

Fuel bills – your quick guide to what to look for in your tenancy and when searching for a new home.

You won't be able to escape the talk around increased energy fuel bills, but how does that effect you living in your student home if your bills are included in the rent payment.

Here are some useful tips to consider when searching and currently living in student accommodation.

Q: What is inclusive rent with a 'fuel cap'?

A: A fuel cap is usually set to limit the overall cost of the energy covered within your rent. This is typically subject to a fair use policy – a cap or allowance for the type of home you are living in. Many larger providers will publish a fair usage policy on their website – **always ask for clarity.**

Q: If my bills are fully inclusive, can I use as much electricity and heating as I want?

A: Usually – but such an agreement is rare in traditional houses and flats. However, if there is a cap written in your tenancy agreement and you use more than the amount set as your limit, you will be charged for any usage above your cap. If there is no cap on your bills than there potentially could be no limit – **but always check this out.**

Q: My contract says inclusive rent but shows an allowance for all the bills and not just fuel costs.

A: This is particularly important to check as this will significantly impact what's left from your allowance to cover energy and fuel costs. Check out the example below:

Tenancy agreement states allowance of £1500 for the property to cover bills - out of this allowance the following charges are deducted:

Internet:	£480.00
Water charge:	£422.00 (not a meter)

Allowance remaining from rental payment towards gas and electricity for the year = £598.00*

*There will probably be additional costs to pay for your fuel usage

Water rates and internet tend to be fixed charges so ask the agent / landlord to confirm their amounts to enable you to calculate what is left to cover gas and electricity.

Q: How will I know if we are using more fuel than the cap?

A: LSH are encouraging accredited accommodation providers to be open and transparent with their tenants about what the typical usage in the property looks like. Ask for this information **especially before signing** a tenancy. This will allow you to get a better understanding of any other potential costs.

Q: The fuel cap on my contract is shown in kWh of usage, what is this?

A: Fuel companies charge fuel per kWh plus a standing charge. It is important to ask what the cap in kWh translates to in money.

Q: What does a typical usage cost look like in a shared house/flat?

A: We have gathered some information from accredited providers to give you some basic examples of potential average usage and current fuel charge costs, it may be more or less than the illustration in your home, it's important to ask your accommodation provider:

What a typical 4-bedroom house may use on average in kWh annually

Gas 19,000 kWh **Elec** 2381 kWh

Current (Oct 22) energy fuel prices =

£ **1,957.00** - Gas 19,000 kWh @ £0.103
£ **102.20** - Gas standing charge @ £0.28 per day

£ **809.54** - Elec 2,381kWh @ £0.34
£ **167.90** - Elec standing charge @ £0.46 per day

What a typical 1 bed flat with 1 occupant may use annually in kWh

Gas 9,587 kWh **Elec** 1356 kWh

Current (Oct 22) energy fuel prices =

£ **987.46** - Gas 9,587 kWh @ £0.103
£ **102.20** - Gas standing charge @ £0.28 per day

£ **461.04** - Elec 1,356 kWh @ £0.34
£ **167.90** - Elec standing charge @ £0.46 per day

Q: Should the fuel bills be in the tenant's name if we have an inclusive rent?

A: No not typically – if your rental payment to your provider is with the bills included, then the bills should normally be in the providers name as the provider has offered to include the bills within the rental figure and should arrange their own payment of the utilities.

Q: Can we get help through the governments 'Energy Support Scheme'?

A: The government scheme pays the allowance available to the energy supplier, who then passes this to the bill payer. If the bills are in the providers name they should then deduct this off your fuel usage bill. Ask your landlord if this has happened for your home. The government are looking at making this a legal requirement but this has not been formally approved as yet.

Q: I'm still not sure about all of this and what it means to me

A: Get in touch with LSH (Liverpool Student Homes) and we will offer you some advice and support. We can check your tenancy agreement before you sign anything.

You can gain additional advice and support via your university's money advice team.



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