

# Housing benefit: Under 35s

**This factsheet considers what housing benefit you might get if you are single, rent your home from a private landlord and are aged under 35.**

Housing benefit can help you pay the rent on your home. You don't need to be receiving other benefits to be eligible. You can also get housing benefit if you are working but have a low income.

The amount of housing benefit you will get mainly depends on your income and your rent, and on rules that limit the maximum housing benefit you can receive. If you rent your home from a private landlord, the maximum you can get is limited to the local housing allowance (LHA) rates for the area in which you live. The maximum rate varies from area to area. Your local council can tell you what the LHA rates are for your area, or you can find out on the LHA Direct page on the Directgov website ([www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)).

## Shared accommodation rate

If you are under 35 and single, the maximum housing benefit you can receive is the LHA shared accommodation rate (the rate for a room in a shared house). This is the case even if you rent a house or flat of your own. If you could afford the rent when you moved in and you have not claimed housing benefit in the past year, this restriction will not apply for the first 13 weeks of your claim.

## Exceptions to the rule

The shared accommodation rate will also not apply if you live alone and:

- you are under 22 and have spent time in care since your 16th birthday
- you have a severe disability
- you are entitled to an extra bedroom for a non-resident carer
- you have spent at least three months in a hostel for homeless people (this can include women's refuges and drug rehab hostels, and doesn't have to be in one stay) and have accepted resettlement support (25- to 34-year-olds only)
- you have left prison and you are subject to 'Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements' (25- to 34-year-olds only).

## If you are aged 25 to 34

Before 1 January 2012, the shared accommodation rate only applied to people under 25. If you are aged between 25 and 34 and you were already living in privately rented self-contained accommodation, you will be affected. If you claimed housing benefit:

- first on or after 1 April 2011, it will be reduced to the shared accommodation rate on the first anniversary of your claim
- before 1 April 2011, it will be reduced to the shared accommodation rate nine months after the first anniversary of your claim that falls on or after 1 April 2011
- and your 25<sup>th</sup> birthday is after 31 March 2011 and before 1 January 2012, your benefit will not be reduced to the shared accommodation rate until your 26<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Your local council will be able to tell you how much benefit you may lose, and when. If this causes you hardship, you can claim a discretionary housing payment from the council, but you cannot rely on getting this help.

## Other situations

If you either share your accommodation with your partner, have a child who lives with you, or rent from a housing association or the council, the shared accommodation rate will not apply to you.

## Students

Most people can claim housing benefit but you may not be entitled to it if you are a full-time student.

## Further advice

You can get further advice from Shelter's free\* housing advice helpline (0808 800 4444), a local Shelter advice service or Citizens Advice bureau, or by visiting [shelter.org.uk/advice](http://shelter.org.uk/advice)

\* Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.\* Calls are free from UK landlines

A Shelter and Citizens Advice service. DCLG funded.



Registered charity number 279057.

# Shelter

Registered charity in England and Wales (263710) and in Scotland (SC002327).



## Note for advisers

Information contained in this publication is correct at the time of going to press. Please check details before use.