



Department for  
**Communities**

An Roinn  
**Pobal**

Department fur  
**Commonities**

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

Information Management Branch  
Level 5  
NINE Lanyon Place  
BELFAST  
BT1 3LP  
Phone: 02890 829137  
email: [foi@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:foi@communities-ni.gov.uk)

Paige Jennings  
[paige@pprproject.org](mailto:paige@pprproject.org)

Ref : DFC/2023-0044

Dear Ms Jennings

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000**

I wish to confirm that the Department has now completed its search for the information which you requested on 2<sup>nd</sup> March and subsequently clarified on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

In that request you asked for the information detailed below :

1. average Universal Credit standard allowance rates (currently and after April 2023, for single individuals and by family type)
2. average housing costs component of Universal Credit, as above.
3. average Housing Executive rent rates, as above.
4. average private rental rates, as above.
5. any current estimated food basket cost available.

The information which can be disclosed is detailed in Annex A to this letter.

If you are dissatisfied with this response and wish to request a review of our decision or make a complaint about how your request has been handled, you may ask for an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. You should write to the Information Access Manager, Department for Communities, Level 5, Nine Lanyon Place, BELFAST, BT1 3LP, or send an email to [foi@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:foi@communities-ni.gov.uk).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a review of our original decision.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

**Damian O'Hara**  
**Information Management Branch**

## Annex A

### **1. average Universal Credit standard allowance rates (currently and after April 2023, for single individuals and by family type)**

I feel it would be helpful to explain that the Universal Credit standard allowance is a set amount as opposed to an average. The amount of standard allowance paid is based on whether the claimant is single or in a couple, and their age.

This information is technically exempt from disclosure under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as it is reasonably accessible to you by other means. Universal Credit standard allowance rates are publicly available and can be viewed using the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/benefit-and-pension-rates-2023-to-2024/benefit-and-pension-rates-2023-to-2024#universal-credit>

The published information includes the standard rates for both 2022/23 and 2023/24.

The Department publishes statistics related to Universal Credit which can be accessed using the link below:

[Universal Credit Statistics - November 2022 | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](https://communities-ni.gov.uk/universal-credit-statistics-november-2022)

### **2. average housing costs component of Universal Credit, as above.**

The average housing element component of Universal Credit for households in payment of Universal Credit at November 2022, by family type is found in the table below.

<b>Family Type</b>	<b>Average housing element amount</b>
Couple without Children	£340
Couple with Children	£400
Single without Children	£310
Single with Children	£390

#### Notes

Figures are based on households who were in payment of Universal Credit at November 2022.

Support for housing costs is integrated into UC via an additional housing element on top of their standard allowance. Figures provided here are averages of the housing element only, excluding standard allowance or any other element amount.

Figures are rounded to the nearest ten. Average amounts are shown as pounds per month.

**3. average Housing Executive rent rates, as above.**

Housing Executive rents are to increase by 7% effective from April 2023. This will increase the average weekly rent from £69.49 to £74.35, representing an increase of circa £4.86 per week.

Additional information about Housing Executive rents are available at the link shown below:

[ni-housing-stats-21-22-tables3.ods \(live.com\)](#)

**4. average private rental rates, as above.**

This information is not held by the Department.

The Department's most recently published Housing Statistics, covering the period January to June 2022 are available at the link below:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/communities/ni-housing-stats-21-22-full-copy.pdf>

**5. any current estimated food basket cost available.**

This information is not held by the Department