

## Working out your Local Housing Allowance

**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. If you live in Council accommodation or rent from the Orkney Housing Association, Local Housing Allowance will not affect you**

To work out how much benefit you might get you need to:

1. work out how many bedrooms you are entitled to and which Local Housing Allowance rate applies to you – this is shown below;
2. check the Local Housing Allowance rates for the area you want to live in (see leaflet **HB(LHA)5**, which you can get from us at the address below or at [www.orkney.gov.uk](http://www.orkney.gov.uk))
3. 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.

### **How many bedrooms am I entitled to?**

The number of people who live with you is used to work out how many bedrooms you are entitled to. We do not count other rooms such as a living room, kitchen or bathroom.

The number of bedrooms you are entitled to is then used to work out which Local Housing Allowance rate usually applies to you. In some cases, there are some more rules – these are looked at below.

You can use the following information as a guide to work out how many bedrooms you are entitled to.

You are entitled to 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.

***David and Rebecca***

David and Rebecca are a couple who have a child, Ben, who is nine years old.

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

***Susan***

Susan is a single mother who has three children, Tom, who is fourteen, Judy, who is eleven and Raymond, who is six.

Susan is entitled to one bedroom for herself, one bedroom for Judy and one bedroom for Tom and Raymond to share. This means any benefit they are entitled to will be based on the Local Housing Allowance rate for three bedrooms.

***Lisa and Matt***

Lisa and Matt are a couple who have five children, Shaun, who is seventeen, Graham, who is fifteen, Laura, who is twelve, Millie, who is nine and Jessica, who is six.

They are entitled to one bedroom for themselves, one bedroom for Shaun, one bedroom for Laura and Millie to share, one bedroom for Graham and one bedroom for Jessica. This means any benefit they are entitled to will be based on the Local Housing Allowance rate for five bedrooms. From October 2011 the benefit they will be entitled to is limited to the Local Housing Allowance for four bedrooms.

**What else might affect the Local Housing Allowance rate?**

There are extra rules if you are:

- aged 25 or over (35 from January 2012), single and do not live with any dependants;
- aged under 25 (35 from January 2012), single and do not live with any dependants;
- a couple and do not live with any dependants;

- you are a care leaver aged under 22;
- you are severely disabled.

These extra rules are covered in separate leaflets that you can get from us at the address below.

If you are a joint tenant this may affect the benefit you can get. For more information about joint tenants, 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.

### **What if my rent is not the same as the Local Housing Allowance rate that applies to me?**

Any benefit you are entitled to will be based on the Local Housing Allowance rate at the date of your application.

For a more detailed explanation of how this may affect you, please see **HB(LHA)6** *Local Housing Allowance: rights and responsibilities*.

### **Further information**

If you want to get 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](http://www.orkney.gov.uk)
- email us at [benefits@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@orkney.gov.uk)
- visit [www.direct.gov.uk](http://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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