

Rent charges April 2024 - March 2025 Frequently asked questions

Why is the rent for my home increasing by 7.7% this year?

Like all housing associations in England, we work within government policy when setting rent charges. Annual changes are calculated using a specific formula that takes the consumer price index ('CPI') from the previous September and adds 1%. CPI measures how the price of goods and services are changing over time. In September 2023, the CPI was 6.7%. In April 2024, rents will therefore increase by 7.7% (6.7% + 1%).

Why is the increase higher than last year?

Last year's rent increase was capped at 7% by government to protect against steep rises in inflation. This year, with inflation slowing, there is no cap and rent changes have been worked out in the usual way, using the CPI plus 1% formula. If all of your rent charge is currently paid by housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit, and your circumstances don't change, this increase will be covered by your benefits.

What is the 53-week year and how will it affect me?

In a normal year there are 52 weekly rent payment dates. However, every five or six years, there are 53 rent payment dates instead. 2024/25 is one of those years. You can find out how the 53-week year affects your rent payments and what action, if any, you need to take in the separate 53-week year 'Frequently asked questions' document.

What if I can't afford my new rent?

If you're concerned about this increase, there is support available:

- Check that you're receiving all available financial help using an online benefits calculator. We recommend the following sites:
Turn2Us - benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk
Entitled To - www.entitledto.co.uk
- Visit the 'Help paying your bills' section of our website which has links to local and national support services
selwoodhousing.com/helpwithbills
- If you still have concerns, talk to us. You'll find details of our rent account managers at selwoodhousing.com/accountmanagers.





How are my service charges calculated?

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.

If you claim housing benefit from Bath & North East Somerset Council or Somerset Council you will need to inform their benefits departments of your new weekly charge. They will then write back to you to confirm your new housing benefit award.

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).

Confirm your housing costs

Date of change

Did your housing costs change on 1 April 2024?

Check the letter from your landlord for the date of the change.

Yes

No

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Confirm your housing costs

Changes to your rent

You previously told us the total rent for your property is £150.00 per week.

Your landlord should have written recently with details of changes to rent or eligible service charges.

Are you still charged weekly for your rent?

Yes

No

How much is your new rent per week?

Do not include any service charges or rent arrears.

£

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Confirm your housing costs

Changes to your service charges

You previously told us the total eligible service charges for your property are £5.00 per week.

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?

Yes

No

How much are your new eligible service charges per week?

Only include 'eligible' service charges. They will be listed separately on the letter from your landlord.

£

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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 that it will start on 1 April 2024. If you don't receive housing benefit, you will be charged the amount stated on the enclosed letter. Please note that this weekly amount will be applied for 53 weeks in 2024/25. If you pay on a monthly basis, please see our 53 week guidance. If you do receive housing benefit, please follow the steps outlined above.





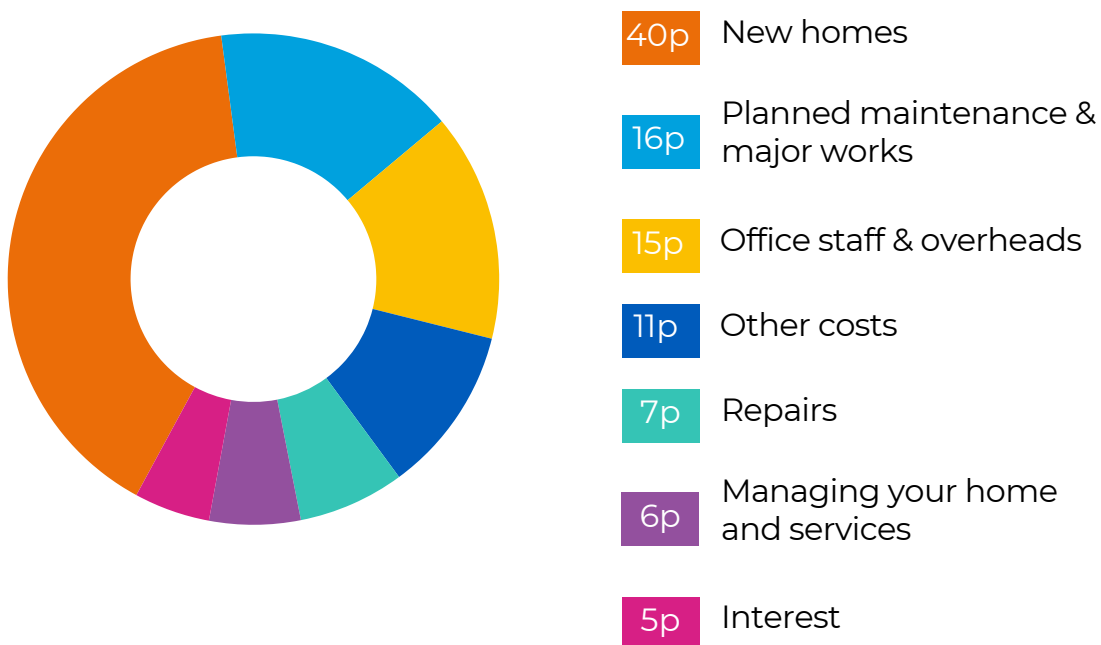
How do I change my direct debit payment?

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 154 new homes for rental and shared ownership.

In 2022/23, 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.

