

Frequently Asked Questions

October 2024

At the beginning of 2025, Housing Plus Group (HPG) plans to merge with The Wrekin Housing Group (Wrekin). This means we would be a larger merged organisation and we will have more opportunity to improve services, but don't worry - your rights as a customer will stay the same and your home won't be affected.

Why have you decided to proceed with the merger?

Our boards have agreed to proceed with the merger following an in-depth due diligence process, looking at financials and how services work. This has been backed by a strong business case which considered the feedback we received from customers and staff during a six-week consultation.

HPG and Wrekin believe that we'd be better and stronger together. As one organisation, we'd be able to achieve more and do even more for our customers and the communities we serve.

The merged organisation will be one of the largest housing associations in the West Midlands with 34,000 homes. The merged organisation will respond to the clear priorities expressed by customers in the recent consultation. It plans to invest an additional £55 million in existing homes, and will be a key developer of new homes over the next 5 years. Our combined geography will enable the organisation to maintain its local focus, using community hubs to take services closer to customers and maintain strong connections with communities.

What happens now?

Both Housing Plus Group (HPG) and The Wrekin Housing Group (Wrekin) will continue to operate in the same way – there is no immediate change for customers. Customers should continue to use the same methods for reporting repairs and other issues, paying rent and service charges and raising other queries.

The formal merger is expected to take place in January 2025 once that all the required legal and regulatory points have been completed.

In the coming months, HPG and Wrekin will continue to take forward the plans and work together to improve services for customers, as part of a journey to full integration.

Will my repairs, grounds maintenance or cleaning arrangement change?

There are no plans for these to change in the short term as part of the merged organisation. We will be focused on improving the services we provide. Longer-term, the merger will give us more funding for repairs, maintenance, services and investing in the communities you live in.

Will I need a new tenancy agreement or lease?

No, there would be no need for existing customers or leaseholders to sign a new agreement or lease, as explained above all the conditions would continue. All your rights and protections would stay the same.

What are the benefits for me?

Coming together will give us a greater capacity to improve services and maintain homes. It will also help us better address housing need by giving us the ability to build more new homes and increase investment in existing homes.

The new merged organisation will:

- Be able to provide even better services for our customers
- Remain connected to the communities we already serve while having a larger voice in the region, with 1,800 employees, 34,000 homes and a turnover of more than £250million we will create additional regional economic impact
- Be more resilient. Increasing investment in existing homes, while also growing our capacity to build more social homes
- Provide more opportunities for our employees and be a great place to work

Are there any disadvantages to the merger?

We have looked carefully at the outcomes of the merger during our due diligence process. We're both strongly connected to our local communities, focused on customers and strive to deliver excellent services. As a single, bigger organisation, this wouldn't change. In fact, coming together would help us do all of that even better.

It will take some time and resources to bring the people, services and systems of both organisations together. In the longer term, we believe that the merger will help us to improve services and result in an even better experience for customers.

My Services and the Merger

Is my security of tenure affected?

No, your tenancy rights are not affected in any way.

Will my rent and service charges be affected?

No, your rent and service charges will continue to be reviewed each year in the same way that they are now.

Will any planned work be delayed because of the merger?

You shouldn't notice any change to the services you receive. It is business as usual. The top priority for both organisations is to deliver great services and homes - and to keep improving on this. The merger won't distract us from focusing on this. Longer-term, the merger will give us more funding for repairs, maintenance, services and the communities you live in.

I live in a Shared Ownership property; will my rights be affected?

You will not be affected – the terms of your shared ownership agreement and rights will remain the same.

Will I lose the 'Right to Buy' my property?

Only certain tenants have the right to buy their home. All tenants who currently have that right will continue to have that right.

I am a leaseholder – how will this affect me?

You will not be affected – the terms of your lease and your statutory rights will remain the same.

Would the merger affect my Welfare Benefits or Entitlements?

Your Welfare Benefits and Entitlements would not be affected by the merger. They would only change if your own personal circumstances change.

Will I be able to move into a Wrekin home?

There will be more choice in the future, but at this stage moving home options will be the same as they are now.

In becoming part of a larger organisation will Housing Plus Group lose its local and personal touch?

No. We will ensure that we don't lose our local focus, which is very much how we have always worked. We know it's important to you and it's essential to us too.

Our teams will continue to deliver services from our local areas as they do currently.

Will I have the same contacts (e.g., my Housing Officer)?

There will be no changes to how we manage your home. All HPG staff will continue to provide services to you. Over time staffing arrangements may change but we will always make sure you know who any new contacts are.

Will I be able to influence how the new organisation works?

We are committed to providing ways for you to get involved, share your thoughts and help us improve our services. We are keen to hear:

- what you think
- what's important to you
- how we can improve our services

This will remain the same in the new organisation and we promise to listen to you, and continue to give you opportunities to influence the way we do things

We will work with you to make sure your voice is heard on important matters relating to local, regional and nationwide matters

Will my service levels change?

In the short term, no.

Will I lose the 'Right to Acquire' my property?

All tenants who currently have that right will continue to have that right.

What are the costs of merging these two organisations?

The merger will involve some additional costs, including staff time and external advisors. However, none of these costs will be passed on to you. The savings made in the longer term would mean we are able to improve and add to the services you benefit from.

**A resilient organisation, making a positive
difference to homes, lives and communities**

