

Housing Costs for Working Age Resettled Ukrainians

Universal Credit housing costs element

Your Universal Credit award can include help towards paying your rent. You must be liable to make the payments and normally occupy the home.

Costs which can be met

- Rent
- Payments for a licence or permission to occupy eg. B&B or hostel
- Eligible service charges for services or facilities eg. cleaning or maintenance of communal areas.

Liability

You must be legally liable or treated as liable to pay the rent.

In certain circumstances you can be **treated as liable** eg.

- your partner is liable
- the liable person is not paying, you have to pay in order to keep your home and it is reasonable to treat you as liable.

In other situations you are **treated as not liable** eg.

- your liability is to a close relative who lives in the same accommodation
- close relative means parent, son, daughter, brother, sister including 'in-law' relationships
- the DWP considers that the liability is 'contrived' to get the housing costs element.

Occupation

You must normally occupy the accommodation as your home.

After establishing normal occupation, you can be absent from your home for an expected absence of up to 6 months and still receive help with your housing costs. If you leave the UK, you can receive help with your housing costs for up to one month.

In specific situations you may qualify for a period before moving in or after moving out – seek advice.

Amount of the housing costs element

The amount of rent included in your Universal Credit calculation may be different to the amount you actually pay. This will depend on:

- whether you rent from a social landlord/council or a private landlord
- how many bedrooms you are assessed as needing
- whether you have any ineligible charges or
- if you have non-dependants living with you.

Weekly rent figures will be converted to a monthly amount for Universal Credit.

Size criteria

The size criteria is used to establish how many bedrooms your household needs. If you live in social housing this will determine if a 'bedroom tax' applies to you, and if you live in the private sector, this will be used to determine your relevant Local Housing Allowance.

One bedroom is allowed for the following:

- the claimant, and any partner
- each non-dependant (whether single or a couple)
- each young person aged 16 or over
- two children of the same sex aged under 16
- two children of the opposite sex aged under 10
- any remaining dependent child.

Additional bedrooms can be allowed in the following situations:

- for a non-resident carer – if someone in the benefit household receives a qualifying disability benefit and regular overnight care has been arranged and provided. This covers situations where someone outside the household regularly stays overnight to provide care
- a member of a couple is unable to share a bedroom due to disability and receives a qualifying disability benefit
- a disabled child is unable to share a bedroom and receives a qualifying disability benefit
- you have a child placed with you for adoption or are a foster parent. This includes periods when you do not currently have a foster child placed with you but have had in the last 12 months. Only 1 additional room is allowed.

Children who are not included in your award are not included when determining the appropriate number of bedrooms.

Joint tenants, sub-tenants and lodgers paying commercial rates are not non-dependants and not included when determining the size criteria for your Universal Credit claim. They may have a claim of their own that helps pay their part of the rent.

Social sector: if you are under-occupying a property your rent will be reduced by 14% if you have one excess bedroom, and by 25% if you have more than one.

Private sector: your housing costs element will be restricted to the Local Housing Allowance rate for the size assessed for your household, see the local rates below. This is capped at a maximum of **four bedrooms** however large your household.

If you are single, aged under 35 and live in private accommodation, you are usually restricted to the **shared accommodation rate** under Local Housing Allowance rules. There are some exemptions (for example if you are entitled to a disability premium or getting a disability benefit).

Local Housing Allowance

If you rent from a private landlord, the Local Housing Allowance limits the amount of housing costs you can claim under Universal Credit.

The amount that applies depends on how many bedrooms you need (see below) and your age. It is not related to the size of the property you rent.

Local Housing Allowance rates in York

Shared accommodation rate	£325.89 per month
1 bedroom	£544.98 per month
2 bedrooms	£650.00 per month
3 bedrooms	£725.00 per month
4 bedrooms	£1,049.98 per month

Examples: joint tenants and Universal Credit

Example 1

Kateryna is 34 and has a daughter, **Olena** age 12, and a son, **Antin** age 14.

Kateryna plans to share a privately rented 3-bedroom house with her friend Svitlana who is 32 and does not have family in the UK. They will be joint tenants. The total rent is £1200 per month, Kateryna will pay £800 and Svitlana will pay £400 a month. Neither are working.

Kateryna and Svitlana will need to make separate claims Universal Credit as they count as two households.

They should ask the DWP to split their rent two thirds/one third to recognise that Kateryna, Olena and Antin will use 2 of the 3 bedrooms and Svitlana will use the other one. Otherwise, DWP will automatically divide the rent equally.

In Kateryna's Universal Credit claim, her help with rent will be capped at the Local Housing Allowance for 3 bedrooms (£725.00) even though she will only be using 2 bedrooms.

Svitlana's help with rent will be capped at the shared accommodation rate (£325.89) because she is under 35.

Example 2

Vasylina is going to share a 1 bedroom flat with her friend **Sofiy**. Vasylina is 37 and Sofiy is 33.

The rent is £800.00 and they will pay half each. They are joint tenants and will each claim Universal Credit.

Vasylina's help with housing costs will be £400 (because it is less than the 1-bedroom rate).

Sofiy's housing costs will be capped at the shared accommodation rate of £325.89 (because she is under 35 years old).

Non-dependants and housing cost contribution

The maximum amount of your housing costs may be reduced if you have a non-dependant living with you. A non-dependant is someone who lives with you on a non-commercial basis, often a friend or adult son or daughter. Anything the non-dependant pays you is ignored as income.

The amount of the deduction for the housing cost contribution is **£85.73** per **month** for each non-dependant.

There is **no housing cost contribution** in some circumstances, including if:

- you or the non-dependant receives Personal Independence Payment (daily living component), Adult Disability Payment (daily living component), Armed Forces Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance (middle or higher care rate) or Child Disability Payment (middle or higher rate care) or
- you are certified as blind or
- the non-dependant:
 - is under 21
 - is getting Pension Credit
 - receives Carer's Allowance
 - is responsible for a child under 5, or
 - is a prisoner.

Example 3

Mariya, 46, will be moving into a private rented, 4-bedroom house. She will be living with her son, **Dymtrus** age 3, and her parents **Zlata** age 67 and **Ihor** age 69.

The tenancy will be in Mariya's name only and the rent is £1,150 a month. Mariya has claimed Universal Credit and Zlata and Ihor have claimed Pension Credit.

Her Universal Credit housing costs will be capped at the Local Housing Allowance 4-bedroom rate of £1,049.98. There will be no housing costs contribution as Zlata and Ihor receive Pension Credit.

Zlata and Ihor are included in Mariya's size criteria calculation because they are non-dependants – rather than lodgers or joint tenants. If they were joint tenants, they would be able to apply for help with their rent through Housing Benefit because they are over State Pension age.

Discretionary Housing Payments

If you are getting Universal Credit (or Housing Benefit) but still find it difficult to pay your rent, you may be able to get a Discretionary Housing Payment. For example, your housing costs element may be restricted by Local Housing Allowance or the social size criteria and paying the rent leaves you in financial difficulties.

Discretionary Housing Payments are paid in addition to your benefit and are based on your circumstances. Your local authority will decide the amount and length of the award. You can reapply at the end of the award period.

You will usually have to provide income and expenditure details and explain why the property is suitable for you and your family.