

# Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance from April 2013

## What will the changes mean?

A size limit rule is being introduced to Housing Benefit for working age people renting from a local authority, a registered housing association or other registered social landlord. By working age we mean anyone under state pension credit age.

The new rules will restrict the size of accommodation you can receive Housing Benefit for, based on the number of people in your household.

The new rules allow one bedroom for:

- every adult couple (married or unmarried)
- any other adult aged 16 or over
- any two children of the same sex aged under 16
- any two children aged under 10
- any other child, (other than a foster child or child whose main home is elsewhere)
- a carer (or team of carers) who do not live with you but provide you or your partner with overnight care

Single people under the age of 35 will be entitled to claim the rate for a room in shared accommodation. There are exemptions to this rule for severely disabled, those leaving rehab hostels and those under the supervision of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

There will be an overall maximum entitlement of 4 bedrooms regardless of family size

## When will the changes take effect?

The new size limit rules will start on 1 April 2013. At this time the Local Authority will write to applicants to confirm the information they hold. They will then write again to confirm what the changes will be to the Housing Benefit payable.

## How might the changes affect an individual?

It is possible that the amount of Housing Benefit payable to individuals to cover rent and service charges could go down. If, under these new rules, it is decided that an applicant has more bedrooms than are necessary for the household then Housing Benefit will be reduced by:

- 14% if there is 1 extra bedroom
- 25% if there are 2 or more extra bedrooms

## **How much will Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance be?**

This is likely to change according to the local authority but there will be a nationwide cap on LHA from April 2011. The current figures for this cap are:

- £250pw for a one bedroom property
- £290pw for a two bedroom property
- £340pw for a three bedroom property
- £400pw for a four bedroom property

All payments will be frozen from April 2012 and future increases will be linked to either the Consumer Prices Index or the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of local rents, whichever is lower.

## **Further Assistance**

Further information is available here:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/factsheet-hbsssc1.pdf>