

HOUSING BENEFIT is available to:

- Council tenants
- Lodgers/boarders
- Hostel dwellers
- Private tenants
- Housing Association tenants
- Ground Rent/Pitch fees for mobile homes

COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT is available to:

- All Council Tax payers resident in the property

Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation of this guide it does not cover the full Housing/Council Tax benefits regulations and should not be interpreted as such.

Further information and application forms may be obtained from: The Benefits Section, Governance Directorate, City Offices, Colebrook Street, Winchester, SO23 9LJ.

Telephone: (01962) 848 539 (telephone calls may be recorded)

Fax: (01962) 841 365

Opening Times: 8:45 - 5:00 (4:30pm on Fridays)

Email: benefits@winchester.gov.uk

Website: www.winchester.gov.uk

Benefit is normally granted from the Monday following the day you apply so do not delay in making an application.

This leaflet gives an outline of the benefit schemes and attempts to answer some of the questions you may have.

If you have over £16,000 in capital you will not qualify for either benefit, unless you receive the Guarantee Element of Pension Credit. Certain compensation payments are disregarded. Please ask for details.

What is Housing Benefit?

Housing Benefit is paid by Local Authorities to tenants who are on a low income to help them meet their rent payments.

What is Council Tax Benefit?

Council Tax Benefit is paid by Local Authorities to anyone on a low income to help them pay their Council Tax.

There is also an alternative benefit known as **2nd ADULT REBATE** that may be claimed by Single Charge Payers who do not qualify in their own right but who have an adult family member on a low income living with them. Please ask for details.

How are they paid?

If you are a Council tenant, the amount of rent you have to pay the Council will be reduced. If you are a tenant of a private landlord or if you are a boarder/lodger, your Housing Benefit will be paid by bacs transfer directly into your bank account. If you have a valid reason we may be able to pay Housing Benefit direct to your landlord.

Your Council Tax account will be reduced by the amount of any Council Tax Benefit.

How do the schemes affect me?

If you receive Income Support/ Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)/ Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) or the Guarantee Element of Pension Credit you will generally receive 100% help with your eligible rent and 100% help with the Council Tax.

Water and sewerage charges are payable in full direct to your local water authority or to your landlord.

If you do not receive Income Support/ Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)/ Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) or the Guarantee Element of Pension Credit

Your weekly income is calculated and compared with your applicable amount. If your weekly income is less than your applicable amount, you will receive maximum Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, ie 100% of your eligible rent and 100% of your Council Tax. If your income is higher than your applicable amount, your benefit is reduced by:

65% of the difference in respect of your rent rebate or rent allowance.

and
20% of the difference in respect of your Council Tax Benefit.

If you have additional adults living with you (non dependants) then your Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit will be reduced to reflect the assumed contribution they make to household expenses

How is my income calculated?

Net earnings from employment are taken ie earnings after deductions for income tax, national insurance and half of any contribution made for a company or private pension.

Added to your earnings will be your income from all other sources apart from income received from capital.

Certain items of income are ignored. The main items ignored are as follows:

£5.00 per week of earnings for a single person

£10.00 per week of earnings for a couple

£25.00 per week of earnings for a lone parent.

An additional earned income disregard of £16.85 per week is applicable if:

- 1 Claimant or partner receives Working Tax Credit that includes the addition for working 30 hours plus or in some cases 16 hours plus and is working 16/30 hours

2 Claimant/partner works 30 hours plus

or

3 Claimant's applicable amount includes the family premium and Claimant/partner works 16 hours plus.

The whole of any Attendance Allowance, Mobility Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Child Maintenance, War Widows Pension or War Disability Pension is also ignored.

What happens to my income from capital?

This is ignored, instead an assumed income is calculated from all your capital.

If your capital is over £16,000.00 you will not qualify for either benefit, unless you receive the Guarantee Element of Pension Credit.

For people aged under 60

The first £6,000 of your capital is disregarded and for each £250.00 or part of £250.00 that you have over £6,000.00 an assumed income of £1.00 per week is added to your other income.

For people aged over 60 (Claimant or Partner)

The first £6,000.00 of your capital is disregarded and for each £500.00 or part of £500 that you have over £6,000.00 an assumed income of £1.00 per week is added to your other income.

What is my applicable amount?

An applicable amount is the figure used in calculating Housing and Council Tax Benefit, to reflect the basic living needs of the claimant and any family. People on Income Support/ Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)/ Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) or the Guarantee Element of Pension Credit have already had their applicable amount worked out for the purpose of assessing entitlement to those benefits.

The applicable amount is calculated by giving you a personal allowance and then adding on to this personal allowance various premiums.

These additional premiums depend on your age, disability and whether or not you have children who are dependent on you.

Weekly personal allowances are as follows:

■ Single aged to 24	£50.95
■ Single aged 25 and over	£64.30
■ Lone parent under 18	£50.95
■ Lone parent aged 18 and over	£64.30
■ Couple both aged under 18	£76.90
■ Couple 1 or both aged 18 and over	£100.95
■ For each child aged less than 20	£56.11

Rates for people aged over 60

Single Claimant

■ Aged 60 - 64	£130.00
■ Aged 65 and over	£150.40

Couple

■ One or both aged 60 - 64	£198.45
■ One or both aged over 65	£225.50

Weekly additional premiums are as follows:-

Family Premium

■ Dependant children aged over 1	£17.30
or ■ Dependant child under 1	£27.80
■ Protected rate for lone parents	£22.20
or ■ dependant child aged under 1 for lone parent	£32.70

Disabled Child Premium (awarded if any of your children is disabled) £51.24

Carer Premium (awarded where you receive Carers Allowance in respect of another person) £29.50

Disabled Premium

■ Single rate (up to age 59)	£27.50
■ Couple rate	£39.15

In exceptional circumstances, severely disabled claimants may also qualify for an extra premium.

What are non dependant deductions?

If you have other adults living with you, eg grown up children, parents, etc your Benefit will be reduced by the amounts listed below. Separate deductions are also made for boarders and lodgers.

The main weekly deductions are:	CTB	HB
a) Income less than £120.00 (HB) £178.00 (CTB) and not in remunerative work	£2.30	£7.40
b) In remunerative work and gross income £120.00 - £177.99	£2.30	£17.00
c) In remunerative work and gross income £178.00 - £230.99	£4.60	£23.35
d) In remunerative work and gross income £231.00 - £305.99	£4.60	£38.20
e) In remunerative work and gross income £306.00 - £381.99	£5.80	£43.50
f) In remunerative work and gross income £382.00 and above	£6.95	£47.75

There is no charge for persons:-

- Under 18 years
- Aged 18-25 and in receipt of Income Support/ Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)/ Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related)/ Council Tax Benefit/ Housing Benefit while in assessment phase
- In receipt of Pension credit
- Where the claimant or partner is getting Attendance Allowance/receives care components of Disabled Living Allowance/or is registered blind.

There are special rules for people aged 65 or over regarding change of circumstances of non-dependants who become or who are resident in the household. Where the change would reduce Benefit entitlement, the effective date of non-dependant changes will be 26 weeks after the change occurs, when:

- or
- A non-dependant moved into the residence
 - The income of an existing non-dependant increases so that the amount of the non-dependant deduction also increases.

Example of a Benefit Calculation

■ *Couple aged over 18 with 1 child aged 7, husband working, earning £250.00 per week (after tax, National Insurance and half of contribution to company pension scheme). They pay rent of £150.00 per week. Council Tax Liability is £2000.00 a year.*

Income		
Husband's earnings		£250.00
Child Benefit		£20.00
Working Tax Credit		£55.00
Child Tax Credit		£42.00
		£367.00
Less earnings disregarded		£26.85
Total	A	£340.15

Applicable Amount

Personal allowance for couple aged over 18		£100.95
Family premium		£17.30
Child allowance to age 20		£56.11
Total	B	£174.36

Excess Income		£340.15
(A less B)		£174.36
Total	C	£165.79

The maximum housing benefit payable is 100% of eligible rent		£150.00
Deduct 65% of the Excess Income (C)		£107.76
£169.79 x 65% -		£107.76

Total Housing Benefit per week		£42.24
---------------------------------------	--	---------------

Council Tax Benefit

Equivalent weekly Council Tax liability		£2000.00 divided by 365 x 7	£38.36
Deduct 20% of the Excess Income (C)		£165.79 x 20%	£33.16

Total Council Tax Benefit per week		£5.20
---	--	--------------

If 20% of Excess Income exceeds the weekly liability there is no benefit entitlement

Example: Council Tax of £1500.00 pa, weekly equivalent £28.76 There is no entitlement as 20% of excess (£33.16) exceeds the weekly liability £28.76

Is all of my rent eligible for Housing Benefit?

Not necessarily, certain items you may pay with your rent are not eligible for Housing Benefit. These include heating charges, lighting charges, water charges or in the case of private tenants your eligible rent may be less than you actually pay where it is considered you pay an excessively high rent or you are over accommodated. If you are single and under 25, a lower standard amount may apply.

Also, if you are a boarder/lodger, the payment for meals is not eligible for Housing Benefit

Housing Benefit has changed

Housing Benefit (HB) has changed for some private tenants to make it fairer and easier to use. As a new private tenant any Housing Benefit you are paid will now be called Local Housing Allowance (LHA). In most cases, we will pay LHA to you - not to your landlord.

What are LHA rates based on?

LHA rates are based on:

- Size criteria
- Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMAs).

Different LHA rates will apply in different areas. Within those areas, they will be based on the median rent charged by landlords in the private sector for properties of various sizes. LHA rates will be further broken down into 'Room Rates' that will apply depending on the size of the household. Size criteria will be based on allowing one bedroom up to a maximum of five for:

- every adult couple
- any other adult aged 16 or over
- any two children of the same sex
- any two children regardless of sex under 10
- any other child

The number of living rooms, kitchens and bathrooms is ignored for the purpose of size criteria.

What information do I need to supply?

You will have to prove your identity by providing proof of your National Insurance Number(s) for both you and your partner. An original document with the number on it must be provided. Acceptable proof is listed below:

- P45/P60 ● Wage slips ● Income Tax letter
- Notification letter from DWP
- National Insurance No. card
- Benefit Award Letters. - Retirement Pension - Income support or pension credit

If you do not have a National Insurance number or an original document with the number on you must provide two original forms of identification eg.

- Driving licence ● Current Passport
- Birth Certificate ● Medical Card ● Bank Statement

Only original documents can be accepted to support your claim, photocopies are not acceptable. Once your documents have been checked and verified they will be returned to you the same day.

Housing & Council Tax Benefit



2009/2010