

house proud

April 2021

The magazine for St Leger Homes tenants



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A message from the Chief Executive



Hello everyone and welcome to the April 2021 issue of HouseProud.

As we move into spring I hope that you are managing to keep healthy, positive and that as many of you as possible have been able to get your coronavirus vaccination. The vaccinations now offer the very best chance for ourselves, our loved ones and our communities to get back on our feet, so I do encourage everyone to take up the chance to be vaccinated when you are offered it. You can read more about why vaccinations are so important in the article below.

One way that St Leger Homes is helping people and communities get back up to full strength is through our World of Work scheme. For some, the last year has made it difficult to find employment, but our World of Work scheme has continued to help many tenants

get back into meaningful work through the support, training and employment opportunities we can offer. If you or someone that you know could benefit from some help to find work, go to page five for more information.

Finally, we are pleased to announce we are planning to hold our Tenants' Choice Awards in September 2021. Unfortunately we had to cancel last year's event but this year we are really looking forward to celebrating the outstanding contributions made by people living in our communities. Find out how to send your nominations in on pages six and seven.

Take care everyone and stay safe.

Dave

Dave Richmond, Chief Executive

Coronavirus vaccinations

The coronavirus vaccination programme is now well under way in Doncaster. It's the biggest vaccination scheme in NHS history, with millions of people across the country having already received the jab.

The vaccines approved for use in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). They are safe, effective and give you the best protection against coronavirus.

Whatever vaccine you receive, this will be given in two doses 12 weeks apart. The first dose gives you good protection from coronavirus, but you need to have the second dose to give you longer lasting protection. The NHS is offering the vaccine to people through hospitals and pharmacies, at local vaccination centres run by GPs and also at larger vaccination centres.

Local medical practices across Doncaster are working together to contact patients and book them in for appointments - you could be contacted by phone, letter, text or email to be invited for a coronavirus vaccination, but you will never have to give any financial information. When you are contacted for your jab, please make sure you attend the appointment at exactly the time you're asked to in order to avoid queues.

For more information about the coronavirus vaccination programme, and to read the latest FAQs from Doncaster CCG, please visit: **www.doncasterccg.nhs.uk/covid-19-vaccine/**. Dedicated support and resources for BAME communities, including translated vaccination guides and Q&As, are also available at this link.

Remember, even when you have had your vaccine please continue to follow all the guidance in place to control the virus and help save lives.

Looking forward in 2021

Tenants
Take Over

Tenants' and Residents' Involvement Panel (TRIP) Chair Betty Clayton sees plenty of reasons to be positive in 2021.

I hope you're all doing as well as can be expected under these difficult circumstances - it's hard to believe we have been living with this dreadful coronavirus for over a year now. It is clearly not the start to 2021 that we had hoped for, but after all the lockdowns and winter gloom we can now enjoy the roll out of the various vaccines and see the light at the end of a very long tunnel. I do hope you will all

have the jab when invited to do so, as the saying goes 'no one is safe until everyone is safe'.

We have continued to have our monthly TRIP meetings virtually and I can say that it definitely gets easier with time. We continue to work, keeping the interests of tenants at the centre of all we do, whilst being a critical friend to St Leger Homes.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, one of our members has contracted coronavirus, but I am pleased to say they are improving and hopefully will

be with us again in the near future.

Until next time do what is right and remember: Hands, Face, Space - look after yourselves, take care and stay safe!



Enter the NFA Photography Competition 2021



If you are handy with a camera then you will be pleased to hear that the National Federation of ALMOs (NFA) are once again holding their annual photography competition.

The theme of this year's competition is 'pulling together'. Over the last 12 months we have seen how residents have rallied around to help each other during lockdown and the pandemic, so the NFA are looking for photos that capture the positive community spirit that has helped us all to get through this difficult time.

Last year our tenant Bolesław Olszewski was named as one of ten finalists in the NFA Photography Competition for his beautiful photograph showing the River Don and North Bridge - if you need inspiration you can see his photo on the cover of this month's HouseProud!

If you would like to enter the NFA Photography Competition 2021 please send your photo in to us including a few lines explaining why you think that it fits the theme of 'pulling together'.

Your photograph should be in high resolution so that it will look clear and sharp when enlarged - if you are using a mobile phone make sure that you are using the highest quality settings available. You and anybody else appearing in the photo must give the NFA permission to use it and you will also need to provide us with your contact details.

You should email your photo to **SLHDCompetitions@stlegerhomes.co.uk** by no later than Friday 1st October 2021. Good luck!

NFA Photography competition 2020 entry - John Atkins



NFA Photography competition 2020 finalist - Bolesław Olszewski

Praise or grumble?



We pride ourselves at putting our tenants at the heart of everything we do, but we are only human and sometimes things go wrong - if that happens, we want you to know how to contact us.

We always take complaints seriously and want to offer a high level of customer excellence, so we aim to provide a fair and effective complaints procedure for tenants, leaseholders, Housing Register applicants and other customers.

Your feedback gives us an opportunity to improve our services based on your feedback, making you a vital part of our ongoing development.

If things do go wrong there are a number of ways you can contact us:

- Telephone 01302 862862
- Email CustomerCare@stlegerhomes.co.uk
- Online at <https://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/my-home/complaints-and-compliments/>

If you are unhappy with the way we investigate your complaint, or the outcome, did you know that

we also have a Tenants' Appeal Panel?

This panel of tenants, and technical experts where necessary, independently reviews and resolves complaints, investigating the facts to come to an independent conclusion.

To ensure our tenants' voices are at the heart of what we do, the Tenants' Appeal Panel have also been involved in carrying out a review of our complaints procedures - a we want to ensure they meet the guidelines in the new Complaint Handling Code, which the Housing Ombudsman's Office published in July 2020.

We are grateful for the very positive feedback we received - you can see this and the outcome of the assessment on the complaints and compliments part of our website.

You are awesome

Compliments really are one of the easiest ways to spread a little happiness around you, and even increase your own. The more you compliment, the better you feel, so please keep letting us know what we do to make you smile by calling **01302 862862**, emailing **CustomerCare@stlegerhomes.co.uk** or online at **www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/my-home/complaints-and-compliments/**

- isn't that nice to hear? It feels great to receive a compliment and we always love hearing the kind words you have for our staff on a job well done.

Save time, do more online with My Access

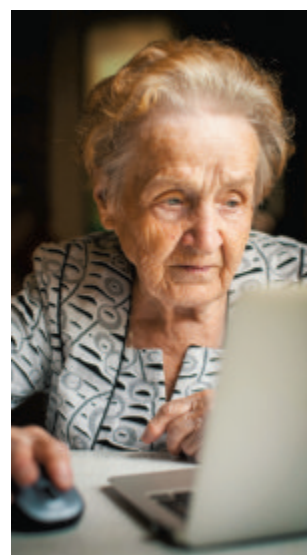
We want to make it quicker and easier for you to access the St Leger Homes services you care about most, so we have created a new section on our website called My Access.

Through My Access you can see details of your rent account such as your rent balance, and you can also use it to make rent payments. As time goes on we will be adding a wide range of new features to My Access, including the ability for you to make an appointment for a repair to be carried out (of course you can always still

report repairs to us on the report a repair page on our website, by telephone and email).

To start using My Access just go to **www.stlegerhomes.co.uk** and click the My Access button at the top of the page - make sure you have your tenancy reference number to hand as you will need this to register. You register and set up a password and start using immediately - there's no waiting around.

Don't miss out, register online now, while you have the time.



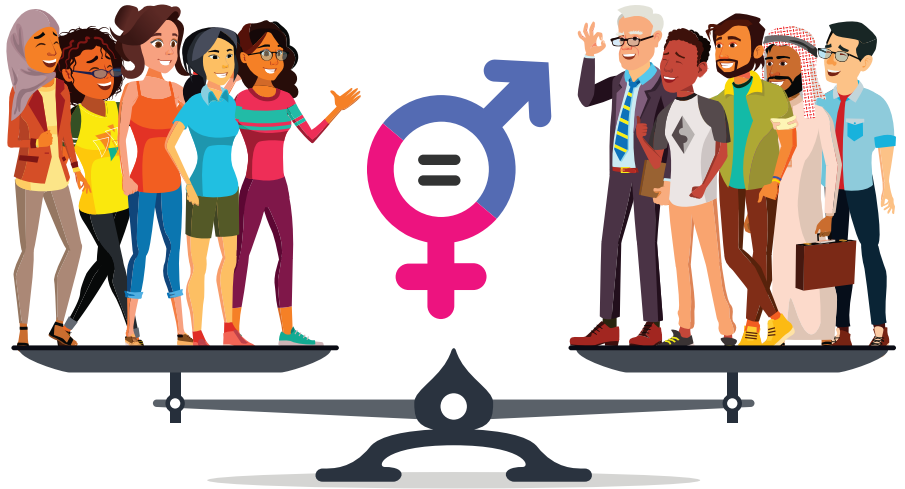
Gender Pay Report 2020

St Leger Homes is committed to treating everyone in our workforce fairly, regardless of their gender.

To help us do this we have published our fourth annual Gender Pay Report. This looks at the gender pay gap in our organisation - that is the difference between the average earnings of male and female employees.

Every business with over 250 employees is required to produce a Gender Pay Report. The report helps us understand the size of the pay gap and the reasons for it, as well as helping to identify ways we can reduce it.

This year has seen an increase in our mean pay gap - the average of the 'hourly pay' for all full-pay employees - which now shows a 9.86% gap, with men earning more than women. This is because of the number of male employees we have at



a senior level. The national mean pay gap is 7.4%, so we are 2.46% higher than the national figure.

Our median pay gap - which is the number that splits the top 50% of the 'hourly pay' figures from the bottom 50% - has also seen a slight increase and now stands at 7.09%, with men

earning more than women. However, the national median pay gap is 15.5% so we are 8.41% lower than the national figure.

If you would like to read our full Gender Pay Report you can find it on our website **www.stlegerhomes.co.uk**

Our World of Work

Even during the difficult times we have been facing, our World of Work scheme continues to help and support tenants into work. The scheme is free, voluntary and you decide what help you need.

Our support and learn scheme is giving tenants the chance to complete a short college course and then come to work for us in six month paid training roles. We also have World of Work participants making empty properties ready for new tenants, and another group working in Stainforth to repair pathways, pavements and guttering.

Coronavirus safety is still a top priority, so currently we aren't holding physical meetings and any work World of Work participants have to follow strict Public Health guidelines.

Interested in joining?

Go to **www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/wow** or call us on **01302 734384** or **07817 124351**.

Another way we are helping people into work is through our apprenticeship programme. Since 2005 this has trained over 130 people, giving them the opportunity to continue their education whilst learning a trade by working with skilled, experienced tradespeople.

If you, or somebody that you know, would like to apply for an apprenticeship at St Leger Homes, **you have until the beginning of May to send in your applications.**

Don't delay, go to **www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/my-opportunities/apprenticeships/** or email **slhdr@stlegerhomes.co.uk** today for more information.

Tenants' Choice Awards 2021

Nominate your local heroes NOW!

We are pleased to announce that nominations are now open for our Tenants' Choice Awards 2021.

The Tenants' Choice Awards are our way of celebrating the fantastic contributions that you, our tenants, make to the wider community in Doncaster. As you will know, last year we had to postpone these awards due to the coronavirus pandemic but

this year we are keen to honour the efforts of our amazing tenants in a way that will be safe for everyone.

We are therefore planning to hold our Tenants' Choice Awards in September 2021 and we hope to make it a real celebration of what can be achieved in our communities in the face of great challenges.

Below you can find the categories for this year's awards.

If you know an individual or group whose good deeds deserve to be recognised in one of these categories, then please let us know by nominating them for a Tenants' Choice Award.

Please note, any nominations that were sent in for last year's postponed awards will be carried forward and entered into this year's event.

The categories are:

Community Champion

This award honours that special person in your local area who works tirelessly for the benefit of their community. Tell us about the positive difference their activities have had on the people living around them.

Community Group of the Year

This award celebrates outstanding groups of people who work hard to bring local communities together. For example, this might be through regular group meetings or by providing help and support for local people.

Young Person of the Year (25 years or under)

This award is for someone living in your community who demonstrates just how considerate, hardworking, generous and thoughtful young people can be. This person will be active in their community, for example involved in a Tenants and Residents Association (TARA) or helping their neighbours.

Tenant of the Year

This award gives recognition to a person who has been dedicated to improving the quality of life for people in our

communities. It pays tribute to the hard work this person has given for the benefit of others, to make our estates a truly great place to live.

Best Green Initiative

This could be a project that has improved or transformed a green space; created a new green area for the local community to enjoy; increased awareness and education on green issues; or, led to improvements in the local environment.

Examples include taking part in litter picks, recycling initiatives, or working to help reduce our carbon footprint.

Best Community Project or Event

This award is for projects or events that improve the lives of tenants and residents and help to bring the community together, such as celebratory events or one-off projects that have had a positive impact on our communities.

Outstanding Humanitarian Response

New category

This award recognises the outstanding efforts of people in our local communities who provided care and support for others during times of crisis, such as the floods that struck our region in November 2019 and the coronavirus pandemic.

Submitting your nomination

When you are nominating a person or group please tell us all of the reasons why they deserve to win the award, giving as much detail as possible. As well as the name of the person or group you are nominating, please also include the following information:

- The name, address and contact details (if you know them) of the person or group you are nominating



- Your own name, address, telephone number and email address

There are several ways you can send your nominations for the Tenants' Choice Awards.

- By post to The Customer Involvement Team, St Leger House, Carr Lane, Doncaster DN4 5AA
- By email to customerinvolvement@stlegerhomes.co.uk - please make sure your email contains all of the information asked for above
- By phone to your Customer Involvement

Officer - please ring 01302 862862 and ask for the Customer Involvement Team

- Through your local Tenants and Residents Association

We must receive your nominations no later than Friday 30th April 2021.

The shortlist of finalists will be published in HouseProud and on our website www.stlegerhomes.co.uk - you will then be able to vote for your favourite finalist in each category.

Send your nomination in now and let's celebrate the heroes in our communities!



New Director of Property Services announced

We are pleased to announce that Chris Margrave has joined St Leger Homes as our new Director of Property Services.

Previously Chris has served as Director of Investment and Director of Assets at Wakefield and District Housing. He is a property health and safety professional with over 30 years' experience who works hard to drive improvements in social housing.

Chris said: "I am delighted to be joining St Leger Homes at this exciting time and can't wait to get started. I am committed to ensuring Property Services at St Leger Homes continues to be customer focussed, delivering excellent customer service for tenants and residents within the borough." Chris has not only impressed us with his technical knowledge and leadership abilities, but significantly with his total commitment to doing the best he can for our tenants - we think he will fit in well at St Leger Homes.

Welcome to St Leger Homes, Chris!

Housing improvements and training opportunities coming to Doncaster

We are excited to announce a new partnership with leading social housing contractor J Tomlinson. This contractor will be working alongside our own Repairs and Maintenance team to provide specialist planned improvement and maintenance work to your homes where it is needed.

The improvement work will include roofing and external wall insulation, window and door replacements, kitchen and bathroom replacements, electric rewires and upgrades, and fire safety works.

We want to maximise the energy efficiency and energy performance rating of your homes wherever we can, keeping you warm in the winter and helping to lower your fuel bills. This will also reduce

both our carbon footprint and the impact that we all have on the environment!

As part of the partnership J Tomlinson will also be investing in our local communities by providing opportunities for employment and work experience at a time when they are greatly needed.

We look forward to working together to make a positive difference locally.

Unused building becomes smart new home

We always want to make sure that the buildings we look after are meeting the needs of people in our communities. In Bawtry we had a communal hall that local residents told us was no longer widely used by the community and now needed quite a lot of building work done to bring it back up to a decent standard.

After talking to tenants and residents, and without any objections, we all came to the decision that the best thing to do was convert the unused hall into a one bedroom property that would provide a much needed home for somebody. The architects were even able to keep the buildings original window designs and make them an attractive feature of the living room!

We certainly don't want to turn every old building into new housing, but we are pleased that in this case we could help a community and convert an unused, unloved space into a happy and safe home for somebody.



Staff receive award for safeguarding customers

During National Safeguarding Awareness Week we were honoured to be given a Celebrating Safeguarding Award from Doncaster Council for the work our staff do to look after customers.

The award was presented to John Atkins, Dave Adams, Emma Oates and Nicki Clarkson for their fast actions to help a person in distress.

Whilst carrying out work on a property, caretakers John and Dave noticed untouched food parcels sitting on the doorstep of a neighbouring house. They were concerned by this so immediately raised the alarm and were able to get access into the property.

On entry they found the tenant was quite unwell and the inside of the home was in a very untidy state, so John and Dave said that they would call back in a day or two to help tidy the place up. However, when they returned there was no answer at the door.

As a result, they contacted Housing Officer Emma and Team Leader Nicki, and with help from the Police and Ambulance Service they were able to get into the property to give assistance. This time the tenant was found to be very ill in bed and the paramedics took the individual to hospital to get the medical treatment they needed.

We are proud of the dedication our staff members showed in this instance, and that they were able to make a real difference to the tenant concerned.

Well done John, Dave, Emma and Nicki!



Gas and electrical safety checks

If we haven't been in touch yet, we will be contacting you soon to arrange your annual gas and five year electrical safety checks. Poorly maintained appliances and wiring can cause serious problems such as fires and carbon monoxide poisoning, so it's essential we carry out these checks in your home.

To ensure everyone stays safe from coronavirus all our staff follow the safety guidance from Public Health England when we visit you.

We will always work with you to keep everyone safe. If anyone in your household is shielding or self-isolating then let us know and we will rearrange this work at a later date.



The dangers of disrepair claims

If you need repair work carrying out in your home remember that whatever the issue is your first call should always be to our repairs service.

We will always carry out any repairs that are necessary to make sure your home is safe, so if you have an issue please tell us about it. We will always robustly defend any disrepair claim made against us, so please don't put yourself at risk of extra costs you can't afford.

For example, we recently successfully defended a housing disrepair claim in court which sadly left the tenant facing legal bills of over £6,000. Even disrepair claims companies that offer no-win no-fee agreements can still leave you with legal and survey charges to pay.

If you have any home repairs to report just call us on **01302 862862** (option 1), go to the 'report your repair' page on **www.stlegerhomes.co.uk** or use the MySLHD app - we'll be happy to help.



Improving the standard of social housing

In November 2020 the Government published their Social Housing White Paper, called The Charter for Social Housing Residents. The White Paper aims to help raise the standard of social housing and meet the needs and aspirations of social housing tenants across the country.

There are plans for new housing regulations, as well as planned improvements to the Housing Ombudsman which will speed up the processing of tenants' complaints.

The White Paper outlines seven commitments that all social housing tenants should expect from their landlord:

1. To be safe in your home
2. To know how your landlord is performing, including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money
3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly, with access to a strong Ombudsman
4. To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair



7. The Government will ensure social housing can support people to take their first step to ownership

You can read the full document at www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper

We will update you with any changes this means for us and the services we provide to tenants in due course.

Helping young people build a successful career

St Leger Homes has joined with a wide range of organisations across the borough by signing up to the Doncaster Promise. This is a new initiative set up by the Doncaster Chamber of Commerce as a way for businesses to support local schools, colleges and young people.



Through the Doncaster Promise we are helping to build a successful, productive and inclusive local economy which can provide support to everyone in our society. An important part of this involves working together to create a high performing education and skills sector that can give people of all ages the skills they need to prosper and grow.

By working with businesses, the Doncaster Promise initiative aims to offer young people a career pathway that also meets the needs of local employers and helps everyone to achieve their goals.

For more information on the Doncaster Promise, visit www.doncaster-chamber.co.uk/opportunities-doncaster/doncaster-promise/

Building a safer future

We are pleased to announce that St Leger Homes has become a Registered Signatory of the Building A Safer Future Charter.

We want to help ensure our buildings are safe for those living and working in them by putting safety first, ahead of all other priorities. Becoming a Registered Signatory is an important first step towards achieving the culture and behavioural change needed to meet the challenges of the future.

For more information about the Building A Safer Future Charter and its objectives, please visit <https://buildingasaferfuture.org.uk/>

Change a future by fostering

Every day foster carers across Doncaster help children to continue living near the people and places they know and love. But more foster carers are needed!

If you could provide a loving home to a child, help a teenager prepare for adulthood or support brothers and sisters to grow up together, then fostering could be for you.

Trust Fostering, part of Doncaster Children's Services Trust which delivers fostering services on behalf of Doncaster Council, is looking for more people to come forward as foster carers.

With no specialists skills needed to foster you will be supported every step of the way with experienced social workers and exceptional training. Through Trust Fostering you will be part of an extensive fostering community who are always on hand to offer advice and support 24/7.

The Trust have an inclusive approach to fostering with foster carers from all backgrounds welcome.



The one thing all foster carers have in common is a genuine passion and enthusiasm for supporting children and young people to achieve fantastic things!

You don't need any experience to become a foster carer, we'll give you the guidance and support you need. You'll need at least one spare bedroom and to be 21 years or older.

You can find more information including details of online information events at **www.trustfostering.co.uk** or by calling **0808 126 2600**.

It's not too late for the 2021 census!

The census is a survey that happens every 10 years and helps give a picture of everyone living in the UK at the time it is taken.

The census is important because organisations from local councils to charities use the information you give to help plan and provide important public services, such as transport, education and healthcare.

By now you should have received your census letter with an access code - all you have to do is go online and enter the code into the secure website. Any personal information you provide is kept safe and confidential, and when the census statistics are published they don't include any personal information. If you don't have internet access, you can request a paper copy of the form by phone.

If you haven't returned your questionnaire census staff will be out visiting households to offer help to fill it in. You still have time so please do complete your questionnaire - remember, filling in your census is required by law!

Volunteers offer vital support



Across the UK, the Royal Voluntary Service work hard to support those who are most in need in local communities.

Throughout the pandemic they have mobilised volunteers to help ease the pressure on NHS services, but they need more people to get involved and offer their help to get everyone through this challenging time.

There are lots of ways Royal Voluntary Service volunteers can help - driving patients to hospital appointments, checking in on people at home to make sure they are well, doing shopping trips for people, organising local community groups and much more. If you want to make a difference by volunteering, visit **www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk**

If you or someone you know could benefit from some extra support, then get in touch with the NHS Volunteer Responder programme on **0808 196 3646** - you can also use Relay UK and British Sign Language Health Access.

Universal Credit update

Your rent amount is changing

Last month you will have received a letter from St Leger Homes telling you that your weekly rent charge will change on 5th April 2021. To avoid missing out on any money that you are entitled to, it is important to report this rent change immediately on your Universal Credit account - when you do this your housing costs will increase based on this new rent amount.

If you do not report this change then you will not receive the right amount of Universal Credit to pay your rent, which means that you would have to pay any remaining costs yourself.

Please note, if you are claiming Housing Benefit rather than Universal Credit then we will report this rent change for you.

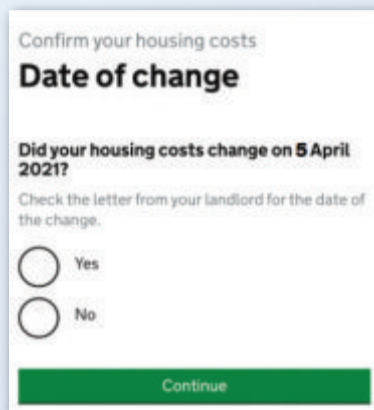
How to report your rent change

Here are the simple steps you must take to report the rent change.

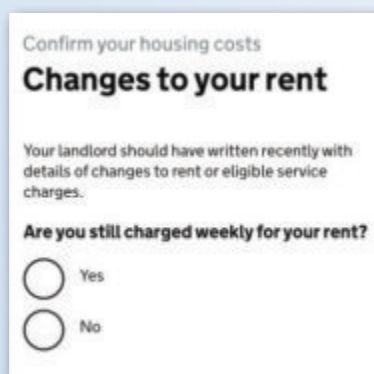
You will need:

- Access to the internet
- Your rent change letter sent in March 2021

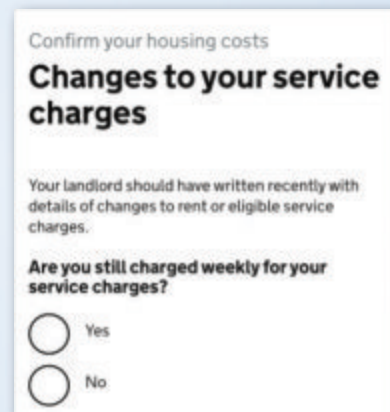
1. Log onto your online Universal Credit journal
2. Click on the new To Do item called 'Confirm your housing costs'
3. It will ask **'Did your housing costs change on 5 April 2021?'** Click **'Yes'** then click **'Continue'**



4. It will ask **'Are you still charged weekly for your rent?'** Click **'Yes'**



5. It will then ask **'How much is your new rent per week?'** Enter the exact new weekly amount you are charged - you can find this on the rent change letter that you received in March
6. Finally, it may ask **'Are you still charged weekly for your service charges?'** If you do have service charges click **'Yes'** and then enter your service charge amount - you can find this on the rent change letter that you received in March. If your housing costs do not currently include service charges Universal Credit will not ask you about them.



If you need any help reporting the changes to your rent, please contact us on **01302 862862** (option 2) and we will be able to assist you over the telephone.



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If so, please contact us on 01302 862862 or email info@stlegerhomes.co.uk



info@stlegerhomes.co.uk



01302 862862



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