

Important changes to Housing Benefit– Under 35's

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Changes to Housing Benefit from 01 April 19

If you are on low income, you can apply for **Housing Benefit (HB)** to help pay towards your rent.

HB can currently pay for part or all of your rent, this depends on your income and circumstances.

From **01 April 2019**, the Government has announced that the amount of benefit you can receive will be capped to a new rate called **Local Housing Allowance (LHA.)** – For HB claimants, this will apply to all new tenancies from **1st April 16** onwards – however, if you claim Universal Credit, LHA will apply regardless of when your tenancy started.

LHA is a way of working out how much housing benefit you can get to help pay the rent.

Who is affected?

If you are single* and under 35 years:

- The maximum **LHA** you can receive will be **£50.13** per week
- This is classed as a Shared Accommodation Rate (**SAR**)

* The Government will class you as a single occupant even if you have dependents but don't receive Child Benefit, for example, you may have shared access to children but the Child Benefit is paid to another person.

Who is exempt?

There are a number of exemptions from the shared rate for under 35's. These include:

- Couples or those with dependent children,
- Foster carers,
- Those in need of a second bedroom for medical reasons,
- Those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or carers allowance,
- Those over 25 who have lived in homeless accommodation for over 13 weeks and have agreed to receive support,
- And former looked-after children aged 18-21.
- If your property is classified as exempt.

How does this affect my rent?

For example, From April 2019:

- If your rent was charged at £100 per week
- You would receive £50.13 per week in Local Housing Allowance
- **Leaving a shortfall of £49.87 per week**

Previously you may have been awarded the full HB to pay rent, with the new LHA, you will be expected to pay the shortfall.

What if I'm struggling to pay rent?

If you are experiencing financial problems which is affecting your rent, please contact our **Money Advice Team** on **01204 329868** as soon as possible so we can help you. See overleaf for additional financial support and benefits you can apply for.

Another solution is to get back into work if you are currently unemployed. We have an excellent support package in place, see overleaf for more details.

I'm currently working– how does this affect me?

If you're under 35, single and you are working and not claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit this won't affect you at present.

If however, if circumstances change in the future, especially if you are out of work, it is important that you inform us straight away, especially if you are unable to pay your rent.

From April 19, the maximum claim towards rent will be **£50.13** a week which will not be enough to pay your rent in full.

Back to work support

If you are not in work, we offer an excellent back to work support programme which provides 121 support and advice with things like:

- Creating a new CV
- Confidence and skill building
- Access to free training & free training grants
- Help with applying for jobs, applications and job offers

To find your nearest UCAN centre, ring us on **01204 328000** or email us:

WorkClub@boltonathome.org.uk

What other support is available?

If you need financial help towards your rent, you can apply to **Bolton Councils Discretionary Housing Payment fund** – to make a claim, you can contact them:

- **By Phone:** - 01204 331599
- **In person:** One stop shop Bolton
- **Email:** council.tax@bolton.gov.uk
- **Online:** <http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/pages/Discretionaryhousingpayments.aspx>

Ring our **Money Advice Team** on **01204 329868** if you need support completing the Discretionary Housing Payment form.

Other Help and Support

You are responsible for ensuring that your rent is paid on time. If you're finding it hard to make ends meet, please remember that this is a priority debt and you can lose your home if you don't keep up with rent payments.

- **Bolton at Home Tenant's** - you can contact our **Money Advice Team** on **01204 329868** and we will support you with your discretionary fund application. We also offer budgeting support and one 2 one support on all other money matters.
- **Back to work Support** - To find your nearest UCAN centre, ring us on **01204 328000** or email us WorkClub@boltonathome.org.uk
- **Citizens Advice** – ask us when your local drop in session is held at our UCAN Centers – ring us on **01204 328000**
- **Bolton's Money Skills** – offer budgeting support **01204 33 2916**