

# Rent Review 2026/2027

## Consultation Feedback

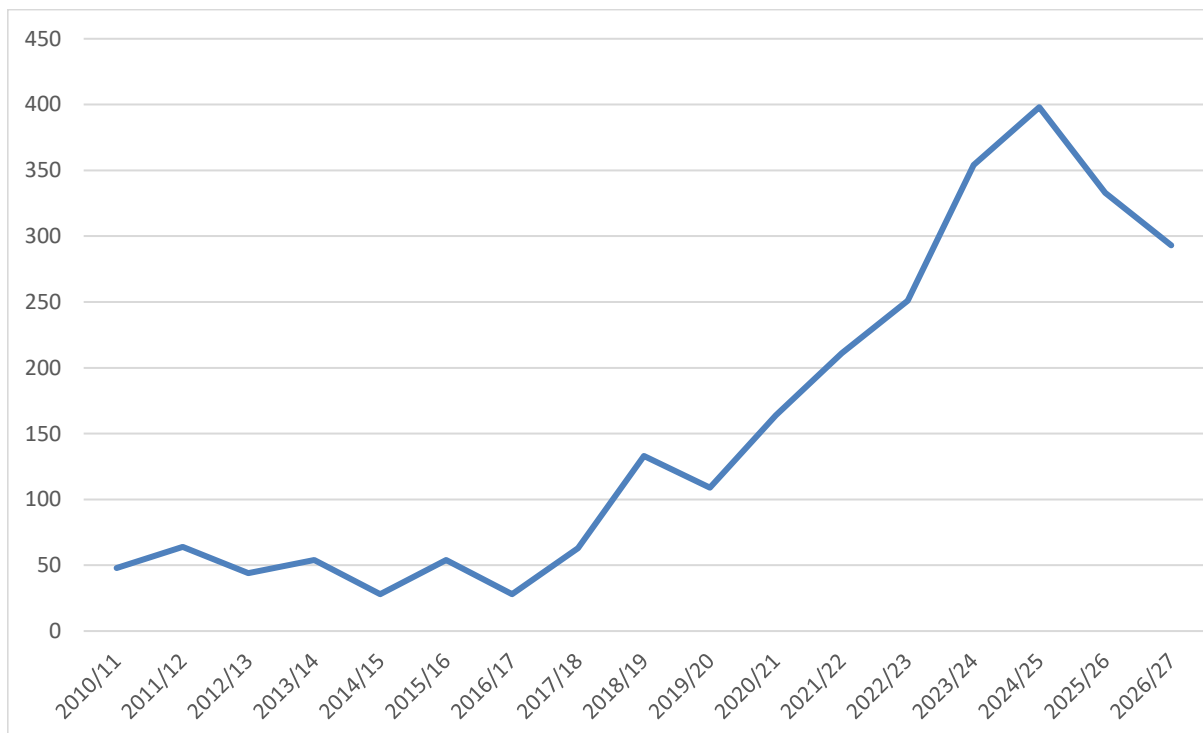
This year's tenant consultation achieved strong levels of engagement, with a positive response rate reflecting the effectiveness of Melville's approach to resident communication. Building on established practice, the consultation was delivered primarily through digital channels, including email, SMS, Facebook, and Melville's website. The survey was open for four weeks, from mid-December to mid-January.

The consultation was distributed via a range of methods:

- Email to approximately 1,700 tenants for whom email addresses are held
- SMS to approximately 1,900 tenants with recorded mobile numbers
- Promotion through Facebook and Melville's website
- Postal distribution to around 70 tenants for whom no digital contact details are held

Additional promotion took place through Facebook and Melville's *Voice* tenant newsletter. To ensure the consultation was as inclusive as possible, tenants were also offered alternative ways to take part, including providing feedback by telephone or requesting a paper copy of the survey.

### 1 Returns



This year's survey continued to attract a strong and representative level of tenant engagement, with 295 responses received. This equates to almost 14% of eligible tenancies (excluding properties leased to partner organisations such as Women's Aid) and reinforces the effectiveness of Melville's digital consultation approach.

While the number of responses was lower than the exceptional returns seen in the previous three years - most notably the 398 responses in 2024 - those higher figures were driven by specific, time-limited factors, including the cost-of-living crisis, the proposed four-day week initiative, and an unusually high proposed rent increase. In this context, the current response level represents a robust and reliable baseline for ongoing tenant engagement.

## 2 Headline findings

- **72%** told us that they're happy with the services they receive from Melville (down slightly from 74% last year). Dissatisfaction sits at **9%** (10% last year).
- **78%** of those who answered said they think Melville's current rent and service charges are affordable (77% last year).
- **64%** feel that their rent represents good value for money (up slightly from 62% last year), with **9%** feeling it represents poor value (11% last year).
- Returns favoured those who receive some Government help (Universal Credit or housing benefit) to pay their rent (**57%**) over those that don't (**43%**) with a sizable majority opposed to either of the options presented:

31%	support increasing rent by 4.5%
9%	support increasing rent by 5%
60%	were opposed to either option presented

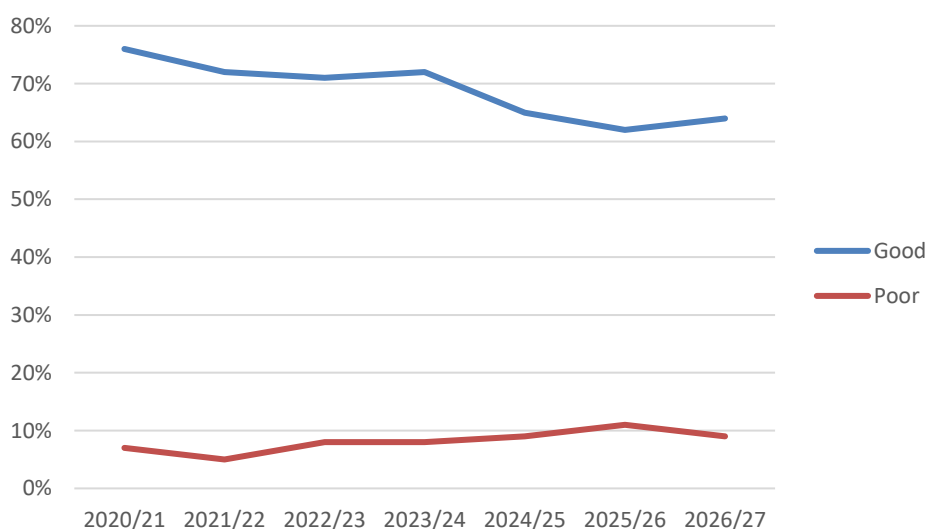
## 3 Breakdown of key findings

The key findings, broken down into how those receiving housing benefit/UC and those paying their rent themselves answered, show the following:

	Overall	UC/HB	Non-HB
Satisfaction with overall service	72%	76%	68%
Find rent/service charges affordable	78%	82%	71%
Rent represents good value	64%	67%	60%
In favour of 4.5% increase	31%	34%	28%
In favour of 5% increase	9%	13%	4%
Against any of the options	60%	53%	68%

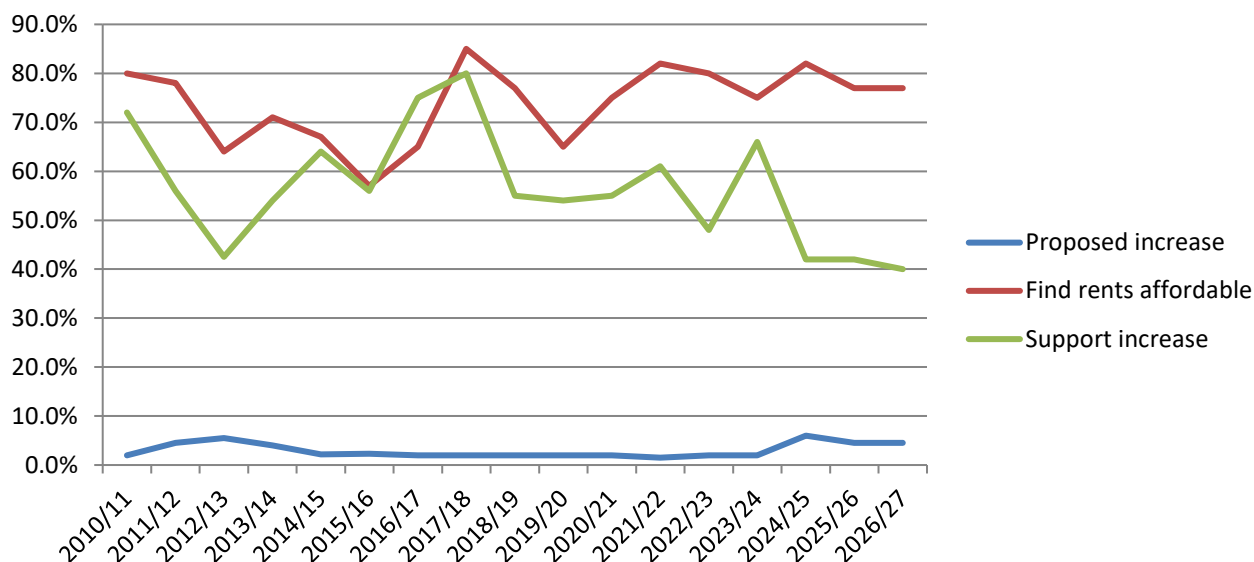
The main difference between the two groups is the support for the proposed increase. In the non-benefits group, support for any of the three options was very low, with more than two thirds against any of the options. In the benefits group far more were in favour of the lowest increase and considerably fewer against any of the options presented. It's also worth noting that significantly fewer of those in the non-HB group find Melville rents affordable.

## 4 Value for money



We've been using the rent survey to ask about value-for-money since 2020. This year we arrested the decline in perceived value-for-money that has seen significant falls over the past 7 years, however at 64%, levels remain well below the 76% of those responding in 2020 who said their rent represented good value for money.

## 5 Comparison with previous years



This chart illustrates how this year's main findings compare to those in previous years. Support for any of the increase options remains low while perceived affordability also remains relatively low. At almost 14% of the tenant population, this year's 295 replies provides a robust cross section of opinions however as ever we are dealing with a limited, and self-selecting, sample.

## 6 Comments and recurring themes

Surveys like this are an excellent opportunity to tease out wider issues affecting our customers and as well as very good quantitative data we also received dozens of individual comments on a range of topics, not just rents. A selection are included here and, where appropriate, we have replied to investigate issues raised and to offer help and support.

We can group comments into overall themes to look for patterns. Significant and repeated issues raised were:

1. A feeling that the views of tenants, particularly those who work, aren't listened to.
2. The difficulty single and older people have meeting increasing rent demands.
3. Complaints about the overall quality of homes and questioning how/where rent money is spent, including ongoing issues with energy efficiency.
4. The prioritising of building new homes over maintaining existing ones.
5. Issues with the repairs provided by R3.
6. Complaints about estate management and the attitude that some tenants have towards looking after their homes and gardens.

1	It wouldn't matter what I wrote as the rents would still go up.
2	Don't keep raising the rent above inflation, and why not give a 3% option in the tick box? Basically the lowest option you want people to tick is 50% above inflation. That is unconscionable behaviour.
3	Think if you asked people that actually pay full rent instead of the people on benefits you would get a truer response.
4	Rent is in my budget and fair.
5	These surveys are pointless as you increase the rent regardless of people's opinions. It's ok for people receiving benefits and getting rent paid for by government. What about the rest that need to pay full rent with no help!
6	People are struggling to pay all rents, c/tax, gas/electricity and feed themselves as it is.
7	The cost of living is increasing all the time and peoples wages are not being increased inline with this so this is my concern.
8	I'm so happy to be Melville's housing customer.
9	Not value for money rent increases are shocking.

10	Your latest proposal to increase rents amounts to yet another £20pm, for a pensioner living on my own, one finds the increase a bit much. The last time you increased the rents after the rent freeze was undone it was increased.
11	I have had no improvements to my property in 15 years from yourselves I have paid for everything myself except a couple of minor repairs because of this I grudge any rent increases if we were to get cladding on outside or something to improve the insulation or heating of the property I would not mind an increase.
12	All I would say for people who live on there own to keep increase to a min ,I understand that they have to increase but when you work and get no help so please be mindful of this.
13	Think rent is a bit high for the area and quality of the houses we are in.
14	Rent was already increased so a better company could be employed to carry out maintenance & repairs to our properties. We have seen no improvement with the quality of the company R3 Repairs. If rent is to be increased then it should be in-lines with inflation not any more.
15	Brilliant service especially repairs quick and efficient.
16	Its hard for everyone rent increases every year is hard for low income people.
17	Affordable at the moment but not sure if rising rents.
18	I totally understand the rents normally increase each year however my hourly rate increase would not cover the rent increase. Perhaps if some tenants were charged for repairs that were not due to wear and tear but negligence or not being looked after properly there wouldn't be a need to increase rents by the suggested increase. I see a lot of houses and gardens being neglected by Melville tenants. Also why have tenant handbook when some residents don't care or do what they want anyway. A social housing should be a privilege and it's about time some tenants realise this!
19	Rents are affordable at the moment. I work so any increase impacts my budget.
20	Put tenants first instead of all the self promoting of Melville your a housing association you seem to forget that.
21	My rent is already huge, I get no help towards paying it and any increase will cause financial hardship!
22	The service has been very good and the rent fair according to today's time.Thank you.
23	If you say 4.40 a week it seems OK then say 16.80 a month that seems a lot.
24	Think if you asked people that actually pay full rent instead of the people on benefits you would get a truer response.
25	As much as living costs are rocketing and I can understand inflation unfortunately wages don't cover it.
26	I think if the rents keep going up at a higher rate we need to look at older houses being more energy efficient.
27	You basically want to put in up £20 a month. This doesn't include how much council tax will go up. I already know how much my wages are going up next year and believe me between the two of you it's going to be hard to run the house. It's getting very close to not being able to eat or heat the house. With everyone wanting to put everything up more than wages are going up. Time people lived in the real world.
28	Rents are constantly rising, I'm seeing homes being improved elsewhere and considerable amount of new homes being built yet our home has had no upgrades, is in poor condition and needs a complete renovation. I've previously supported rent raising to help improve properties and to build new but I haven't seen any impact on my property in any way, shape or form, in fact any repairs needed are done as minimal as possible. New builds should be given to those who have waited in poor quality homes so these can either be renovated or disposed.
29	Stop buying more houses. And focus on the ones you have especially the older properties. Our front and back door has been fixed 2x but is so old that really it needs to be replaced. The new bathroom has mold on the ceiling. And we do everything to try to stop this but it's not working. But I am thankful for the house. And everything that is done.
30	The rents are higher than the council. Shouldn't be.
31	I live on my own with only one wage coming in, so please say to the board and for them to consider when setting rents as I get no help at all and do think this needs to be recognised.
32	I've only recently moved into a Melville property, coming from Midlothian Council, I feel the condition of the property isn't great, hasn't been well maintained.