



Working out your Local Housing Allowance

Local Housing Allowance is a new way of working out new claims for Housing Benefit for tenants renting accommodation from a private landlord. It also affects tenants already getting Housing Benefit who move into accommodation rented from a private landlord. Local Housing Allowance is being introduced on 7 April, 2008.

If you live in council accommodation or other social housing, Local Housing Allowance will not affect you

To work out how much benefit you might get you need to:

1. work out how many bedrooms you are entitled to and which Local Housing Allowance rate applies to you – this is shown below and on the LHA-Direct website
2. check the Local Housing Allowance rates for the area you want to live in, this is also available from the LHA-Direct website or your Local Authority
3. find out if you can get the full amount of benefit. Your Local Authority will be able to help with this and the amount of benefit you can get may be affected by:
 - any money you have coming in
 - any savings you have
 - how much your rent is
 - if we expect anyone living with you to pay towards your rent
 - if you share paying the rent with someone else who is not your partner

For more information about Housing Benefit, please get in touch with your Local Authority.

How many bedrooms am I entitled to?

The number of people who live with you is used to work out how many bedrooms you are entitled to. We do not count other rooms such as a living room, kitchen or bathroom.

The number of bedrooms you are entitled to is then used to work out which Local Housing Allowance rate usually applies to you. In some cases, there are some more rules – these are looked at below.



You can use the following information as a guide to work out how many bedrooms you are entitled to.

You are entitled to one bedroom for:

- every adult couple (married or unmarried)
- any other adult aged 16 or over
- any two children of the same sex aged under 16
- any two children aged under 10
- any other child.

Here are some examples that may help:

Reena and Suki

Reena and Suki are a couple who have a child, Ben, who is nine years old.

They are entitled to one bedroom for themselves and one for Ben. This means any benefit they are entitled to will be based on the Local Housing Allowance rate for two bedrooms.

Susan

Susan is a single mother who has three children, Tom, who is fourteen, Judy, who is eleven and Raymond, who is six.

Susan is entitled to one bedroom for herself, one bedroom for Judy and one bedroom for Tom and Raymond to share. This means any benefit they are entitled to will be based on the Local Housing Allowance rate for three bedrooms.

Lisa and Matt

Lisa and Matt are a couple who have five children, Shaun, who is seventeen, Graham, who is fifteen, Laura, who is twelve, Millie, who is nine and Jessica, who is six.

They are entitled to one bedroom for themselves, one bedroom for Shaun, one bedroom for Laura and Millie to share, one bedroom for Graham and one bedroom for Jessica. This means any benefit they are entitled to will be based on the Local Housing Allowance rate for five bedrooms.



What else might affect the Local Housing Allowance rate?

There are extra rules if you are:

- aged 25 or over, single and do not live with any dependants
- aged under 25, single and do not live with any dependants
- a couple and do not live with any dependants
- you are a care leaver aged under 22
- you are severely disabled

These extra rules are covered in separate leaflets that you can get from the LHA-Direct website or your Local Authority.

If you are a joint tenant this may affect the benefit you can get. For more information about joint tenants, please get in touch with your Local Authority.

Non-dependants

If you claim benefit you can only get it for yourself and your family. If you share a property with someone who is not part of your family, your benefit may be reduced. This is because we may expect them to pay towards your rent.

For more information about this, please get in touch with your Local Authority.

What if my rent is not the same as the Local Housing Allowance rate that applies to me?

If your rent is up to £15 lower than the Local Housing Allowance rate that applies to you, any benefit you might get will still be based on this rate. For example, if your rent is £90 and the Local Housing Allowance is £100, the maximum amount of benefit your Local Authority could pay you would be £100.

If your rent is more than £15 less than the Local Housing Allowance rate that applies to you, any benefit you might get will be based on the amount of your rent plus £15. For example, if your rent is £60 and the Local Housing Allowance is £100 the maximum amount of benefit your Local Authority could pay you would be £75.

For a more detailed explanation of how this may affect you, please see **HB(LHA)6** - Local Housing Allowance: rights and responsibilities.



Contact us

There are many different ways to get in touch with The Rent Service.

Technical support

For technical assistance, or if you would like to report a fault with the LHA-Direct website, please contact the LHA-Direct helpdesk via e-mail: helpdesk.lha@therentservice.gov.uk

Contacting TRS Customer Services Department

If you would like to contact The Rent Service visit our website: www.therentservice.gov.uk

or the following page with full contact details:

<http://www.therentservice.gov.uk/contact/contact-details.asp>

By e-mail: customer.services@therentservice.gov.uk

By telephone: 01202 551590

You may also wish to contact your local Rent Office service for:

Wales - RentOfficerHelpdesk@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Scotland - Dave.Ritchie@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Contacting your Local Authority

To find principal local councils throughout the UK please visit the Direct.gov website: www.direct.gov.uk

or the following index page:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DI1/Directories/Localcouncils/index.htm>

Contacting the Department for Work and Pensions

TRS is an Executive Agency of the Department for Work and Pensions. To contact DWP please visit their website:

www.dwp.gov.uk

or the following page with full contact details:

www.dwp.gov.uk/contact