

■ Thinking of renting private accommodation?

Housing Benefit and Pre-Tenancy Determinations

Before you take on a Tenancy and claim Housing Benefit, apply for a Pre-Tenancy Determination

If you are thinking of renting accommodation from a private landlord (not the Council or a Housing Association) and you are likely to need help from Housing Benefit to pay your rent, you can now find out how much of that rent can be used to work out your housing benefit entitlement, before you decide to rent the property and sign the tenancy agreement.

A Pre-Tenancy Determination is a rental valuation by the independent Rent Service. This valuation gives you the figure that will be used by us to work out your housing benefit - **BUT** if you are single and under twenty-five years of age the maximum rent which will be used to work out your housing benefit will be limited to the average cost of a non self-contained room in the area in which you are thinking of living. The Rent Service will give you that figure.

Remember that when your housing benefit is worked out, it will take account of your income, capital and other circumstances.

The Pre-Tenancy Determination does not guarantee that you will get housing benefit or tell you the amount that you will get.

Likely to need help with paying your rent?



Winchester
City Council

Housing Benefit and Pre-Tenancy

Determinations

How to apply

Fill in and sign the application for a Pre-Tenancy Determination, which asks for details about the property you are thinking of renting. You will need information from the landlord to fill in the form and they must sign the form as well. Once the form is filled in and signed either post it to us or bring it into the office.

What happens next?

We will ask the Rent Service to value the property and decide how much rent it would be reasonable to pay for it. You will normally get your decision within seven days. If the Rent Service has made a valuation of the property on the same tenancy terms within the last twelve months then that valuation will stand and we will send you a copy of that decision. The Rent Services' decision is explained below.

Keep this leaflet in a safe place, as you may need to refer to it again when you get the Rent Services' decision.

The Rent Service will send you, the landlord and ourselves copies of the decision. The information he gives you will help you decide whether you can afford the rent that is being asked. If you decide to take the accommodation you should claim housing benefit at once. You can get a housing benefit application form from us.

The Rent Services' Decision and your Housing Benefit

What will the Rent Service do?

We will send your application for a Pre-Tenancy Determination to the Rent Service. You will normally get your decision within seven days.

The Rent Service may need to look at the property you are thinking of renting and, if so, will make arrangements with the landlord to visit it. The Rent Service will consider things such as the rent charged, what services are included in the rent, the number of rooms in the property, the size of your household, the length and terms of the tenancy and the general level of rents in the area. From this information the Rent Service will decide how much the property is worth in the rental market and how much is generally paid in the area for a property of a suitable size for you and members of your family who live with you.

If you are single and under twenty-five years of age, the Rent Service will make another decision. This will be based on the cost of a non self-contained room (where you would have shared use of kitchen and toilet facilities) in the same area as the property for which you are seeking the Pre-Tenancy Determination. These decisions will stand for twelve months from the date they are made.

The decision notice that the Rent Service sends you will tell you the maximum rent figure which will generally be used in working out your housing benefit. Generally, the maximum rent figure is arrived at by using two figures worked out by the Rent Service. The first is the figure that the Rent Service thinks is a reasonable rent for the property or one of a suitable size for you and your family. The second figure is the Rent Services' average rent based on properties of the same size in the area.

If the decision notice is for someone who is single and under twenty-five years of age it will state what the maximum rent figure is as well as the average figure for

a non self contained single room. This will be known as the single room rent. In this case, the maximum rent will be no more than the single room rent.

It will also give you other information including details of any services (such as laundry or cleaning) paid for in the rent. These services are not generally met by housing benefit. The maximum rent figure will go down if your rent includes other items (eg. water rates, meals, heating). The maximum rent figure can be further reduced by us if the figure seems unreasonably high for your particular accommodation needs.

Will the maximum rent figure be the amount of housing benefit I get?

Not necessarily. Your housing benefit will generally be worked out using the maximum rent figure but if you are under twenty-five years of age the maximum rent will generally be limited to the single room rent.

The Rent Services' decision does not guarantee that you will get housing benefit or that you will get the amount stated on the decision notice.

The Rent Services' decision is only an indication of the amount of the rent which may be used to work out your housing benefit entitlement. We will need to consider your personal circumstances (eg. your income, people living with you) before your benefit entitlement can be assessed.

You may be able to get some additional help with your rent to prevent hardship. Please contact us if you are experiencing hardship and we will send you an application form.

Any payment of housing benefit will depend on the date of the housing benefit claim rather than on the date that you applied for your Pre-Tenancy Determination.

If you need further help please contact the Benefits Section:

Finance Directorate
Benefits Section
Winchester City Council
Colebrook Street
Winchester
SO23 9LJ

Tel: 01962 848 539
Telephone calls may be recorded

Fax: 01962 841 365

e-mail: benefits@winchester.gov.uk

A private interview room is available at the City Offices.

Application for a Pre-Tenancy Determination

Please answer all the questions and give as much information as you can. You will need to ask the Landlord or Property Agent to provide some of the information and to sign the form and return it to us.

1. Please give your details:

Surname:

First & other names:

2. Please give the address (including any flat or room number) of the property that you want a Pre-Tenancy Determination for:-

Postcode:

3. Your present address:

Postcode: *(essential information)*

Tel Number: E-mail address:

4. Please give details of the proposed tenancy. You may need to ask the prospective landlord for this information.

(a) How much is the total rent? £

(b) (i) How often will you pay this amount?

Once a week/once every two weeks/once a month/other
(Please write which)

(ii) If paid weekly, over how many weeks in the year is it paid eg. 52 weeks or a lesser number if you receive rent free weeks. *(Please write how many)*

(c) What sort of tenancy will it be? Shorthold/Assured shorthold/other *(Please write which)*

(d) How long will the tenancy last?

(e) Are any services or amenities provided?
(Please write Yes or No)

If Yes, please give details below (tick in box as appropriate)

Services/Amenities

	(Included in rent)	(NOT included in rent)
Cleaning of common areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting of common parts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lift	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Porter or estate staff/gardening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laundry equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laundering by landlord	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cleaning of accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting of accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hot water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water charges/rates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gas/Electricity for cooking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counselling and Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(f) Is the accommodation furnished?

(Please write Yes or No)

If Yes, is it: Fully Furnished

(Please write Yes or No)

Is it Partly Furnished

(Please write Yes or No)

(g) Does the rent include any money for meals?

(Please write Yes or No)

If Yes, please give details below

Meal	Yes	No
Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evening Meal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Who is the Landlord or Agent of the property?

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone Number:

You will need to get the prospective Landlord/Agent to sign the declaration at item 11

6(a) Type of property *Yes or No (Y/N)*

Detached house	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bedsit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detached bungalow	<input type="checkbox"/>	Terraced house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flat in a block	<input type="checkbox"/>	Terraced bungalow	<input type="checkbox"/>
Semi-detached house	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flat in a house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Semi-detached bungalow	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hostel	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flat over shop(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maisonette	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Number of floors in whole building:

(b)(i) If it is a room(s) - how many room(s) do you occupy?

(b) (ii) If more than one room - how many are:

Bedrooms:

Living Rooms (excluding bathrooms and kitchens):

(b) (iii) Give location of room(s):

Front: Yes/No Centre: Yes/No Rear: Yes/No

(c) On which floor is your private accommodation :-

	Yes	No
All floors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
First	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Second	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Third	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(d) Please indicate the **number** of rooms in the property by putting a number in the appropriate box.

Please Do Not Tick the Boxes.

	Whole house	Sole use included in tenancy	Shared use included in tenancy
Living rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bedrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kitchens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bathrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bed-sits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TOTAL NUMBER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(e) Does the accommodation have central heating?

(Please write Yes or No)

(f) Does the rent include the use of a garage?

(Please write Yes or No)

7. Please give details of any other people who will be living with you if you take on this new tenancy

Name	Relationship to you	Sex (M/F)	Age	Date of Birth
Myself	Applicant			

8. Will this be a joint tenancy with any other person(s)? *(Please write Yes or No)*

If Yes, please give their name(s) below and state relationship to you (if any):

Name	Relationship to you

9. Are you getting housing benefit at the moment? *(Please write Yes or No)*

10. Are you single and under 25 years of age? *(Please write Yes or No)*

11. Ask the Landlord or Property agent to complete this declaration

I am considering granting a tenancy on the above dwelling and give my consent for an inspection of the property/premises to be carried out by the Rent Service.

Signed:

Print name:

12. Please complete this declaration yourself

I am considering renting the property described on this application form and I intend to apply for housing benefit.

Signed:

Print name:

Date:

For office use

A. Young individual single room rent required: **Yes/No**

B. Date of application to Local Authority:

C. Local Authority reference:

Local Authority date stamp

When you have completed all the questions on this form, take it or send it to ...

Finance Directorate
Benefits Section
Winchester City Council
Colebrook Street
Winchester
SO23 9LJ

Tel: 01962 848 539
Telephone calls may be recorded

Fax: 01962 841 365
e-mail: benefits@winchester.gov.uk

Notes:

1. A Pre-Tenancy determination will tell you the maximum rent which housing benefit could meet for the property. It does not tell you how much housing benefit you will get. This will depend on your other circumstances (for example, your income and the size of your family).
2. If you are single and under 25 years of age it is more than likely that your maximum rent will be restricted to the average cost of non self contained accommodation in the area to which you are thinking of moving.
3. You will need to claim housing benefit separately, once you have received the Pre-Tenancy Determination and have decided that you want to take up the tenancy. You can get a housing benefit claim form from the address above.