

Attention Universal Credit claimants



From April 1st 2024, customers with an active Universal Credit claim must inform the DWP of the annual change in housing costs. You can do this via your online portal, Report a Change to Where I Live and What it Costs or by calling the Customer Contact Centre on 0800 328 5644. Alternatively, there may be a banner across your UC Portal inviting you to complete a new housing costs declaration.

This change must be reported on, or after April 1st 2024 – stating that the change applies from April 1st 2024. Timely reporting will be advantageous.

For each month that you fail to report a change in your housing costs, you will miss out on support from Universal Credit.

If you fail to update your rent for the whole year, you would miss out on an average of 390.52 in additional housing costs – or the equivalent of help with approximately 3 ¾ weeks.

Reporting any change to your household and housing costs is your responsibility; backdated

payments are unusual if a report is made late. Housing costs will be charged by DDC and you will need to catch up from your personal allowance if you have missed out on help with Housing Costs due to delayed reporting.

Your name, your tenancy and your benefits

Your tenancy must be held in your legal name.

If we receive a Universal Credit declaration regarding Housing Costs we can only confirm this if the name on the tenancy and on the benefit claim is an exact match.

If you have changed your name, through marriage, divorce or deed poll please contact your Housing Officer to update your tenancy record. Your Rent Variation Notice will be addressed to whom DDC believe the named tenant/s of a property to be. If this is incorrect, please contact us.

If we receive a Universal Credit declaration regarding Housing Costs and you only include part

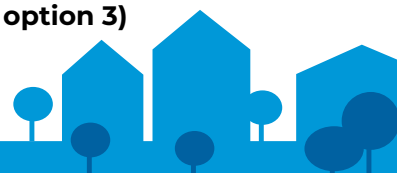
of your address – we cannot verify it. Please ensure your Universal Credit claim contains a full and accurate address (including house number.)

If we are unable to verify your claim, we will return it to Universal Credit with the reason why and attempt to contact you to discuss this. We can only contact you quickly (by phone or email) if you keep us informed of your contact details.

If you have a joint tenancy and would like to discuss removing an absent joint tenant, please contact your Housing Officer. Your Housing Costs may be affected if DDC report a joint

tenant who is not on a joint Universal Credit claim with you; you may need to inform Universal Credit that you hold an 'Untidy Tenancy' (i.e. have an absent joint tenant not contributing) until such time as the matter is resolved to ensure you receive the Housing Costs you are entitled to. If you have any concerns, please contact the Income Recovery and Rents Team where the Income Officer or Benefit and Money Advisor will be happy to assist you.

**Rent Team number
01304 801084,
(option 1, option 3)**



Name
Address line 1
Address line 2
Address line 3
Kent
Postcode

Tenant Survey

Every year we will be seeking your views on your perception of the service you receive. Its vital that you complete this survey, otherwise we won't know what we're doing well and how we can improve.

This survey is also part of the new regulation, called Tenant Satisfaction Measures, where our service is checked by the Regulator of Social Housing,

Overall satisfaction with DDC's Housing service was 68.1% in 2023, which is an improvement of 2.18% on the previous survey in 2021.

Satisfaction with Repairs was 72.84%, which is a leap of 18.13% improvement in satisfaction on the 2021 survey. Thank you to everyone who completed last year's survey.

We will be contacting all tenants to complete the next survey over the summer months, so please look out for it and complete it when you can.

Estate Walkabouts

Join the team in your area!

Come along to one of our Estate Walkabouts, where we visit each area once a year. Housing Officers, Residents, DDC departments, Councillors and contractors attend and aim to work in partnership to drive forward improvements.

All residents are very welcome to come along, to meet the team and tell us your views.

Estates are visited regularly for inspections where we report any repairs and health and safety concerns, but these walkabouts are different and provides you with an opportunity to engage



with us directly. We value this chance to hear what you think and act upon your ideas.

Please follow the QR code, or search 'Estate Walkabouts' on the DDC website to see when we're coming to your area.



Make the most out of your weekly shop

The Salvation Army have released a free to download cookery book. Following on from a national scheme to introduce cooking, companionship and confidence, they have released a book of affordable meals "designed to make the most out of your weekly food shop!"

www.salvationarmy.org.uk



Garden Competition

Dust off your dibblers and plant some pansies, the Garden Competition is back for 2024!

DDC run an annual Garden Competition in partnership with the Dover District Tenants' Consultative Group to celebrate the hard work of our most talented gardeners. Lots of prizes are up for grabs.

You are welcome to nominate yourself or someone else. If you're nominating someone else they must support the submission, and they must be a DDC Tenant.

We have 4 categories this year, which will be:

- **Front Garden** - Open to all gardens, large and small
- **Back Garden** - Any size, anywhere!
- **Most Improved** - Have you mutual exchanged? Recently signed up? or have you been on a mission to tackle the weeds?
- **Best Use of Space** - Got a Balcony or a small space to work with? Or even a large area of land to manage. This is the perfect category to showcase

your balcony, patio or hanging baskets.

The deadline for entries is 28th June, judging will be completed in July, and a Prize Giving Ceremony will take place in August.

For more information, or to apply, please scan the QR code or search 'Garden Competition' on DDC's website.

