

# INDEPENDENT LIVING RESIDENTS

# HEATING CHARGE UPDATE



We are doing all we can to support you through the cost-of-living crisis and the impact of energy price rises.

## ENERGY TO HEAT YOUR HOME

As a resident of one of our independent living schemes, the heating and hot water in your scheme may be provided through a communal (shared) heating system, known as a heat network. Heat networks have a communal heat generation system which provides heating in the scheme. With heat networks, we can provide you with a simple heating setup which

divides the service and maintenance costs fairly.

Although heat networks can be powered differently, all of our heat networks are powered by either gas or electricity. Your scheme manager will be able to tell you which it is in your scheme.

If you do not pay for your heating directly yourself,

you will pay for it in your service charge. Where this is the case, we provide the supply for your heating, after 'buying' the supply wholesale. This has always been a very economical and cost-effective way to heat your homes and it provides you with a value-for-money service. We have been supplying your energy in this way for many years.

## PRICE CAP

The rocketing energy prices are a worry for many people. The government introduced a price cap for the average combined fuel bill in September 2022, but that cap increases by 30% in April 2023, meaning that bills will rise. This covers your domestic electricity or gas supply, but not heat networks.

The energy we buy to power heat networks is classed as business energy, and it is not covered by the domestic heating energy cap. Instead, it falls under the business energy cap.

The business energy cap does not provide as much support as the domestic cap and is only in place until March 2023.

As well as the cap, the Energy Bill Subsidy Scheme (EBSS), will credit about £66 per month directly to your domestic electricity account from October 2022 through to March 2023. The credit will be applied monthly whether you pay your electricity bill monthly, quarterly or through a pre-payment meter. You do not need to claim the discount.

We calculate service charges based on energy costs from the past year. In October 2021, these costs were about a third of what they were in October 2022. This means the energy costs in 2022 were artificially low.

This is not the case now. When it was time for us to calculate the energy costs for this year's service charge it was much higher as it was based on last year's energy costs.

## STAYING WARM, COMFORTABLE AND SAFE

We completely understand why you might be worried about having your heating on because of the cost, but please take care to stay as safe and warm in your home as possible. A cold home can mean damp, mould and condensation has chance to form, which can seriously affect your health and wellbeing, and damage your home too.

Electric heaters may seem like a good idea, but these are much more expensive and do not help people on heat networks. Using outdoor heaters to keep warm, or camping stoves to cook, may also seem like a good idea to help keep costs down, but these items can be extremely dangerous if they are used for anything other than they are meant for. Please do not use such items inside your flat. They could not only risk your life, but the lives of your neighbours.

There are many practical, safe and sensible ideas to help you save energy online. Consumer agency Which? has published 10 tips on its website which could help you lower costs [www.which.co.uk/reviews/cutting-your-energy-bills/article/how-to-save-on-your-energy-bill/10-ways-to-save-on-energy-bills-aX2RS8b8IIMR](http://www.which.co.uk/reviews/cutting-your-energy-bills/article/how-to-save-on-your-energy-bill/10-ways-to-save-on-energy-bills-aX2RS8b8IIMR)

Please ask your scheme manager, customer partner or one of our housing hub advisors to print these, or any other energy saving tips out for you if you would like to keep a note of them.

### THINKING OF THE FUTURE

Please bear in mind that doing what you can to save energy now will help to keep costs lower for you this year.

### SUPPORTING YOU

If you need help to manage your bills, we can offer practical advice and support, provide help with things like budgeting and making the most of your money, and we can also put you in touch with agencies and charities that can help.

The cost-of-living crisis is a worry, but we are here to help if you need us. Speak to your scheme manager or customer partner or contact us on **0345 678 0555**.