

Our Ref: Fol 3242

Date: 6 August 2018

Dear Glenys Harriman,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 19 July 2018. You asked:

'To make up for the fact that there are not exactly 52 weeks in a year many social landlords charge 53 weeks' rent every seven years rather than 52.

However the Universal Credit regulations do not make any allowance for this when converting weekly rents to monthly for the purpose of calculating the Housing Cost Element.

This means a UC claimant paying 53 weekly rents in such years will only receive an award of UC based on 52 weeks' worth.

Could you provide any documents/ regs/guidance which explains if and what will be done for such UC claimant to ensure they don't miss out?

Universal Credit Regulations 2013

SCHEDULE 4

Housing costs element for renters

Relevant payments calculated monthly

7.-

(1) Where any relevant payment is to be taken into account under paragraph 6, the amount of that payment is to be calculated as a monthly amount.

(2) Where the period in respect of which a renter is liable to make a relevant payment is not a month, an amount is to be calculated as the monthly equivalent, so for example-

(a) weekly payments are multiplied by 52 and divided by 12;

(b) four-weekly payments are multiplied by 13 and divided by 12;

(c) three-monthly payments are multiplied by 4 and divided by 12; and

(d) annual payments are divided by 12.

(3) Where a renter is liable for relevant payments under arrangements that provide for one or more rent free periods, the monthly equivalent is to be calculated over 12 months by reference to the total number of relevant payments which the renter is liable to make in that 12 month period.

(4) "Rent free period" means any period in respect of which the renter has no liability to make one or more of the relevant payments which are to be taken into account under paragraph 6.

DWP Response

It may be helpful if I explain the role of the Freedom of Information Act. The Act provides a right of access to recorded information held by a public authority like DWP (subject to certain exemptions). The Act does not provide that a public authority must create new information to answer questions; nor does it provide that a public authority give advice, opinion or explanation in relation to issues/policies under question.

In cases where a customer does ask a question, rather than request recorded information, we do our utmost to provide the recorded information that best answers the question. Once the public authority has provided the recorded information, it has met its obligations under the Act; interpretation of the information provided is left to the requestor.

The information we hold that best answers your question is '*Universal Credit and Rented Housing – Frequently Asked Questions*' which can be accessed at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-and-rented-housing--2/universal-credit-and-rented-housing-guide-for-landlords#paying-rent>

If you have any queries about this letter please contact us quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Strategy Fol Team

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF
www.ico.gov.uk