

Moray Council  
**Council House Rents**  
for 2017/18



- How we calculate your rent
- How we use your rent
- How you can contact us

# Jargon buster

**Housing Benefit:** Housing benefit is still available to people who are on a low income and need help paying their rent. However this is changing to Universal Credit as part of the government's Welfare Reform. The amount you will get depends on many factors including your personal circumstances, property size as well as your income and any savings.

For more information on the current housing benefit system please visit [http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray\\_standard/page\\_41489.html](http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_41489.html)

For more information on the changes happening to housing benefit please visit [http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray\\_standard/page\\_97915.html](http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_97915.html)

**Kitchen standard:** The kitchen standard is based on whether the house has a kitchen that meets or fails the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). The SHQS concentrates on rating kitchens on criteria such as safety, the amount of storage space, and the number of safe electrical sockets. The SHQS rating does not take into account the age of the kitchen.

**NHER (National Home Energy Rating):** The National Home Energy Rating scheme gives an 'energy efficiency' rating for a house based on the type of heating, the main heating fuel, the house construction and whether double-glazing is fitted. The scale goes from 1 (poor) to 10 (good), with the least energy-efficient houses at the lower end of the scale and the most energy-efficient houses at the top. The average NHER rating for council houses in Moray is currently just under 7. For more information, please visit [www.nher.co.uk](http://www.nher.co.uk).

**Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS):** This is a national standard based on a minimum set of quality measures for all houses in the social rented sector. The SHQS is based on a number of things and houses must:

- meet the acceptable standard
- be free from serious disrepair
- be energy efficient
- have modern facilities and services
- be healthy, safe and secure
- for more information, please visit [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

## **How does the rent setting policy work?**

The policy for setting rent uses a points scheme to work out your rent. In line with the policy, we will consider seven features that apply to your home. These are:

- the number of bedrooms your home has
- the type of property that you rent, such as flat, terrace or detached
- the standard of your kitchen
- the energy rating (NHER) of your home
- whether your home has a garden and if so, whether you share it
- where in Moray your home is located
- whether your home is newly built

These features are based on the characteristics and facilities of your home. Each feature has a number of parts to show the different characteristics of properties. We award points against each feature of your home.

The total number of points for all appropriate features will be multiplied by a number called a points-based factor. The end figure will be the weekly amount of your rent.

### Example of how we work out your rent

If you live in Buckie in a mid-terrace house with three bedrooms and you have a private garden, we will work out your rent as follows:

Feature	Points
Three bedrooms	102
Mid-terrace house	35
In Buckie	10
Kitchen above standard	5
NHER rating 7+	8
Private garden	4
New Build (No)	0
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>164</b>

To work out your new rent, we multiply the total points by a points-based factor, which is calculated to achieve a fair rent increase.

## Rent for 2017/18

The Council carried out a rent increase consultation from 8 December 2016 to 13 January 2017. It offered tenants the choice of whether they would prefer a 3.5% increase over the next 3 years or a 4% increase over the same period. The 4% increase would allow the Council to build more houses and maintain housing services at current levels. The majority of tenants who responded to the consultation opted for a 4% increase on the basis that the Council would now build 70 new houses per year over the next three years.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Why is my rent different to my neighbour's?**

This could happen if your home has different features from your neighbour's, for example, central heating that is more energy efficient.

## **What happens if improvements are made to my home?**

If we carry out any improvements to your home they could affect your rent. When we undertake certain improvements we will work out your rent again if one of the six features affecting your rent has been improved. For example, if we upgrade your kitchen or improve the energy efficiency of your home, your rent may increase.

We will only increase your rent 60 days after the improvement was made, and we will give you at least 28 days' notice in writing of any increase in your rent.

## **What happens if I exchange or transfer my home?**

We will work out the rent of the other property using the same points scheme as described above. We would tell you the amount of rent that you would have to pay before you exchange or transfer your home.

## **Will I still get help to pay my rent?**

If there is a change to your rent, we will reassess the amount of Housing Benefit you get.

If you are on a low income and your rent goes up, you should apply for Housing Benefit. If you do not get Housing Benefit but think that you may qualify, please phone 0300 123 4566.

# How your rent is used

## What happens to your rent?

Each year we review our budget for managing our housing stock. We have closely examined the budget for 2017/18 to identify possible savings. These savings will be used to carry out more improvements in the Housing Service.

## Where the money comes from

Money for council housing comes from tenants' rents, whether it is paid by cash or through Housing Benefit. This money goes into what's called the '*housing revenue account*'.

### Income 2017/18

Rent and other payments	99.4%	£18,152,000
Bank balances and interest	0.1%	£10,000
Other income	0.5%	£88,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£18,250,000</b>

## Where the money goes

We are committed to maintaining and improving your homes. We spend around half of our budget on maintenance, and we also pay interest on money that we borrow for building houses and carrying out major repairs.

### Expenditure 2017/18

Repairs and maintenance	55.4%	£10,129,000
Interest and repayment on loans	20.7%	£3,774,000
Supervision and Management	21.9%	£3,990,000
Other Expenditure	2.0%	£357,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£18,250,000</b>

We use money from a capital account to fund major improvements to our houses. Capital expenditure is money that we spend on major works that add value or will last a long time. Capital expenditure is often covered by borrowing, which is repaid over a period of years, much like a mortgage. In 2017 we will be investing £9,260,000 on new council houses, and expect to complete 47 of these during this period.

We will also be spending a total of £11,123,000 on repairs and maintenance of our housing stock in 2017/18.

# Local Access Points

## Buckie Access Point

Moray Council  
13 Cluny Square  
Buckie  
AB56 1AJ

## Elgin Access Point

Moray Council  
High Street  
Elgin  
IV30 1BX

## Forres Access Point

Moray Council  
Auchernack  
High Street  
Forres  
IV36 1DX

## Keith Access Point

Moray Council  
Keith Resource Centre  
Mid Street  
Keith  
AB55 5AH

# Contact Details

**Phone:** 0300 123 4566

**Email:** [housing@moray.gov.uk](mailto:housing@moray.gov.uk)

Please tell us if you need us to translate this document into your language, or if you would like a copy in large print, Braille or on audio tape.

## Useful websites

For more information, please visit the following websites. Use the link provided or scan Quick Reference code with your smart phone.

[www.moray.gov.uk](http://www.moray.gov.uk)



[www.nesltd.co.uk](http://www.nesltd.co.uk)



[www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)



Quick Reference (QR) codes can be scanned by a smart phone with a QR Reader to take you straight to the appropriate website.

