

## What do we do with services included in your rent?

If your rent includes amounts for things like meals or fuel, the Rent Service will usually take them into account when they tell us what rent to use. Sometimes, the Rent Service may tell us that the claim-related rent and the local reference rent include meals. If they do, we have to take an amount off your maximum rent for the meals. The Government sets the amount we have to take out of your rent for meals. This amount normally changes every year. The amount we take will depend on what meals you get and the size of your family.

## Our other leaflets about housing benefit and council tax reduction are:

- 1 How we work out your housing benefit and council tax reduction
- 3 What to do if you think your housing benefit/council tax reduction decision is wrong
- 4 Backdating housing benefit/council tax reduction
- 5 Non-dependants

Our leaflets

Local Housing Allowance - A guide for tenants

Local Housing Allowance - A guide for landlords

give more information about the Local Housing Allowance scheme.

## Here are the ways you can get in touch with us

### Opening hours:

We are open from Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm.

### By letter:

Benefits Section, Corporate and Community Services Department, Barrhead Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire G78 1SY.

### By phone or fax:

Phone: 0141 577 3002

Fax: 0141 577 3255

### In person:

Visit Customer Service Officers at Barrhead Council Offices, Main Street, Barrhead and at Council Headquarters, Eastwood Park, Rouken Glen Road, Giffnock, G46 6UG (no appointment necessary).

### E-mail:

benefits@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

(For general enquiries only.)

### Website:

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/benefits

### Income Maximisation:

Income Maximisation staff can carry out a free benefits health check to ensure you are receiving the correct benefits. Staff will assist you with completing forms.

Phone: 0141 577 3071

Email: benefithealthcheck@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

and quote benefits health check.

### Money Advice:

The Money Advice Team offers free, confidential, professional and practical advice on money matters. You can visit them at the Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead

or call free on 0800 052 1023

or email money@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

or text "money and your name" to Freetext 80800

This leaflet can be provided in other languages and is available in alternative formats such as large print or Braille.

Please contact Customer First on 0141 577 3001.

इस सूचना-पत्र में उल्लेखित सूचना यदि आप हिन्दी अनुवाद में चाहे तो कृपया सम्पर्क करें।

如果您想得到该资料所含信息的译文，请联系：

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਲੀਫਲੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਿਥੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ اس لیفلٹ میں درج معلومات کا ترجمہ اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو ہم سے رابطہ کریں

# Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction



## 2

## The rent we use to work out your housing benefit



6th edition valid from April 2015

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/benefits

## The rent we use to work out your Housing Benefit

Everybody who rents accommodation from a private landlord and claims on or after 7th April 2008 will have their Housing Benefit worked out using Local Housing Allowance. If you are already receiving Housing Benefit, the rules will not change until you change your address or have break in your claim for a week or more.

### Local Housing Allowance does not affect you if:

- your home is rented from East Renfrewshire Council
- your home is rented from a Registered Social Landlord
- you live in a caravan, mobile home or houseboat
- you live in some supported accommodation
- your tenancy started before 2nd January 1989
- the Rent Officer has decided that a large part of the rent you pay is for board and attendance.

**If you rent your home from a private landlord and if you are in one of the above groups, your Housing Benefit will continue to be worked out under the existing rules.** We will ask the Rent Service to decide how much rent we can use to work out your Housing Benefit.

If you rent your home from either the council or a housing association we will use the rent your landlord charges you. From April 2013, if you live in a council or housing association home and you have one or more "spare" bedrooms your housing benefit may be reduced. This could affect you:

- if you are 16 up until state retirement age
- even if you only get a small amount of housing benefit for example if you are working
- even if you are sick or disabled

If you use extra services for things like personal care or a garage we cannot include these things in the rent we use to work out your housing benefit.

For more information please look for our welfare reform leaflet or go to the website at:

[www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/housingbenefit](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/housingbenefit)

## The Rent Service

Normally we have to ask the Rent Service to decide the rent we should use to work out your Housing Benefit. The Rent Service look at whether your rent is more than a reasonable rent for your home. Even if they think your rent is reasonable, they will then look at whether it is more than the rent for similar properties in the area. If the Rent Service think your home is too large for your family, they will also look at whether you could rent somewhere smaller and cheaper. If we have asked the Rent Service to look at your rent on or after 3 April 2000, they will give us a 'claim-related rent'.

The claim-related rent is the lowest rent they think we should use for the property you are renting. The Rent Service may also give us a 'local reference rent'. This is the average rent for the type of property you need. From 1 January 2012, all tenants under 35 and who live on their own, will be classed as a 'young individual' and the Rent Service will give us 'single-room rent'. This is the average rent in the area for a room in a house where you would share a living room, a kitchen and a bathroom but you would not get any meals. The Rent Service may need to visit you to decide what rent we should use to work out your Housing Benefit.

### How do we work out your Housing Benefit from these rent figures?

We use the figures the Rent Service give us to decide how much of your rent Housing Benefit can cover. The amount we can cover is called your 'maximum rent'. If the Rent Service have given us a single-room rent, we have to use this figure as your maximum rent. If the Rent Service have given us a local reference rent, and you moved into your home on or after 7 October 1997, your maximum rent will be the local reference rent. If you moved into your home before 7 October 1997, you are usually covered by different rules. We still use the local reference rent, but we add on half the difference between that figure and the claim-related rent.

### Here is an example of how this works.

The claim-related rent is:	£70
The local reference rent is:	£50
Half of the difference between the claim-related rent and the local reference rent is:	£10 (£70 - £50 = £20 ÷ 2 = £10)
So the maximum rent is:	£60

If the Rent Service do not give us a single-room rent or a local reference rent for your home, your maximum rent will be the claim-related rent.

### What if you don't agree with your maximum rent?

If you don't agree with your maximum rent, you should write and tell us. If you want us to, we can ask the Rent Service to look at your rent again. The Rent Service could decide one of three things.

- They could stick with the decision they first made
- They could change their decision and give us a higher rent.
- They could change their decision and give us a lower rent.

If they decide to give us a lower rent, we would have to use this figure to work out your Housing Benefit.

If you don't want us to ask the Rent Service to look at your rent again but you still want more benefit, you can ask us to pay you Discretionary Housing Payments. But, we can only pay you Discretionary Housing Payments if you are suffering hardship and your circumstances are unusual.

If you don't agree with your maximum rent, you must write to us within one month of getting our letter about your Housing Benefit.

### What if your rent goes up?

Once you have agreed with the decision the Rent Service have made, we cannot normally ask them to look at your rent again for at least a year. But, if your rent goes up in that time, you should still tell us. In special cases, we may be able to ask the Rent Service to look at your rent again straight away. But we will need to know why your rent has gone up.