

Housing Benefit is changing

What are the changes?

The UK Government has announced that they are going to change the way Housing Benefit and the housing element of Universal Credit is calculated from **1 April 2018**. If you rent your home from a Housing Association or local authority the amount of Housing Benefit or housing element of Universal Credit you will receive may be capped.

Who does this change affect?

If you are single, **under 35 years old** and do not have any dependent children living with you, you are affected – your Housing Benefit or housing elements within your Universal Credit will be capped.

When do the changes take place?

The cap will come into force from **1 April 2018**. It will be applied to those tenants who started a new tenancy or renewed their tenancy after **1 April 2016**.

How much is being capped?

Housing Benefit and the housing element of Universal Credit for social housing tenants is being capped by the UK Government at the same level applied to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate in your area. The maximum housing benefit or housing element of Universal Credit you will be entitled to is the Local Housing Allowance shared accommodation rate.

The current LHA shared accommodation rate for Glasgow is £68.28 per week.

What is the Local Housing Allowance?

The LHA is the maximum amount of housing benefit paid by the UK Government for rent to private sector tenants regardless of the rent they are being charged. LHA rates vary by your individual circumstances, where you live and how many bedrooms you are entitled to.

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What does it mean for you?

If you have signed a new tenancy or renewed a tenancy from **1 April 2016**, the amount of Housing Benefit or housing element of Universal Credit that you receive will be restricted from **1 April 2018**. For example, if you are single, with no children living with you and are under the age of 35, your rent will be restricted to the **LHA rate for one-bedroom shared accommodation** regardless of the number of bedrooms you have. The maximum housing benefit you will receive will be £68.28 per week even if your rent is higher than this.

Does this mean I will need to pay more for my rent?

Yes, in Glasgow if your rent is more than £68.28 per week, then you will be expected to pay the difference.

What can you do?

If you have signed a new tenancy or renewed a tenancy after **1 April 2016** you need to consider carefully whether you will be able to afford your rent when these changes come in. From **1 April 2018** if you are in receipt of Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit, you will need to pay for any shortfall in your rent above the LHA rate.

Are there any exemptions?

At the present time the UK Government has said there are no exemptions for anyone or any accommodation. However, this may change in the future.

Where to get help

You can find more information about LHA rates for your area at www.glasgow.gov.uk or www.gov.scot

Alternatively, contact your local housing office who can arrange for further advice and support.