

Quick facts

Affordable Rent

You may have noticed some properties being advertised on Home Options as being 'Affordable Rent'. Below is some more information about Affordable Rents and what it means.

What is changing?

The government is making changes to the levels of rent that some new residents will pay for social housing. All housing providers receiving development funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) will have to charge what is called Affordable Rent on a proportion of their new tenancies.

There is a desperate need for additional affordable housing in the UK. Until recently, the government has supported housing associations in building new homes by providing grants. This has changed and housing associations are now expected to fund new homes mainly from their future rental income, with limited grant support.

What exactly is Affordable Rent?

Affordable Rent is rent charged at up to 80% of market rent. This means the rent charged will be less than the amount charged for a similar property by a private landlord (who would charge the 'market rent') but will be more than a traditional housing association rent (known as a Social Rent).

The additional money raised by Affordable Rent charges must be put towards building new affordable homes.

How will affordable rents properties be advertised?

This will vary across the Greater Norwich sub-region. In the Norwich City and South Norfolk council areas properties will be advertised using the Choice Based Lettings system which allows registered users to 'bid' on the properties they are interested in. In the Broadland District Council area allocations to properties are done using a non-systems approach. In each case, properties that carry an 'affordable rents' will be clearly indicated.

What about Housing Benefit?

Tenants of Affordable Rent properties can still apply for Housing Benefit as normal and claims will be assessed based on household circumstances. As with Social Rent, if Housing Benefit does not cover the full rent, tenants will have to pay the difference.

Will every new tenant pay the Affordable Rent?

Housing associations have been given the flexibility to decide some of the rules they wish to apply so each housing association's approach will be different.

For example, some Housing Associations may advertise just a proportion of their homes with an Affordable Rent charge. Others have decided to charge the Affordable Rent for all new lets but offer built-in protection for existing tenants who transfer and who will pay the lower, Social Rent charge. Also there may be other reasons why particular properties or types of property are exempt from Affordable Rent charges.

Information on rent charges will be included on each Home Options advertisement and, in instances where properties are not advertised using Choice Based Lettings, this information will be given verbally. Applicants who receive an offer should check with the particular Housing Association what the rent charge will be, if they are not clear.

Where can I get more information?

If you are a current social housing tenant and have specific questions about your tenancy or how Affordable Rent may affect you, please contact your housing provider using the usual contact details. These can be found on your latest rent statement.

In the meantime, further information about Social Housing Reforms is available from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) website at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/socialhousing/> or you can contact the Home Options team at your local council offices:

South Norfolk Home Options Team:

South Norfolk Council,
South Norfolk House,
Cygnet Court,
Long Stratton,
Norwich,
NR15 2XE

Telephone: 01508 533633 minicom: 01508 533622

Opening times: Monday - Friday 8.45am to 5pm.

Email: homeoptions@s-norfolk.gov.uk