



## RENT SETTING POLICY

### 1. Introduction

This policy sets out how Citizen sets the rents on the homes that it owns and the aims of Citizen in carrying out this function. This policy ensures that effective systems are in place which will mean that rents are set legally and correctly.

This policy describes the setting of rents, how we set our service charges is set out in our Service Charge Policy.

This policy does not apply to the setting of rents in our supported specialised housing sometimes referred to as 'Exempt Supported Housing'. This is covered in our Rent Setting – Specialised Supported Housing Policy

The Government has powers granted by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 to issue directions to the Regulator to set out the rent regime for Housing Associations. This policy meets the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing, as set out in its National Standards and in particular the "Rent Standard" and "Rent Standard Guidance".

Citizen sets its rents in line with the regulatory guidance as issued and as updated by the regulator.

We are committed to the following objectives in how rent and other charges are set.

- To provide affordable accommodation providing value for money for customers.
- To meet statutory, regulatory and contractual obligations when setting rents
- To ensure that all tenants and licensees are advised clearly at the start of their tenancy or licence, what their rent is and any service charges that apply.
- That any change to rents charged is clearly communicated to tenants and licencees, ensuring that proper notice is provided in line with our statutory, regulatory and contractual obligations.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to how rents are set on homes owned by Citizen which are within the scope of the regulations. This includes homes where customers pay rents on homes owned by us to a managing agent acting on our behalf.

This policy does not apply to rents on garages or non-domestic rented properties.

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### 3. Policy Detail

#### 3.1 New lettings and Re-Lets

Rents for new lets on “social rent” properties are calculated according to the formula as set out in the regulations.

Regulations allow for a property’s formula rent to have an upward tolerance applied of:

- 10%, if the accommodation is supported housing and
- 5%, if the accommodation is not supported housing

Citizen has process in place to utilise this flexibility and will apply these where appropriate. The use of this flexibility has been considered, and approval has been given by the Citizen board taking into consideration financial viability and affordability for residents.

Rents for new lets on Affordable rent properties are calculated at 80% of the market rented value. This valuation is set in line with the Regulators most up to date recommendations on valuation. If the valuation results in a rent lower than a social rent, then the rent could be set at the social formula rent.

Rents on shared ownership properties are calculated in accordance with the requirements set out in the lease.

#### 3.2 Rent reviews

Regulations set out the considerations that Citizen should undertake when deciding to implement a rent review and the amount of any change. These include comparing Citizen rents to those charged by its peers and in the context of the local rental market.

This comparison takes place annually and is set out in a report to the Citizen board who are responsible for the approval of any changes to rents up to the maximum allowed by regulation.

Each rent review is supported by a detailed implementation and audit plan to ensure that revised rents are applied appropriately.

The rent review process will ensure that customers are informed of any changes in rent in accordance with the requirement of their agreements and regulation.

These changes will be communicated in a clear and concise format and we have process in place to allow customers to ask for further information on the changes.

Rent reviews for garages and other non-domestic properties are not affected by this legislation.

#### 3.3 Fair Rents

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The re-registration of fair rents takes place every two years from the last registration, and a new rent is calculated by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). In order to minimise the impact of the new rent on the tenant, the annual increase will be the lower of

- The maximum registered rent issued by the VOA
- The Social rent 'formula' rent + service charge
- The current social + CPI + 1%.

### **3.4 HIST Rents**

Regulations allow for the limits on rents described not to apply where households have an income in excess of £60,000. Citizen does not utilise this flexibility.

## **4. Roles, responsibility and Governance**

It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that this policy is successfully implemented, and the procedures followed. The Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that all staff understand the importance of this policy and the related procedures and comply with them.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their reports have undertaken the appropriate policy eLearning by utilising reports produced by Learning and Development

**Any changes to this policy must be made in line with the requirements set out in Citizens Standing Orders and our Policy framework.**

## **5. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, unless legislation, service delivery or sector developments require otherwise ensuring the policy continues to meet its objectives and take account of good practice developments.

Legal advice will be taken to ensure compliance with legal, regulatory and contractual responsibilities.

Where appropriate service delivery reports in respect of this policy as incorporated into our quarterly reporting suite.

## **6. Equality Impact assessment**

This policy has been subject to an Equality Analysis. Staff working across Citizen have considered the impact of this policy on different groups and communities that we work with. In framing this



policy, our staff are committed to not discriminate adversely against any group and will respect the diversity of the communities we are working within.

The EIA and any actions identified as needing to be implemented are in Appendix 1

## 7. VERSION CONTROL

VERSION	DATE	AMENDMENTS	APPROVED AT/BY	REVIEW
V 1.0	Sept 2019	Policy updated to Citizen brand format	Policy Owner	March 2023
V 2.0	Mar 2020	Updated to reflect the revised Rent Standard effective from April 2020.	Policy Owner	March 2023
V 3.0	March 2021	Updated to citizen policy template	Policy owner	March 2023

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