

Your observations and our replies

Consultation A - Spreading the rent collection weeks for tenants

Last updated: 10 January 2023



This consultation has now been closed

Received between – 6 and 10 January 2023

Observation: As a previous tenant has stated, I would prefer to keep the 2 weeks as rent free for the xmas period, as this does help households out especially for those that are not good at saving or would use the extra on other bills. its good to know that over this time the rent is paid and that 2 weeks money can be used elsewhere..

Reply: Thank you for your contribution. The options for tenants to make their rent payments would remain flexible. Tenants can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year.

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Received between – 21 December 2022 and 6 January 2023

Observation: *I want to Keep the Two rent free weeks as it has been for so long as this really does help people over the most expensive time of the year Christmas, and not having to find the rent money for two weeks is a real God send. I beg that you Keep to spreading the yearly cost of rent over the 50 weeks which enables everyone on a budget a bit of breathing space of not having pay two weeks rent and I feel that I don't notice a real difference per week But I certainly notice two weeks free from that obligation.*

Reply: Thank you for your contribution. For December 2022 the rent-free weeks would not change, and we are proposing to make the changes from April 2023. The options for tenants to make their rent payments would remain flexible. Tenants can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year.

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Received between – 16 and 21 December 2022

Observation: *We are in receipt of your letter dated 28.10.22 my husband and me are in support of removal of two week rent free period.*

Reply: Thank you for your contribution.

Observation: *I would prefer to keep things the same as they are now*

Reply: Thank you for your contribution. For December 2022 the rent-free weeks would not change, and we are proposing to make the changes from April 2023. The options for tenants to make their rent payments would remain flexible. Tenants can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year.

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Received between – 12 and 16 December 2022

Observation: *I would prefer to keep the 2 weeks free at xmas. I log in every month and pay 4 or 5 weeks rent, I do this so that in December I actually see the benefit of not paying 2 weeks rent. This helps with bills and they go up as winter is in full swing by then as well as Xmas and all that comes with it. Thanks*

Reply: Thank you for your contribution. For December 2022 the rent-free weeks would not change, and we are proposing to make the changes from April 2023. The options for tenants to make their rent payments would remain flexible. Tenants can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year.

Observation: *Keep the two-week rent-free period. The few £'s a week extra is barely noticeable, but, the rent-free weeks are a great benefit at this time of year.*

Reply: Thank you for your contribution.

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Received between – 23 November and 12 December 2022

Observation: *I DO NOT want the proposed changes to come into effect as I find the 2 rent free weeks at Christmas time very useful as my income is benefits. I feel that to join the customer group would involve extra travel expenses that I can ill afford as I am disabled and have to use taxis for such travel.*

Reply: Thank you for your contribution. There are many ways to contribute, and we will make sure this will not cause any additional expense to the participants.

Observation: *I'd like to respond to the consultation A on rents. We agree with the proposal to collect the rent over 52 weeks rather than 50 weeks. Although it will make little difference to us financial, we think if the Council can make time and cost savings by streamlining admin processes and government returns then it makes absolute sense to do so.*

Reply: Thank you for your contribution.

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Received between – 18 and 23 November 2022

Observation: *Keep the rent-free weeks at Christmas, so many rely on having a little extra in their pocket at that time of year.*

Reply: Thank you for your contribution.

Received between – 6 and 18 November 2022

Observation: *As a long term tenant id rather the rent stay as 50 weeks rather than over 52 weeks, as a worker who is on minimum wage and no benefits its better to carry on as thats how we budget our outgoings at the 50 week rate, the free 2 weeks at xmas is best for workers as most employers pay staff early in december making it a nearly 6 week pay month so its so much harder to budget for. Please can you keep us informed of the decision please. Id also like to join the customer working group.*

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Reply: For December 2022 the rent-free weeks would not change, and we are proposing to make the changes from April 2023. The options for tenants to make their rent payments would remain flexible. Tenants can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year.

You can join the working group by completing the [Housing Consultation](#) online form.

Observation: Keep as it is.

Reply: Thank you for your contribution.

Received between – 3 and 6 November 2022

Observation: *A lot of people rely on the 2 week free rent over Xmas and new year as it gives them a bit extra money over that period and with cost of living crisis could put a lot of people in jeopardy also how would changing from 50 weeks to 52 weeks work for many people who pay monthly and not 4 weekly as although they pay over 50 weeks they don't get the 2 weeks free rent because of counteracting the 5 week months into the balance.*

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Reply: For December 2022 the rent-free weeks would not change, and we are proposing to make the changes from April 2023, although the options for tenants to make their rent payments would remain flexible. Tenants can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year.

Observation: *What do you mean by “spreading rent collection weeks”? I pay monthly direct debit so how will you “spread” that? Thanks*

Reply: Every property has an annual rent charge, which has been divided and charged over 50 weeks. We are proposing to spread the annual charge over 52 weeks. Tenants can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year. If you currently pay monthly by direct debit, you will continue to do so.

Observation: *I do not have a problem with this either way.*

Reply: Thank you for your contribution.

Observation: *We are on a low income bracket and never had free weeks rent. We would like the rent spread it in 52 weeks so the rent is a little bit less.*

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Reply: Thank you for your contribution.

Observation: *I don't want the rent to be 52 weeks, I prefer it to stay at 50 weeks. I suggest that there is a vote about this in Milton Keynes, as some people rely on the 2 free weeks at Christmas, the most votes win. Also we have been told before that our rent would be cheaper when the water rates was taken out, in fact the rent went up.*

Reply: The options for tenants to make their rent payments would remain flexible, and they can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year. The aim of the consultation is to identify all of the services provided, and the relevant costs. You are welcome to join the group by completing the [Housing Consultation](#) online form.

Observation: *I think that people would like to keep paying rent over 50 weeks because this helps with Christmas expenses i.e. It feels like a Christmas bonus.*

Reply: For December 2022 the rent-free weeks would not change, and we are proposing to make the changes from April 2023, although the options for tenants to make their rent payments would remain flexible. Tenants can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year.

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Observation: *I agree rent to be spread over 52 weeks*

Reply: Thank you for your contribution

Received between – 29 October and 3 November 2022

Observation: *Will I still have the rent free weeks this year?*

Reply: Yes, you will. We are proposing that the new 52 rent week year will start from April 2023, which means that you will still have two rent-free weeks in December 2022.

Observation: *I would like to keep the rent free weeks, at the approach to christmas, it is nice to know there is money there to cover towards christmas, and know that the rent is paid and not have this worry. You probably will stop this without taking in to account peoples views, so can you not give people the option when you send out your yearly statement of rent, to say to them, you can pay eg; £95.32 for 52 weeks or carry on paying £99.32 weekly so at the end of*

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year people will be in credit to cover the 2 free weeks, although looks the same process people are just paying higher amount and may save you costs.

Reply: For December 2022 the rent-free weeks would not change, and we are proposing to make the changes from April 2023. The options for tenants to make their rent payments would remain flexible. Tenants can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year.

Observation: *I know we are in a cost of living crisis and that the council want to cut costs as that is what this boils down to in reality streamlining some of your admin processes is the reason. You have also forgotten to add that you only get the 2 week free rent period if you are indeed in credit but if you are in arrears you forfeit that right, so there for you are not really helping the ones that made need it during the cost of living crisis. Christmas is an expensive time for people even more so now during the current climate so the 2 free weeks come in rather handy & lets them either pay off some bills with money that should of been for rent or to try & have a little bit of Christmas.*

Reply: Currently, for those tenants who are in arrears, we would not charge the rent during the rent-free week period. However, we would expect payment arrangements to continue, to reduce their arrears in those weeks.

Observation: *As I budget for a monthly budget the proposal is acceptable to me. However, when this matter was discussed at our Tenants Meeting today it appeared unclear (as the wording of the letter was a little ambiguous) if this meant that we*

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would be charged the same amount (annually) or if this was two weeks additional rent. I believe it would be the same annual rent BUT collected in 52 (or 12 monthly payments) instead of (50 weekly with a two week 'holiday' at Christmas.

Reply: Every property has an annual rent charge, which has been divided and charged over 50 weeks. We are proposing to spread the annual charge over 52 weeks. Tenants can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year.

Observation: *Thank you for the letter about our rents, I would like to stay with the two free weeks. But would like to ask when our homes are going to have new boilers, as I have been told that the one, I have there are no spare parts for it thank you again.*

Reply: We will include your comment about the rent-free weeks in our final consultation proposal. If you have any queries or concerns about repairs, please visit our [Council Housing Repairs](#) page.

Observation: *I do not think it is a very good idea to remove the rent free weeks at Christmas and New Year. This gives tenants the chance to spend their money on the additional seasonal necessities. I think you would find that people would be more inclined to leave their rent at that time of year and would then be guilty of going into arrears as they need money for other things. With the current system, the Council will still get the same overall rent income and it does provide tenants with a little breathing space at this expensive time of year.*

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Reply: Every property has an annual rent charge, which has been divided and charged over 50 weeks. We are proposing to spread the annual charge over 52 weeks. Tenants can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year.

Observation: *I am very disappointed to hear about your proposed change to the rent payments. We are low paid council tenants and look forward to the “x2 free weeks” at Xmas even if we have to work most of it as I work in retail and my wife in NHS. This system has been in operation since I came here from London in 1970. I would be very sad if it didn’t continue.*

Reply: For December 2022 the rent-free weeks would not change, and we are proposing to make the changes from April 2023. The options for tenants to make their rent payments would remain flexible, and they can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, 4-weekly, or monthly over the whole year.