

Working out your Local Housing Allowance if you are a couple



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

Local Housing Allowance is a way of working out new claims for Housing Benefit for tenants renting accommodation from a private landlord.

It also affects tenants already getting Housing Benefit who move into accommodation rented from a private landlord.

Local Housing Allowance was introduced on 7 April, 2008. Local Housing Allowance will not affect people living in Council accommodation or rented from the Orkney Housing Association.

To work out how much benefit you might get you need to find out what Local Housing Allowance rate your benefit will be based on.

If you are part of a couple and do not live with any dependants, your benefit will be based on the one bedroom Local Housing Allowance rate if you live in:

- a self-contained property;
- shared accommodation but have two or more rooms (bedrooms or living rooms) that no-one else can use.

If you are part of a couple and do not live with any dependants, your benefit will be based on the Local Housing Allowance shared room rate if you live in shared accommodation.

By couple we mean a man and a woman who are married or are living together as if they are married, or two people of the same sex who are civil partners of each other and are members of the same household.

By a self-contained property we mean one where you have your own room plus your own:

- bathroom;
- toilet; and
- kitchen (or facilities to cook with).

For example, this could be a one-bedroom flat.

Bill and Jane

Bill and Jane are a couple who have no children. They live in a house where they share facilities.

They are entitled to one bedroom for themselves. As they share facilities, this means any benefit they are entitled to will be based on the Local Housing Allowance shared room rate.

Gary and Roger

Gary and Roger are a couple. They live in a self-contained flat.

They are entitled to one bedroom for themselves. This means any benefit they are entitled to will be based on the Local Housing Allowance rate for one bedroom.

For more information, please get in touch with us at the address below.

You can find out what the Local Housing Allowance room rates are by checking leaflet **HB(LHA)5**. You can get this from us at the address below or by visiting our website at www.orkney.gov.uk

You also need to find out if you can get the full amount of benefit. The amount of benefit you can get may be affected by:

- any money you have coming in;
- any savings you have;
- how much your rent is;
- if we expect anyone living with you to pay towards your rent;
- if you share paying the rent with someone else who is not your partner.

For more information about this, please get in touch with us at the address below.

Non-dependants

If you claim benefit you can only get it for yourself and your family. If you share a property with someone who is not part of your family, your benefit may be reduced. This is because we may expect them to pay towards your rent.

For more information about this, please get in touch with us at the address below.

Joint tenants, care leavers or the severely disabled.

If you are a joint tenant, a care leaver or severely disabled this might affect the benefit you can get. For more information, please get in touch with us at the address below.

What if my rent is less than the Local Housing Allowance rate that applies to me?

If your rent is up to £15 less than the Local Housing Allowance rate that applies to you, any benefit you might get will still be based on this rate. If your rent is more than £15 less than the Local Housing Allowance rate that applies to you, any benefit you may get will be based on a lower rate.

You should note that with effect from April 2011 you will not be entitled to receive this additional payment of up to £15.

For details about this, please see **HB(LHA)6** *Local Housing Allowance: rights and responsibilities*

Further information

If you want more information:

- phone the Council's Housing Benefit Section on (01856) 873535 Ext 2116, or Direct Dial (01856) 886312
- visit, or write to, the Council's Housing Benefit Section at Orkney Islands Council, Council Offices, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY
- look on our website on www.orkney.gov.uk
- email us at benefits@orkney.gov.uk
- visit www.direct.gov.uk

Remember that this leaflet is a guide only. It is not meant to say exactly what your legal rights are. While we have tried to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct at the date shown below, it is possible that there may be incorrect information or some ideas may be oversimplified. Also, please remember that the information in this leaflet is likely to become less accurate over time because of changes to the law.

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