



## OTHA Applicant Information Leaflet

### Important information about your rent charge

This leaflet gives you some information about changes to entitlement to Housing Benefit and the Housing Element of Universal Credit which may affect you in the future.

This leaflet can be made available in large print, on tape or in an alternative language or format on request.

### What are the Changes?

The Government has made changes to the amount of help that can be given to some tenants to help them pay their rent.

The maximum amount of Housing Benefit (or the Housing Cost element of Universal Credit) will be “capped” at “Local Housing Allowance” rates.

This means that the rent allowances that apply to private rents will now apply to all Housing Association rents.

The allowances being used might mean that the amount of benefit you will receive might not cover your rent charge and you will need to pay the rest of your rent from your own money.

For tenants who are single and under 35, the allowance used is known as the **Shared Accommodation Rate** and this applies to all tenants in this category – even if you live alone.

### Who is going to be affected?

All new tenants from 1 April 2016 could be affected but the tenants who will be worst affected are single tenants under 35 years of age and whose tenancy started after 1 April 2016.

### What are the Local Housing Allowances?

The rates vary across Scotland but the rates for Inverclyde are as follows:-

	Shared Accomm	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms
<b>Weekly rate</b>	£60.00	£80.77	£101.54
<b>Monthly rate</b>	£260.00	£350.00	£440.00

This means that if you are single, under 35 and entitled to benefits to help you with your rent then the maximum amount you will receive every month is **£260.00**.

A couple would receive a maximum of **£350.00** for a one bedroom property.

Tenants living in a two bedroom property would receive a maximum of **£440.00** per month.

### When will this happen?

If you are going to be affected then the changes will not happen until 1 April 2019 but any tenants whose tenancy started on or after 1 April 2016 will be included in this change.

## **What should I do?**

The Association cannot make the decision for you but we need to make sure that anyone who might be affected by this change from 1 April 2019 is aware of it and can decide whether or not they want to take on a tenancy now.

## **Change of Circumstances?**

Lots of change can happen in a short space of time and just because you might or might not be affected now, your circumstances may have changed by 1 April 2019.

For example, you might be single now but in a relationship by 1 April 2019 and vice versa!

Also, you may not be in employment at the moment but are working by 1 April 2019 and again the opposite might be the case.

## **What should I do if I cannot pay my rent?**

If you find that you are affected after 1 April 2019 and your rent is higher than the allowance being paid, we will discuss this with you at the time.

There may be Discretionary Housing Payments that we can help you apply for or we could offer advice on agencies that may be able to help you find employment.

If you want to discuss this in more detail with any of our staff please contact the office on 01475 807000 or email [info@oaktreeha.org.uk](mailto:info@oaktreeha.org.uk)