

Local Housing Allowance

# How will I be paid?



## How will I be paid my Local Housing Allowance?

Local Housing Allowance will usually be paid directly to you, not your landlord. You will get paid either straight into a bank account or by cheque.

It is up to you to make sure that your rent is paid to your landlord. One way of doing this is to set up a

regular payment (by standing order or direct debit) from a bank account. As long as you have enough money in your account, you won't have to worry about remembering to pay your rent and your landlord will know the rent will be paid automatically.

If you do not have a bank account, now may be a good time to think about opening one. The main types of bank account are explained below, along with some answers to frequently asked questions.

### *Option 1*

**A current account at any bank or building society** (some with access at the Post Office®).

These accounts are available from any bank or building society you choose, and offer the widest range of banking services. As well as your Local Housing Allowance or other benefits, state pension or war pension, you can have other money paid into it, like wages.

With a current account you can make withdrawals from a cash machine, or at some branches over the counter. You can receive a cheque book and a debit card, and in some cases earn interest on your balance. You can pay bills by standing order or direct debit and you can have an overdraft facility (subject to your credit status). You can avoid paying bank charges as long as you don't go **overdrawn**.

As the features of bank and building society accounts vary, it's a good idea to compare different accounts to see which one suits you best.

Depending on where you live, some current accounts let you withdraw your cash over the counter at the Post Office®. A list of these banks is on page 10.

Some of these accounts are accessed using a cheque book and card, and some also allow you to use a card and Personal Identification Number (PIN). Please check with your bank or building society for details.

## *Option 2*

**A basic bank account** (some with access at the Post Office®).

This easy-to-use bank account shares many current account features. Your Local Housing Allowance or other benefit, state pension or war pension can be paid straight into it and you can receive payments from other sources, like wages.

You can pay bills by standing order or direct debit. But as there are no overdraft facilities, you'll need to make sure you have enough money in your account to pay them or the payment will not be made and you may be charged a fee by the bank.



You can make withdrawals from cash machines and in some cases over the counter from branches of the bank or building society itself. Some basic bank accounts also offer you a debit card.

In addition, you will also be able to withdraw cash at the Post Office® using basic bank accounts from some banks. A list of these banks is on page 10.

With some basic bank accounts, you will also be able to check your balance at the Post Office®.

## Opening a bank or building society account

Just get in touch with the bank or building society of your choice. You can get details of banks in your area from your local Housing Benefit office.

You can visit the branch in person or in some cases you can do it by phone. You'll need to provide proof of who you are and where you live. The bank or building society will tell you which documents they accept – typical things are a passport, full current driving licence, order book or a recent council tax or utility bill. Your local Housing Benefit office will advise you on what your local banks will accept.

Tell the bank you need an account that money can be paid into directly. If you want an account that will be accessible at Post Office® branches, make this clear.

**Tell the bank if you want a basic bank account and ask for it by name.**





Depending on the type of account, you may use a cheque book or a plastic account card to collect your money. You can also use your card to find out how much money is in your account. With a plastic card, you will have a Personal Identification Number, known as a PIN, so that only you can take cash out. **Don't tell anyone your number.**

If you have a current or a basic bank account, you can use your card at a cash machine to get money out or check your balance. With most accounts you can take your card into a branch and ask the cashier to give you some or all of your cash, and also ask how much is in your account.

Some current accounts let you withdraw cash over the counter at the Post Office®. Check with your bank, building society or Post Office® branch for details.

## Some questions answered

**Q. How will I know how much money is in my account?**

**A.** All account options offer regular statements. In addition, if you have a current or savings account, you can check by using a cash machine or visiting a branch of your bank or building society. If you have a basic bank account, you can use a cash machine or in most cases you can go to a Post Office® branch or the bank or building society itself.

**Q. What happens if I have less than £10 in my account and the cash machine only gives £10 notes?**

**A.** Depending on the type of account, you can get your money over the counter at the Post Office® or at your bank or building society. Some basic bank accounts also offer a £10 overdraft facility to ensure you can get your money at a cash machine. You won't normally be charged for using this overdraft facility but the bank or building society will automatically claim the money back from you the next time money goes into your account. Check with your bank or building society for details.

**Q. Can I also use my account for tax credits?**

**A. Yes. Just let Inland Revenue have the details**

**For more information, contact the tax credit helpline on 0845 300 3900.**

**Q. Where can I get independent advice about my options?**

**A. You can talk to advice agencies like the Citizens Advice Bureau, Age Concern and MENCAP. For your nearest one, look in your local telephone book.**



## Using your bank account to get money from the Post Office®

You can get money out at the Post Office® if you have a basic bank account at:

- abbey
- Alliance & Leicester
- Bank of Ireland
- Bank of Scotland
- Barclays
- cahoot
- Clydesdale Bank
- The Co-operative Bank
- First Trust Bank
- Halifax
- HSBC
- Lloyds TSB
- Nationwide Building Society
- NatWest
- Northern Bank
- The Royal Bank of Scotland
- smile
- Ulster Bank
- Yorkshire Bank

You can get money out at the Post Office® if you have a current bank account at:

- Alliance & Leicester
- Barclays
- Lloyds TSB

## Further information

You can get further information about LHA from your local council. This will include information on:

- Working out the number of rooms you are allowed
- Rates of LHA available for different areas
- How LHA will be paid
- Opening a bank or building society account
- Your rights and responsibilities
- Vulnerable Customers
- Reviews and appeals

You can find the address of your local council in the business numbers section of the phone book. Look under the name of your **District Council, Borough Council, City Council**, or in some areas, new **Unitary Authority** or **London Borough**. If you live in Scotland look under the name of your local council.

Information is also available on the Department for Work and Pensions website. The address is:

[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

### Other formats

If you need this information in another format please get in touch with your local council.

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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