



Changes to your rent payment period

Questions and answers

Isn't this just a way of charging us more?

No. You will pay exactly the same annual figure as you would have done under the current system. All we are doing is dividing your total yearly sum by the number of weeks in the year. In fact, you will end up paying slightly less each week than you do now.

Two Rivers Housing will not receive any extra money from making this change.

What happens to my four 'rent-free' weeks?

Traditionally you have had four weeks every year that have become known as 'rent-free' – two at Christmas and two at the end of March. Of course these are not 'free' of charge; we just worked out what you owed over the whole year and divided it by 48 weeks.

This new arrangement simply means we will divide your annual rent by the number of weeks in the year so, although the amount you pay over the whole year is exactly the same, you will actually pay slightly less each week.

I like having 'rent free' weeks

If you find the 'rent free' weeks useful, especially at Christmas, then you could still do this by paying a little extra on top of your weekly rent. This would be like a Christmas 'savings' scheme. We can let you know how much extra you would need to pay each week so that your rent is up-to-date at Christmas.

When will this change happen?

We will look at all comments and questions about the proposed change after the deadline has passed and then make a decision. If we decide to go ahead after taking this feedback into consideration, the new arrangement will begin on Monday 4 April 2016.

I'm behind with my rent, so what does this mean for me?

Your weekly rent will be payable under the new system in the way that it is now, but you still need to keep paying extra to clear your arrears. You can contact us to make an affordable payment agreement.

I like to pay my rent once a month. Do I have to change to pay it weekly?

No, you can still pay your rent monthly. In fact, you can pay your rent on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis – whichever suits your circumstances best. Just make sure you stay up-to-date with your payments.

If you don't already pay by Direct Debit, you may find this makes things easier. Please contact us for a Direct Debit instruction, complete and return the form to us and we will do the rest. Your rent will then be paid to us automatically every month, it won't cost you any more and you won't have to worry about paying it yourself.

As an incentive, we are offering all new Direct Debit payers £30, which will be added to your account.

Please call us if you would like any further information about this.

I pay by Direct Debit – what does this mean for me?

If you have an arrangement with your bank or building society to pay your rent by Direct Debit, you don't have to change anything. All you need to do – if this proposal is agreed – is sign the form we will send with another letter, to confirm you agree.

I receive Housing Benefit – what does this mean for me?

If your rent is paid through Housing Benefit, you don't have to change anything. All you need to do – if this proposal is agreed – is sign the form we will send with another letter, to confirm you agree.

What happens when I start to receive Universal Credit?

If you receive Housing Benefit and you are of working age the Government will eventually move you to Universal Credit. The date this will happen depends on your personal circumstances so you will be notified when it will affect you.

When this happens, your benefits will be paid to you on a monthly basis. The change we are proposing will make it easier for you to see how much money you need to budget for paying your rent every month, and what you will have left over when it is paid.

I currently pay my contents insurance with my rent – how will this be affected?

This won't be affected as you will still be able to pay your insurance at the same time as your rent. Like your rent, you currently pay the total annual insurance cost over 48 weeks so, if we change your rent in April, we will also adjust your weekly insurance premium at the same time.

For the purposes of the calculation in your letter we have not included any insurance charge you may pay at the moment.

What happens next?

The deadline for asking questions or making comments about this proposed change is **Monday 28 September 2015**. We will then look at all the comments received and make a decision.

If we decide to introduce this new system we will send you a form to sign and return to confirm you agree with the change we are making.