



Affordable Rents

WM Housing is committed to the continued provision of decent affordable homes within the west midlands. As well as these homes, which are offered through a combination of rent and shared ownership, we are justifiably proud of the numerous other specialist services the business undertakes. These include teams to support victims of anti-social behaviour, financial assistance, a training and development agency and various other ways that we work to make sure our customers can maintain their tenancies.

Unfortunately the need for affordable homes continues to outstrip supply. WM is dedicated to addressing this problem. However recent changes in government policy have led to a dramatic fall in the amount of grant money available for associations like ours to build new affordable homes. This has meant that, together with all other developing housing associations, we have had to look carefully at ways to ensure that WM continues to develop new homes and is able to meet local housing needs.

After much consideration we have concluded that the only way we can continue with this provision, and be able to meet our commitments to develop new properties, is by adopting the government's Affordable Rent Policy. This is one of the conditions of accepting the grant we have been awarded by the Homes and Communities Agency.

We are aware this new approach will mean charging slightly increased rents to future and transferring tenants. We have undertaken research that shows our rents compare favourably to other similar housing providers and we are committed to ensuring that rents remain in line with national affordability measures. Our customers' existing rents will not be affected by this project.

Although this will increase rents for future and transferring tenants, it means that we can continue to provide housing at significantly lower prices than the private sector.

In addition to this WM will continue to offer the benefits that come with renting from a social housing provider. These include:

- A strong tenancy protected by law
- 24 hour, 365 days a year emergency repairs service
- Annual gas appliance checks
- Ongoing improvement programme
- Regulation and accountability
- Free benefits, income and employment advice
- Clear service standards and complaints process
- Low cost home insurance
- Opportunities to influence services, have your say and get involved.

