

Housing Benefit fact sheet

Who can get Housing Benefit?	What does HB cover?
<p>Housing Benefit is a means-tested benefit which helps people on a low income to pay their rent and some service charges. The Housing Benefit scheme is administered by District/Borough Councils.</p> <p>To get HB you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be liable for the rent on the place you live • Have no more than £16,000 capital or be on Pension Credit Guarantee • Be on a low income • Occupy the accommodation as your home <p>Housing Benefit is available whether a person is unemployed or working. Some people from abroad and most students are not eligible for Housing Benefit. There are, however, some exceptions to this. Housing Benefit is not payable to a person who lives with their landlord who happens to be a 'close relative'. Seek advice if these situations apply.</p> <p>Non-dependant If a person has a 'non-dependant' living in their home they may have their benefit reduced because non-dependants are assumed to contribute towards the rent. This is called a non-dependant deduction.</p>	<p>Housing Benefit may not cover the whole amount a tenant pays to their landlord. This is because it will only cover eligible rent and some service charges.</p> <p>Eligible rent Eligible rent is the amount of rent taken into account when calculating Housing Benefit.</p> <p>Housing Benefit can be restricted if the accommodation is considered too large or too expensive for the tenant.</p> <p>Housing Benefit will not cover charges such as meals, water rates, fuel charges and payments. Housing Benefit does not cover people in permanent residential care.</p> <p>Service Charges Housing Benefit can cover some service charges, but only where these relate to the provision of accommodation and are a condition of the tenancy. These can include general management costs, cleaning and lighting of communal areas. Housing Benefit does not cover 'general counselling and support' charges. These include charges for Warden's Services in sheltered housing and charges in supported accommodation, such as homeless persons' hostels and women's refuges. This should be paid for via the Supporting People Grant.</p>
How to claim	Backdating a claim
<p>Claim form The claimant should contact their local council directly and ask to claim Housing Benefit.</p> <p>Claim online Some Councils offer either an on-line claiming facility or a downloadable claim form (or both) from their own web sites.</p> <p>Claim by phone For those claiming any of the following</p>	<p>It is important to claim on time. Housing Benefit can only be backdated for 3 months for people aged 60 or over or 6 months for people under 60. The 3 month backdating for those aged 60 or over can be awarded on request without showing reasons for the delayed claim. However for claimants of working age, they must show continuous "good cause" for the delayed claim in order to get the 6 month backdating.</p>

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<p>benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension Guarantee Credit (people aged 60 or over) • Income Support • Income-related Employment and Support Allowance • Jobseekers Allowance income-based <p>The claimant should be asked during the course of the call whether they also wish to claim Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit. If so brief details of the claim will be taken over the phone and passed to the relevant district or borough council which may subsequently issue its own more detailed claim form for completion.</p>	<p>Housing Benefit payments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Benefit is paid 4 weekly in arrears, from the first Monday following the date of the claim, unless the claimant becomes liable for rent in the same week they make the claim. In this case, benefit will be paid from the Monday of that week. • A Local Authority tenant will have their Housing Benefit credited to their rent account.
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<p>Discretionary Housing Payments</p> <p>Discretionary Housing Payments are intended to help people who need extra help meeting their housing costs. Discretionary Housing Payments are not part of the Housing Benefit Scheme and are not subject to any appeal rights. Claimants should apply for Discretionary Housing Payments in writing to their local authority Housing Benefit office.</p>	<p>If you think the decision is wrong</p> <p>Anyone unhappy with a decision should request a revision in writing within one month of the original decision. A full statement of reasons for the decision can also be requested. The Housing Benefit department should supply this within 2 weeks, and the time limit for requesting a revision is then extended by 2 weeks.</p> <p>If the claimant is still unhappy with the revised decision, they can appeal in writing for a tribunal to hear their case. The appeal must be made within one month from the date of the revised decision.</p> <p>Always seek further advice when challenging decisions.</p>
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