

# Housing Rents

February 2014

The Council have a dedicated Income Team which is responsible for the collection of outstanding rent arrears owed to the Council: (01352) 703838.

Along with the new Income Team, we have recently introduced a new Rent Arrears procedure. This new procedure means that we are able to take action against tenants who do not pay their rent at a much earlier stage. We can also now ensure that tenants who want to pay their rent but are unable to, can receive the help they need, when they need it.

The new Rent Arrears procedure means that tenants will receive:

Week 1 in arrears – first reminder letter

Week 2 in arrears – second reminder letter

Week 3 in arrears – visit from the Income Team

Week 4 in arrears – Notice of Seeking Possession

Four weeks after serving the Notice, if a tenant has not cleared or reduced their rent arrears, we will then consider commencing court action.

## **What to do**

If you are having difficulty paying your rent, you must let us know immediately. We will do our best to help you. If you know you have a payment problem, or you have received an arrears letter from us, you should contact the Income Team.

The Income Team will discuss your arrears with you, and will give you advice. We may also put you in touch with our Income Maximisation Officer or Debt Advisor, who can help you take action to sort things out, including applying for benefits.

If you are unable to pay the full amount you owe, we can enter into an agreement with you to pay it off gradually. This will involve paying an extra amount in addition to your weekly rent over a period of time until the debt is paid off. If you already receive some Housing Benefit and your circumstances have changed you can apply to be reassessed.

If you are joint tenants you should remember that both members of the joint tenancy are responsible for making sure that the full rent is paid.

If you wish to speak to someone regarding your rent, please contact the Income Team on (01352) 703838.