

Shared ownership rent setting policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out ReSI Housing's approach to rents for shared owners. Shared owners are leaseholders who own part of their property and pay rent on the share of the property that they do not own.
- 1.2 This policy includes information on how rents are set and reviewed, and our approach to rent arrears and income management.
- 1.3 ReSI Housing is also aware of its grant and s106 obligations with respect to rent setting, which are binding on ReSI Housing. ReSI Housing is bound by the terms of the shared ownership lease.
- 1.4 The appointed Property Managers of ReSI Housing will be required to accept the obligation to comply with this policy and the Board will thereafter be responsible for monitoring the compliance of these managing agents with this policy.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 For all our shared ownership properties, the purpose of this policy is to:
 - 2.1.1. Ensure that ReSI Housing is transparent in its approach to setting rents.
 - 2.1.2. Ensure that ReSI Housing meets its legal and regulatory obligations with regard to setting rent.
 - 2.1.3. Set out our approach to collecting rent.
 - 2.1.4. Set out how we will manage any rent arrears.

3 Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all shared ownership residents, and shared ownership properties owned by ReSI Housing.
- 3.2 It does not apply to properties where the shared owner has staircased to 100% ownership.
- 3.3 All staff, the Fund Manager and Property Managers are expected to comply with this policy when working with shared owners.

4 Equality and diversity

- 4.1 ReSI Housing is committed to making sure all services are accessible to all our residents. The Property Managers acting on our behalf are required to ensure they are communicating appropriately with our customers, and they have the relevant information.
- 4.2 This policy will be applied in a way which makes sure we treat all customers with fairness and respect. We recognise our duty to advance equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination or victimisation on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership and any other protected characteristics defined within the [Equality Act 2010](#).
- 4.3 On request we will provide translations of all our documents, policies and procedures in various languages and formats including braille and large print.

5 Commitment

- 5.1 ReSI Housing will adhere to all relevant legislation, regulatory requirements and best practice when setting and collecting rents.
- 5.2 ReSI Housing will communicate clearly with shared owners in relation to:
- How their rent is set
 - The amount of rent that is due
 - Any changes to their rent
- 5.3 ReSI Housing will take into account best practice published by the Regulator of Social Housing, National Federation of Housing, and the Council of Mortgage Lenders.

6 Approach

- 6.1 Rent for shared ownership properties is due on the share of the property retained by ReSI Housing.
- 6.2 **Initial rent setting**
- 6.2.1 The initial rent for a shared ownership property will be set by ReSI Housing, based on the value, and share of the property retained by ReSI Housing and will be set at the point of purchase of the shared ownership property.
- 6.2.2 Rent for shared ownership properties will be set at the level specified in the property's shared ownership lease, and in line with the requirements of any s106 covenants on the property.
- 6.2.3 Rent will be set as a proportion of the value of the share in the property retained by ReSI Housing. As currently required by Homes England annual specified rent will be set at no more than 3% of the value of the retained share.

6.2.4 All prospective shared owners will be made aware of the level of rent that will be due on their properties upon purchase and this will be set out in their leases. Details of rent and any other lease charges will be set out in Key Information Documents provided to prospective purchasers.

6.3 Rent review

6.3.1 Rents will be reviewed annually in line with the lease.

6.3.2 The relevant month for the RPI utilised for rent reviews is generally September (prior to the general April review date). Some older leases provide for links to inflation indices at different points in the year and some refer to limits set under the Fair Rent regulations. The method of review will be set out in the review notice in accordance with the lease.

6.3.3 Shared owners will be notified promptly and clearly of their new rent before the Rent Review Date. It is the responsibility of shared owners to pay the correct rent that is due on their property.

6.4 Staircasing

6.4.1 Shared owners are able to purchase additional shares in their home, as set out in ReSI Housing Staircasing Policy. When a shared owner purchases additional shares in their home the proportion of rent they pay will be reduced to reflect this change. ReSI Housing will notify shared owners of the new rent due upon their purchase of an additional share.

6.5 Rent payment

6.5.1 It is the responsibility of shared owners to make sure that their rent is paid when it falls due. ReSI Housing will make the responsibilities of rent payment clear to shared owners throughout the purchase process.

6.5.2 Information about how to pay rent will be provided clearly to all shared owners upon purchase of their home. All shared owners will be asked to make payments by direct debit. Where it is not possible for a shared owner to pay by direct debit ReSI Housing will also offer payment by standing order.

6.6 Income management

6.6.1 As set out in our Income Management Policy ReSI Housing will take a firm but fair approach to rent arrears. When managing rent arrears for shared owners we will work in line with the joint guidance for shared ownership issued by Homes England, UK Finance, and the National Housing Federation.

- 6.6.2 Where rent arrears accrue, we will seek to work with shared owners to address the issues of rent arrears and put in place plans to address the arrears.
- 6.6.3 The Property Managers acting on our behalf will notify shared owners of any arrears accrued on their account and identify organisations that can offer them financial advice to resolve their arrears.
- 6.6.4 We will work to recover all rent due to us through all reasonable means, including the use of court orders.

6.7 Appeals

- 6.7.1 If a shared owner considers that the rent has been set at or the outcome of a rent review is not in line with this policy, they have a right to appeal in writing to ReSI Housing. We will review any appeal and notify the shared owner of our decision within 21 days.
- 6.7.2 Where ReSI Housing and the shared owner are not able to reach agreement on the rent within three months of the change in rent shall be referred to an independent expert as set out in the shared ownership lease.

7 Service charges

- 7.1 Where service charges are applied to Shared Ownership properties, the approach will be set out in the shared owner's lease.

8 Monitoring and compliance

- 8.1 The ReSI Housing Board has overall responsibility for rent setting. An annual report will be provided to the Board, outlining the rents of the shared ownership portfolio, and the outcome of the rent review process.
- 8.2 Rent setting and review calculations will be validated by internal audit at least once every three years.

9 Review

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Last reviewed 18 July 2023