Dear resident

We are considering making some changes to the charges for rent and other services in our hostels.

We are doing this because the rent and amenity charges that we charge at the moment do not cover the actual cost of providing the services, or of maintaining and repairing the properties. We want to provide good quality services, in well maintained buildings that have good quality, modern facilities. We need to make sure that the Council has enough money to keep the hostels in good condition and to improve and modernise the facilities now, and in the future.

The only way we can do this is to increase the rent we charge, and the charges for other services such as heating, lighting, water and staffing costs. We are only increasing the charges so that we can cover these costs, and will not be making a profit from the extra charges.

Those reciveing housing benefit to pay their rent and charges at the moment, will be able to claim housing benefit to cover the extra costs. Those who are not reciving housing benefit at the moment may be able to claim housing benefit to cover the extra cost, depending on their circumstances.

***What is included in the rent and other charges?***

The basic rent and charges cover:

* repairs, maintenance, improvements and refurbishment of the building and facilities;
* maintenance of the grounds, gardens and any trees on the property;
* window cleaning;
* provision and maintenance of all furniture, furnishings, kitchens, ovens, hobs, and white goods;
* provision and maintenance of fire alarms and fire safety equipment;
* pest control;
* communal lighting;
* cleaning of communal areas and facilities;
* building insurance;
* council tax;
* staffing costs. This includes the cost of Customer Services Officers, Cleaners, Tenancy Services Officers, and the staffing costs of providing, managing and running the buildings and all related services. If there is a concierge service at the hostel, this is also included.

The personal amenity charge includes a share of the costs of the heating and hot water, electricity and mains water and sewerage services.

We have written to all the residents in Camden Road, Chester Road and West end Lane hostels and have arranged meeting with them, to answer questions and find out what residents think of the proposals; you can also let us know your views on the proposals here.

The proposed increases at Camden Road, Chester Road and West End Lane are as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Camden Road** | Basic Rent | Other charges | Personal amenity  | Total |
| Current charges | £69.19 | £65.72 | £8.92 | £143.83 |
| **Chester Road** | Basic Rent | Other charges | Personal amenity | Total |
| Current charges | £37.34 | £66.72 | £8.92 | £112.98 |
| **West End Lane** | Basic Rent | Other charges | Personal amenity | Total |
| Current charges | £54.57 | £66.72 | £8.92 | £130.21 |
|   | Basic Rent | Other charges | Personal amenity | Total |
| **Proposed new charges** | **£122.95** | **£115.69** | **£14.77** | **£253.41** |