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Local Housing Allowance How Housing Benefit just got better

How is Housing Benefit changing?

We are changing Housing Benefit to make it fairer and easier to use. As a private tenant any Housing Benefit you are paid will now be called Local Housing Allowance. In most cases, we will pay Local Housing Allowance to you – not to your landlord. We are going to bring this change in over the coming year. Many people will be better off and no-one will be worse off.

What is Local Housing Allowance?

Local Housing Allowance is help towards the cost of your rent.

Who is Local Housing Allowance for?

Local Housing Allowance is for private tenants on a low income.

By 'private tenant' we mean someone who rents a property or a room from a private landlord.

Local Housing Allowance does **not** apply if:

- you rent your property from the council
- your landlord is a housing association
- your rent has been registered as a 'fair rent'
- your tenancy started before 1989
- you live somewhere where you are provided with care, support or supervision
- you live in a caravan, mobile home or houseboat.

Local Housing Allowance may not apply if your rent includes an amount for meals. Ask your local council for more details.

How much Local Housing Allowance will I get?

The amount of Local Housing Allowance you will get depends on:

- the number of rooms you need
- the area you live in
- any savings or money you may have coming in
- whether you have someone who is not a dependant living with you.

The number of rooms you need

The rules say how many rooms you need, based on how many people live with you. Full details will be available from your local council.

The area you live in

Your local council will be divided into areas by an independent rent officer. You can use your postcode to work out which area you live in.

Local Housing Allowance will pay the **same amount** wherever you live in your area.

The rent officer decides what the Local Housing Allowance is. It will be based on the rents that most people pay in your area.

If your rent is LESS than the Local Housing Allowance, you will be able to keep any extra money. But if your rent is MORE than the Local Housing Allowance, you will normally have to make up the difference yourself. You will not lose out if your circumstances stay the same. Ask your local council for advice if you are thinking about moving.

What do I need to do?

At the moment you do not need to do anything. Your local council will get in touch when this change is going to take place to let you know how it affects you.

Remember that this leaflet is a general guide to benefits and is not a full and authoritative statement of the law. We have made every effort to ensure that the information in this leaflet is correct at the date shown on the cover. However, changes in the law may make the leaflet become gradually less accurate.

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