

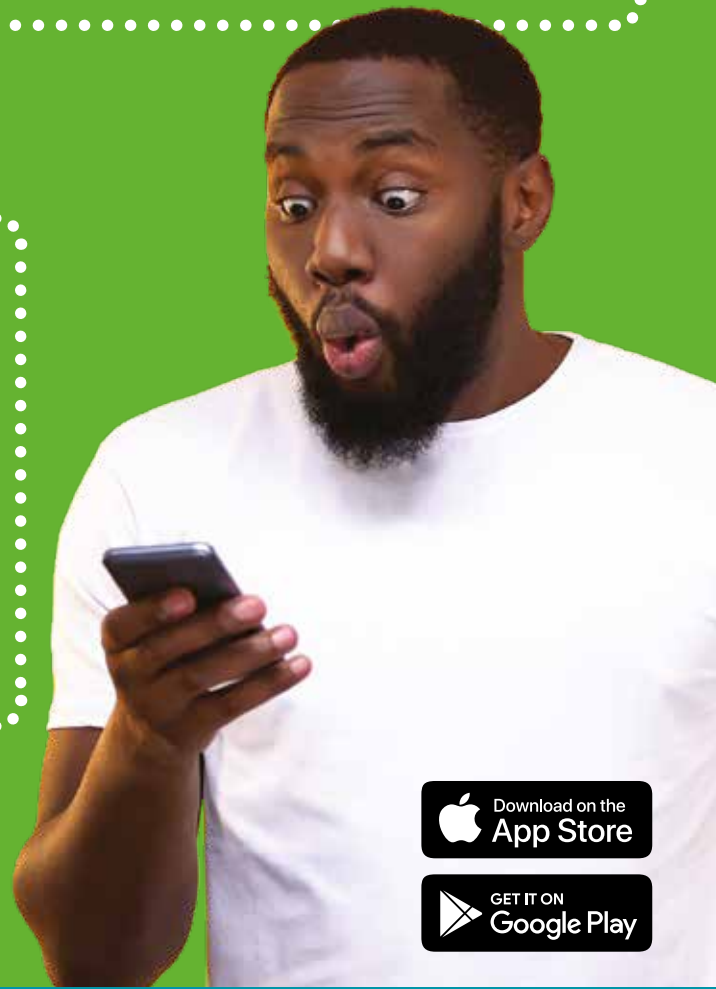


Ready to be amazed?

The new app makes managing your account surprisingly simple.

Rent, repairs and more – available in just a few taps

Find out more on pages 2 & 3



My Riverside

Anytime | Anywhere | Any device



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My Riverside App is now live!

We're delighted to announce the launch of our My Riverside app. It's available to download for free from Apple's App Store and Google Play Store now.

Being able to offer the app to access My Riverside is a huge enhancement of our My Riverside offer. Making it even easier to access My Riverside anytime, anywhere and on any device. Leaving you to get on with life.

We have been working in close partnership with customers and our colleagues to make improvements to our My Riverside offer and provide a better mobile experience. A huge thank you to everyone who has taken part and provided us with some extremely valuable feedback and recommendations for the future.

"Well laid out. Easy to use"

"It's clear and easy to navigate, so no difficulty finding what's needed"

"Clear labelling, bold writing and pictures which point you to the different sections"

"Everything I need to know is there"

"You don't have to wait a long time for someone to answer and it's very easy to use"

We know how important it is for you to be able to contact us easily and get things sorted quickly. The My Riverside app makes requesting repairs, paying rent and getting in touch much easier in just a few taps, so you can get on with your day.

Everything you need at your fingertips



Pay online



Check account



Report repairs



Update details



Live chat

Sign up in just two simple steps...

Step 1 Register

To get started simply visit my.riverside.org.uk/register



Step 2 Download

Get the App and let's start making life easier



Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play



Report a repair without any hanging around

My Riverside. The quick and easy way to get things sorted. Leaving more time for the finer things in life.

- ✓ Report repairs quickly and easily
- ✓ Check and manage your account and charges
- ✓ Pay securely online
- ✓ Update your contact details
- ✓ Live Chat with us

My Riverside

Anytime | Anywhere | Any device



Register now at

my.riverside.org.uk/register

Already registered?

Download the app and make life even easier.

Your rent & service charges

Rent and service charges for 2022/23 explained

Rent is a regular payment to us as your landlord for the occupation of your current home.

A service charge is a payment some tenants pay, usually for any shared services we provide in connection with the occupation of your home, such as cleaning of communal areas. A service charge does not include rent.



How we set rents

Social Housing rents are set following the Government guidelines on rent setting. This guideline limits each annual increase to the previous September's Consumer Price Index (CPI) and adding 1%. The CPI in September was 3.1%. This means that for most tenants your net rent will increase by 4.1%. This is lower than the current CPI 5.4% (December 2021).



Why we're changing our rents

The increase follows a period where rents fell for four years out of six, meaning that on average rents in April will only be 4% higher than they were in 2015. The increase is below the increase we've seen in many of our costs, particularly repair and building costs.

We know that people are facing a range of financial pressures at the moment, including an increase in energy and food costs, other household bills and the removal of the £20 Universal Credit uplift.

We know this increase will present another financial challenge for many people.



So, what are we doing about it?

We are here to support you with money advice, energy advice, helping you to find work, get a better job or gain new skills – all of which can help to put money back in your pocket.

We're investing an extra £2.5m a year to help you, our customers. Of that, we're making £500k available to customers facing immediate hardship by way of small grants. These are designed to help meet one-off essential costs that you would otherwise struggle to afford.

If you think you need help in this way, please call us and ask to speak to our Money Advice team.

Delivering value for money

We know many of you may have experienced a significant degree of service disruption over the past couple of years because of COVID-19. This was also compounded by a serious attack on our computer systems that we suffered in November. We sincerely apologise for the inconvenience this has caused.

Our work to improve services has not stopped and we're determined to put this right over the coming year and beyond, to ensure our services are better than ever.

Our repairs services are beginning to get back to normal having caught up on repairs backlogs and moved back to our 28-day standard target time for delivering all routine repairs. This had been increased to 56 days for a time to help us manage the volume of repairs and COVID related sickness absence.

We're also continually enhancing our digital services. The launch of our new My Riverside app, which was developed in response to customer demand for an app and in partnership with our customers, will make it easier than ever to report repairs, make payments, check balances, live chat with us and much more.

Your rent also funds investment in the future of your homes. We're continuing to improve our existing homes to the tune of nearly £800m over the next five years. As well as being used to replace things like kitchens, bathrooms and boilers, this will be invested in measures to improve energy efficiency and warmer homes. We are also planning a major programme of work to tackle issues such as damp and mould, with nearly £10m being invested by 2025.

What do I need to do when I get my rent and service charge letter?

We will be writing to you this month to set out the changes. If the amount you pay changes, you'll need to make sure you're ready to pay the new amount in April 2022.

There are three basic types of payment that affect the action you need to take:

- If you pay by **Direct Debit** or reoccurring card payment the amount taken from your account will update automatically.
- If you pay by **Standing Order** you will need to update your payment with your bank or building society. Why not consider switching to Direct Debit to avoid the hassle?
- If you pay by **Easypay card** or **My Riverside** you simply pay the new amount in the same way you always have.

Housing Benefit and Universal Credit

In some cases your benefit claim may not cover all of the total charge you need to pay. It's your responsibility to make sure the total charge is paid.

If your Housing Benefit is paid direct to Riverside

We'll confirm your new charges with your Housing Benefit Office.

If you've made a new claim since 1 January and it's paid direct to us, you will need to notify your Housing Benefit office of your new rent and charges.

Please do this immediately.

If your Housing Benefit or Universal Credit is paid direct to you

It's your responsibility to make sure Housing Benefit, or for Universal Credit, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), know your new charges and make any relevant changes.

If you're on Universal Credit, these are the screens you'll see in your UC account.

Confirm your housing costs

Date of change

Did your housing costs change on 4 April 2022?

Check the letter from your landlord for the date of the change.

Yes

No

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Confirm your housing costs

Changes to your rent

You are currently charged £100.00 per week in rent.

Your landlord should have written recently with details of changes to rent or eligible service charges.

Are you still charged weekly for your rent?

Yes

No

How much is your new rent per week?
Do not include any service charges or rent arrears.

£

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Confirm your housing costs

Changes to your service charges

You are currently charged £5.45 per week in eligible service charges.

Your landlord should have written recently with details of changes to rent or eligible service charges.

Are you still charged weekly for service charges?

Yes

No

How much are your new eligible services charges per week?
Only include 'eligible' service charges. They will be listed separately on the letter from your landlord.

£

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Please remember, if you're on Universal Credit do not update your claim until April – it could cause issues with your claim.

How to access support services

If you're struggling financially, we offer expert advice on everything from money and benefits, energy bills, savings and finding work or a better job. Here's how to find out more and get in touch.

If you don't have access to the internet, give us a call and ask to be put through to the teams. We may also be able to link you up with other external agencies who can help too.

- Let's Talk Rent – www.riverside.org.uk/letstalkrent
- Money and benefit advice – www.riverside.org.uk/money-advice
- Energy bills – www.riverside.org.uk/energy
- Employment and training support – www.riverside.org.uk/employment

Remember, non-payment of rent can put your tenancy at risk. But through our Let's Talk Rent approach, it needn't mean a crisis. If you reach out to us if you're in financial difficulty, we'll always work with you to help.



Remember "Let's Talk Rent" and we'll help get you back on the right track.

How we help – case study

How we helped Riverside customer Karen to land a job in our Income Management Team.

Ricky Mistry, one of our Employment and Training officers, explained: “One customer I had previously supported into employment was keen on working for us and asked for support.

“I worked with her to update her CV and create a cover letter for her application. I then provided step-by-step advice on how to complete the online application.

“I also contacted the Income Manager and asked to keep an eye for the application and gave my recommendation.”

The customer – Karen Fowkes – was invited for an interview – and she aced it.

She said: “Ricky contacted me about the position knowing I was looking for another job as he has supported both myself and my daughter, who now works at Oxford University, with courses and employment.

“Right from the start of the process he supported me and continued to do so all the way through.”

Karen is now a key part of our team, is earning more money each year and works family friendly hours which suit her and her family.

Calling all customers – would you like to work at Riverside?

You're a Riverside customer... but have you or anyone in your household ever thought about working for us?

We've got a number of exciting roles available, from entry level jobs to skilled and management positions.

From customer service jobs to care roles and hands-on trade jobs we need a huge range of skills.

So, whether you're a tradesperson, an experienced office worker, a carer or simply a person looking to get back into work or take on a new career, we want to hear from you.

We offer an array of benefits including a competitive pension plan and flexible, family-friendly working arrangements which can suit almost any circumstances.

Our dedicated Employment and Training team are here to offer advice, support and practical help to anyone living in a Riverside home who is interested.

When you get in touch, we'll contact you to arrange a support call with one of our specialist officers. They'll listen, understand your needs and develop a plan that is right for you.

So, register your interest now with our Employment and Training team using our online form at www.riverside.org.uk/employment.



Your involvement

Customer involvement – have you say

Customer
Voice



The most effective companies and organisations listen to customers and work together with them to make decisions, design services and tailor their plans to reflect customers' needs.

It's a vital part of what we do here at Riverside and how we intend to shape our services now and in the future.

So, we're asking you, "how can we create opportunities for you to have your say?"



Simply scan the QR code to let us know your views on:

- How local groups can play a role in shaping local services
- The role of customer inspectors
- The role of customers on committees, boards and panels

Your views will help us ensure that we reflect the needs of all customers more effectively in the way we involve and consult you.

Thank you, in advance, for having your say and helping to make Riverside better.

- How you feed back to us via surveys
- Our customer involvement processes through the Riverside Customer Voice Executive and our online iCommunity



Our Employment and Training team can help with:

- Getting back to work if you're unemployed
- Job searching, CV writing and interview techniques
- Sharing job opportunities
- Becoming self-employed or starting your own business
- Looking for work if you have a disability
- Looking for work if you have a criminal record
- Apprenticeships, training and qualifications
- Accessing funding to support learning or job opportunities
- Working with other organisations to offer rewarding opportunities
- Moving your career forward if you're already in work

You can also check out our vacancies and more information about working at Riverside at www.riverside.org.uk/jobs-and-careers

Better and Stronger Together

Partnership update – what happens now?

On 1 December 2021 One Housing Group became part of The Riverside Group. But what happens now? In this feature, we'll look at the road ahead and the immediate benefits of the partnership as well as our pledges for the future.

What's happening?

Both organisations, Riverside and One Housing Group, continue to operate in the same way – there is no immediate change for customers.

That said, Riverside and One Housing teams are beginning to meet to discuss how they can potentially work together in the future to improve services for customers, as part of a journey to full integration by December 2023.

Richard Hill, Chief Executive of One Housing Group, is leading on co-ordinating that work.

Are customers involved?

Of course. Customers were involved throughout the consultation on the partnership and will continue to be a vital part of the process.

During the consultation, a team of 12 customers from a variety of areas across both organisations teamed up to contribute to every aspect of decision making. They had a say in how the

consultation was designed, the questions we asked, the way we communicated with you and much more.

Going forward, we have formed a Customer Pledges Task and Finish group who will continue to work with us to scrutinise and advise on ways in which customer service can be improved. This group is formed by individuals who are members of Riverside and One Housing Group customer engagement forums. We'll update you on their meetings and activities throughout the process at www.riverside.org.uk/together.

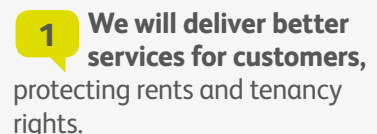
Are there any immediate benefits?

Yes, thanks to the increased financial resilience we've created through the partnership, we've committed to investing an additional £2.5m in support services to customers straight away to improve the livelihoods of customers and build stronger communities.

Customers who wish to move homes will also soon have the opportunity to register for an internal transfer for a new home with both Riverside and One Housing Group. This means customers will be able to apply for a move in any area where we own homes except where the local authority has specific local connection requirements. In some areas housing is in very short supply so waiting times may vary.

This will be shared across both Riverside and One Housing Group.

Our Pledges



1 We will deliver better services for customers, protecting rents and tenancy rights.

2 We will make sure there is a louder customer voice, with residents able to take part in our Boards and committees, and better able to hold us to account.

3 We will invest nearly £1 billion in improving and repairing homes over the next 5 years, with a focus on fire and building safety, warmer homes and regeneration. We will also build more new affordable homes.

4 We will improve care and support services for older people, those with complex needs and people who are homeless.

5 We will improve the livelihoods of customers and build stronger communities, providing better opportunities by investing in employment support and money advice.

6 We will keep our promises and make sure you can hold us to account, publishing a report each year on how we are delivering these pledges.



Find us on Facebook and Twitter

You can talk to us and keep up to date by joining us on social media. Search for '**Riverside Group**' on Facebook and **@riversideuk** on Twitter.