

Housing benefit: under 35s

This factsheet considers how much housing benefit you can get if you are single, rent your home from a private landlord and are aged under 35.

Housing benefit can help you pay the rent on your home. You don't need to be getting other benefits to be eligible. You can get housing benefit if you are working and have a low income.

How much housing benefit you will get mainly depends on your income, your rent, and on rules that limit the maximum housing benefit you can receive.

Local housing allowance rate

If you rent your home from a private landlord, the maximum housing benefit you can get is the local housing allowance (LHA) rate for the area you live in.

The LHA rate varies from area to area. Your council can tell you what the LHA rates are for your area.

Alternatively, you can find them online by entering your postcode or local authority at tinyurl.com/LHAfindrate

Shared accommodation rate

If you are under 35 and single, the maximum housing benefit you can normally receive is the LHA rate for shared accommodation (the rate for a room in a shared house).

Even if you rent a house or flat on your own, the shared rate will still apply, and you will have to make up any shortfall between the benefit you receive and the actual rent.

Exceptions to the rule - living alone

The shared accommodation rate will not apply if you live alone, and you:

- are under 22 and have spent time in care since your 16th birthday
- have a severe disability and qualify for certain disability-related benefits
- need an overnight carer
- are a housing association or council tenant
- live in certain hostels.

If you are aged 25 to 34 the shared rate will also not apply if you have:

- left prison, pose a serious risk to the public and you are subject to 'Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements' (MAPPA).

- spent a total of at least three months in a hostel for homeless people (this can include women's refuges or drug rehabilitation hostels) and you have accepted resettlement support. The three months does not have to be continuous, or just in one hostel.

Exceptions when you live with others

The shared accommodation rate does not apply if you are under 35 and:

- you live with a partner, or
- you have a child who lives with you, or
- a non-dependant lives with you – this usually means a adult member of your family.

However, the shared accommodation rate will apply if you live with your partner in accommodation shared with other people.

Exception at start of your claim

The shared accommodation rate won't apply for the first 13 weeks of your housing benefit claim if you:

- could afford the full rent when you moved into your home, and
- have not been paid any housing benefit in the past year (your partner, if you live with them, must also not have been paid housing benefit).

Universal credit

The shared accommodation rate also applies if you are receiving the housing costs element of universal credit instead of housing benefit.

Further advice

You can get further advice from england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice, 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.



Funded by
UK Government



Registered charity in England and Wales (263710)
and in Scotland (SC002327).

Note
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