

Bedroom tax

If you rent your home from a housing association or council, your universal credit housing cost element or housing benefit might be reduced if you are classed as having more bedrooms than you need. This is often called the bedroom tax.

Are you under-occupying your home?

You are allowed one bedroom for every:

- adult couple
- single person aged 16 or over
- two children aged under 16 of the same sex
- two children aged under 10 regardless of their sex
- person who cannot share a bedroom because they are severely disabled
- non-resident carer or group of carers providing overnight care
- foster child, if you are an approved foster carer
- adult child in the armed forces who will return to your home
- lodger (housing benefit only)

How much will your benefit be reduced by?

Housing benefits normally cover your eligible rent. This is the amount of rent you pay to your landlord, not including charges for other services like water or heating.

The bedroom tax reduces your eligible rent by:

- 14% if you are under-occupying by one bedroom
- 25% if you are under-occupying by two or more bedrooms

For example, if your eligible rent is £380 per month your benefit would be reduced by:

- £53.20 per month if you are under-occupying by one bedroom
- £95 per month if you are under-occupying by two or more bedrooms

Your benefit amount is not reduced if you and your partner live together and are both state pension age.

Factsheet

Speak to the council (for housing benefit) or the DWP (for universal credit) if you want them to explain how they have calculated your benefits.

What can you do?

There are different steps you can take depending on your situation.

Apply for a discretionary housing payment (DHP) from your local council

A DHP can help you make up the difference between your benefit amount and your rent. A DHP can be a regular payment for a set period of time or a one-off lump sum.

Take in a lodger

The rent you receive from a lodger can increase the amount of income tax you pay or reduce the benefits you receive. Ask your landlord if you are allowed to have a lodger.

Transfer to a smaller property

Some councils or housing associations will give you extra priority on their transfer list.

Check you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to

There may be other benefits you can claim. For example, if you have a disability you may be eligible for additional financial support.

You can get further advice from [england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice](https://www.england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice), a local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice.

If you have nowhere to sleep tonight, are at risk of harm or losing your home within the next 2 months, call Shelter Helpline on 0808 800 4444 for advice and information on your options. Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.

