

Annual rent and service costs increase – explanatory notes

DUWO to raise rent by a maximum of 1.2 percent

The annual rent increase will take place on 1 July 2010. The minister of Housing, Communities and Integration has ruled that the maximum allowed rent increase for residential properties will be 1.2 percent. Just as last year, the policy is that rent increases should be in line with inflation: the maximum rent increase will be equal to the inflation rate over the last year. For most properties, DUWO will raise the rent by 1.2 percent from 1 July. The rent increase could possibly be lower, for example where properties are rented on the basis of the Vacant Property Act.

Service costs

Although rents may rise by a maximum of 1.2 percent, it is still possible that the total monthly amount you pay to DUWO for your accommodation will rise by more or less than that 1.2 percent. This is because the additional costs (better known as service costs) could rise by a different percentage. The additional costs include those of services provided by DUWO or by third parties that we charge on to the tenant. Municipal taxes and charges can also be included. Examples of services provided by DUWO include the cleaning of communal areas and garden maintenance. Examples of services by third parties are gas, water, electricity, municipal taxes and TV and internet connections. The specific services involved are stated in the rental agreement and the rental notice letter. Unfortunately, DUWO has little influence on many of these costs, although we do attempt to influence them, for example by making agreements with local authorities on charges and taxes. Sometimes we succeed in making arrangements with the authorities. For example, residents of flats in Delft can apply for a remission of the sewerage charges and waste materials levy through the so-called TWK regulation (Room Residents Living Costs Subsidy). A copy of the rent increase notice is often required for reclaiming tax payments, so please keep this letter carefully. You can find more information at www.duwo.nl. Service costs are estimated and settled by DUWO annually. You make an advance payment every month, which is settled annually. Because energy costs often form the main items in the service costs, you can do a lot yourself to limit these costs by using less energy. You can find energy-saving tips on our website under the heading 'Energy and the Environment'.

Settlement of service costs

Because the service costs that you pay to DUWO in advance are not always the same as the amounts we ultimately have to pay to suppliers, the difference is settled at the end of the calendar year. We try to send tenants a statement of the service costs within six months after the end of the year. Sometimes the tenant gets money back, sometimes the original payment is correct, and sometimes an extra payment must be made. The service costs statement may also include items for which the advance payment is always equal to the amount that should be paid, such as the glass insurance, household contents insurance and service subscription. These are not settled at a later date.

Possibility to apply for rent benefit

You can apply for rent benefit for some student accommodations. The right to rent benefit, and its level, depend on your income, the rental price, the number of (other) residents and several other criteria. Tenants who would like to know if they are eligible for rent benefit can ask DUWO about this. You can also go to www.toeslagen.nl for more information.

Avoid having to pay back rent benefit!

Have you submitted an income tax return and made deductions for healthcare costs and other exceptional expenses? Then the estimate of your income for 2010 may not be correct. In 2010 the conditions for exceptional expenses were changed. Because of this, the estimate of your income may be too low. Avoid having to pay back rent benefit by making a new calculation of your income. To do this, go to www.toeslagen.nl. Have you already submitted your means test income for 2010? Then you don't have to do anything more.

The Amsterdam tenants' association Duwoners is urgently seeking management committee members!

Would you like to build up management experience alongside your study? Then you're just the person we're looking for as a new management committee member for our young and growing tenants' association with more than 4,000 members! We are looking for a treasurer, a secretary and general management committee members. We offer a varied post with excellent remuneration, in which, among other things, you will be involved in high-level consultations with the DUWO directors. It is also an excellent addition to your CV!

Interested?

If you are interested, or have any questions, please e-mail dick@duwoners.nl or go to our website: www.duwoners.nl.