

Rent charges April 2022 - March 2023 Frequently asked questions

Why is the rent for my home increasing by 4.1% this year?

Like all housing associations in England, we work within government policy when setting rent charges. Changes are calculated using a specific formula - taking the consumer price index (CPI) from the previous September and adding 1%.

The CPI measures how the price of goods and services are changing over time. In September 2021 the CPI was 3.1%. In April, rents will therefore increase by 4.1% (3.1% + 1%).

Why is the increase higher than last year?

Last year rents increased by 1.5%; the year before by 2.7%. This is because the CPI during those years was lower. During the previous four years rents actually decreased by 1%, in accordance with government policy.

If you receive housing benefit or Universal Credit to help pay your rent, the increase will be covered by your benefits.

What if I can't afford my new rent?

If your rent is not covered by your benefits and you have concerns about being able to pay the new rate, please contact your account manager. You can find contact details for all our account managers at www.selwoodhousing.com/accountmanagers.

Your account manager can review your individual circumstances and provide advice. Alternatively, you can contact your local Citizens Advice who will be able to provide support with managing finances.

What about service charges?

Service charges may go up or down depending on actual costs incurred in the previous year. Price increases happening now will impact on next year's service charges. If you have any questions regarding your service charges, please contact your neighbourhood manager. You can find out who your neighbourhood manager is on our website.



What action do I need to take if I receive housing benefit?

If you claim housing benefit from Wiltshire Council, and the payment comes directly to Selwood Housing, we will inform them of your new weekly charge.

If housing benefit is paid to you directly, you will need to inform the benefits department at Wiltshire Council of the change.

What action do I need to take if I receive Universal Credit?

If you claim the housing element of Universal Credit, you will receive a 'Confirm your housing costs' to-do item in your online journal at the beginning of April.

Please complete this to-do item once received. You will not need to notify Universal Credit before the to-do item has appeared. If you have any questions, the Universal Credit telephone helpline is 0800 328 5644 (option 2).

The image shows three sequential screenshots of a digital form titled 'Confirm your housing costs'.
1. **Date of change**: 'Did your housing costs change on 4 April 2022?' with 'Yes' and 'No' radio buttons and a 'Continue' button.
2. **Changes to your rent**: 'You are currently charged £100.00 per week in rent.' 'Your landlord should have written recently with details of changes to rent or eligible service charges.' 'Are you still charged weekly for your rent?' with 'Yes' and 'No' radio buttons. 'How much is your new rent per week?' with a text input field and a 'Continue' button.
3. **Changes to your service charges**: 'You are currently charged £5.45 per week in eligible service charges.' 'Your landlord should have written recently with details of changes to rent or eligible service charges.' 'Are you still charged weekly for your service charges?' with 'Yes' and 'No' radio buttons. 'How much are your new eligible service charges per week?' with a text input field and a 'Continue' button.

Example of a 'Confirm your housing costs' to-do item

How do I change my standing order?

You'll need to let your bank know what your new charge will be and when it will start (1 April for monthly charges or 4 April for weekly charges).

If you don't receive housing benefit, you will be charged the amount stated on the enclosed letter. If you do receive housing benefit, please follow the steps outlined above.

How do I change my direct debit payment?

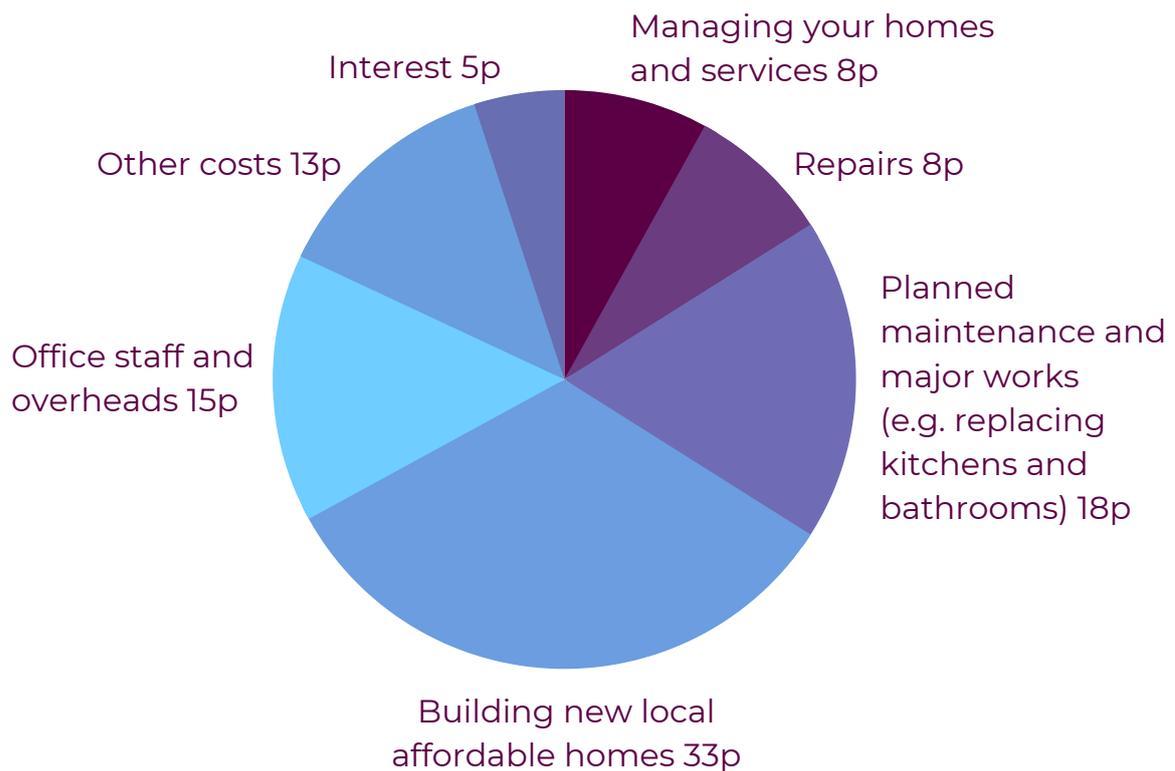
We will change your direct debit for you. This is why paying by direct debit is the easiest way to pay your rent. We'll let you know what the new amount is five working days before your direct debit is due.



How is my rent spent?

The rent we receive is invested back into our homes, to ensure they are safe, secure and in good condition. We also build new affordable homes in the local area so we can support more people in housing need. Last year we built 146 new homes, housing 546 people.

In 2020/21, every £1 of rent we received was spent in the following ways:



Who should I contact if I have more questions?

Please call customer support on 01225 715 715 or email info@selwoodhousing.com if you have any more questions.

