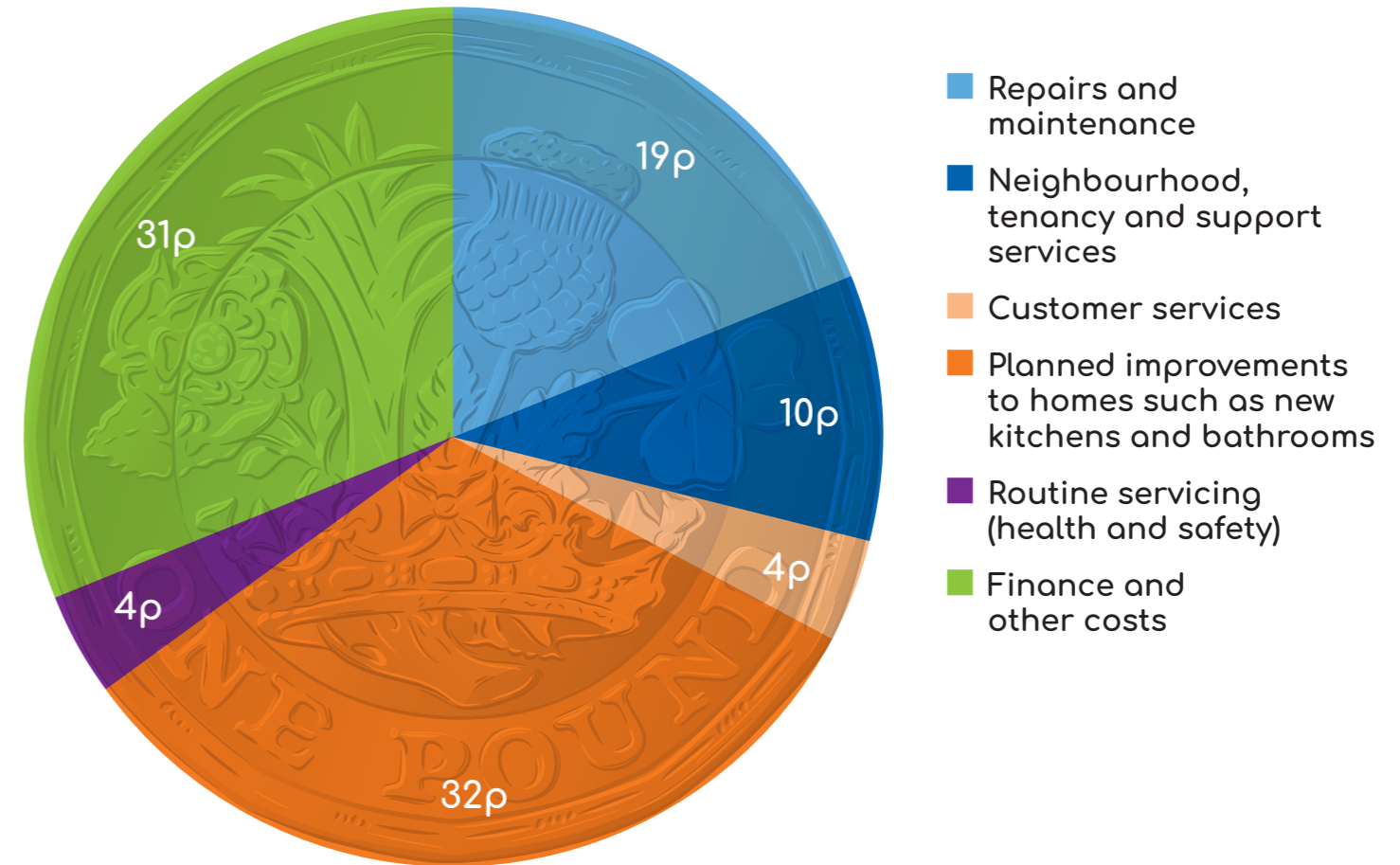
The chart below shows the average rent in 2022/23 for a 2 bedroom property in the area. NDH social and affordable rents are still far lower than private sector rents in North Devon.



\*source Office for National Statistics Private Rental Market Statistics 2022/23.

# Where does my rent money go?

As a not-for-profit charity, income collected from rents is invested into the homes and services we provide for customers. Below we have broken down how every £1 is planned to be spent during the coming year.



## Services we offer you



### Neighbourhood support

Our team are here to help you within your community. They can deal with any anti-social behaviour reports, tenancy help or refer you to other local services.



### Financial support

We have a fantastic team who are here to help you with any money worries you may be having. Whether this is with energy bills, budgeting or if you are worried about how you'll pay your next week's rent, we are here to help guide you to where support can be found and help in any way we can.

We want customers to get as much support as they can to ensure they do not lose their home. Please do not worry in silence.



### Independent Living

Our independent living communities and support officer service enables customers over the age of 55 to live independent and fulfilled lifestyles. This year we have also focussed on providing dedicated financial support as well as ensuring they are receiving all their pension and benefit entitlements. If you are concerned about anything please speak to the team.



### Specialist support

Our Specialist Support Team offers a more targeted support for things such as mental health and hoarding that you may need assistance with. If you feel you need additional help, the team can work with you to find support.



### Customer involvement

Our Involvement Team love to hear from all our customers wanting to have their say at NDH. If you'd like to find out more about getting your voice heard please email Tracey at [tracey.williams@ndh-ltd.co.uk](mailto:tracey.williams@ndh-ltd.co.uk).



## Where was your rent money spent last year?

To keep up to date with everything we are doing, you can read our Home News and Annual Report issues online, or when they land on your doorstep each April, September and early December. Below are just a few examples of completed projects.



### Repairs

9,161 repair completions

89% customer satisfaction

\* results collected from surveys following the completion of works



### Safety

97% homes with a valid and satisfactory electrical certificate

100% homes with a valid gas safety certificate



### Energy efficiency

166 new energy efficient boilers

96 homes received new energy efficiency measures costing £1.3million of which £650,000 was from grants and funding applications



### Home improvements

189 new kitchens

16 new bathrooms

17 new roofs

Please note the figures for Repairs and Safety are for April to December 2023, whereas Energy Efficiency and Home Improvements are for our planned units for the whole year until March 2024.





# Got a query?

We know you may have some questions regarding your new rent and so we hope this brochure has been of help to answer these. If you still have questions, our team is ready to discuss them with you. Please get in touch with us via email or phone.

If you are in need of financial support or are worried about anything related to the rent increase please do get in touch. The sooner you reach out, the sooner we can help you. We have a Money Matters Team who are on hand to help you find any support or additional entitlements you may need and we will always work with customers who are struggling to maintain their payments.

If you want to chat to one of the customers who helped put this brochure together or want to discuss what Customer2Customer support is available, we're just an email or phone call away.

Please contact us using the phone number or email address below:



01271 312500



[www.ndh-ltd.co.uk](http://www.ndh-ltd.co.uk)



[customer care@ndh-ltd.co.uk](mailto:customer care@ndh-ltd.co.uk)



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An accessible version of this booklet is available on our website.

