

Social Rented Sector

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Social Rented Sector

Social Rented Sector (SRS) is all accommodation which is classed as social housing. Social housing is defined as low cost rental accommodation that is made available to rent, to those on a Local Authority Housing Register.

Any other accommodation which does not meet this definition is classed as Private Rented Sector (PRS).

SRS tenants will have a tenancy agreement but they may also have less formal arrangements such as, a use and occupation agreement.

A claimant will declare that they live in SRS housing on their Universal Credit claim.

Value of housing costs element

Universal Credit claimants in SRS housing normally have their rent and any eligible service charges included in their housing costs calculation.

Removal of spare room subsidy

Where the accommodation is under-occupied according to the size criteria, a standard percentage-rate deduction is applied. The deduction depends on whether the property is under-occupied by either one bedroom or two or more bedrooms.

If there are spare bedrooms, the eligible rent (housing cost) is reduced by either:

- 14% if there is one bedroom in the property more than required
- 25% if there are two or more bedrooms in the property more than required.

This reduction does not apply if the claimant is:

- a joint tenant unless the other tenant is part of that claimant's benefit unit.
- a home owner or in a shared ownership property where rental costs are due.
- Living in a property adapted under a sanctuary scheme. See sanctuary scheme for full details

Some non-dependants are expected to contribute towards the rent when they live with a claimant who is not subject to an exemption. This may affect the claimant's support for housing costs, as the eligible housing costs will be reduced by a housing costs contribution (HCC). See housing costs from non-dependants.

Verification of housing costs

SRS housing costs are verified directly with the Social Landlord, either via the Landlord Portal or SRS email process.

Social Landlords will confirm the value of the rent and eligible service charges, the number of bedrooms in the accommodation and confirm the claimant occupies the property.

The claimant does not need to provide separate evidence of their housing costs but if their landlord provides a different amount to that declared by the claimant, the claimant will need to confirm the correct rent amount.

Sanctuary Scheme

The sanctuary scheme is operated by a provider of social housing; it aims to support victims of domestic violence to remain in their homes by installing additional security to the property or the perimeter of the property where the victim lives.

From 1 October 2021, there is a sanctuary scheme exemption from the removal of spare room subsidy so that those who qualify will not have a deduction applied if they under occupy a social sector tenancy. A claimant will qualify if:

- their property has had additional security installed under a sanctuary scheme as a result of domestic violence or abuse having been inflicted upon or threatened against the claimant or a member of their household
- the perpetrator of the abuse does not live at the property – except where they are a qualifying young person dependent of a member of the household

[link to domestic violence guide](#)

Evidence

Claimants will need written evidence from a person acting in an official capacity confirming that they are living in a property adapted under a sanctuary scheme and:

- the victim's circumstances are consistent with those of a person who has had domestic violence or abuse inflicted, or threatened, upon them
- the victim has made contact with the person acting in an official capacity to tell them about such an incident

A "person acting in an official capacity" is:

- a health care professional,
- a police officer,
- a registered social worker,
- the claimant's employer,
- a representative of the claimant's trade union,
- or any public, voluntary or charitable body which has had direct contact with the claimant in connection with domestic violence

The sanctuary scheme exemption, where a claimant qualifies for it applies from the first day of assessment period which falls on or following the date the exemption is agreed. It cannot be applied to assessment periods starting before 1 October 2021.