

## **The size of my household has changed. What will happen to my housing benefit?**

If someone moves in or out of your household, you must tell us right away. We will change your maximum housing benefit to the correct LHA rate for the new size of your household.

If someone in your household has a birthday that will affect the LHA rate (for example, when a child turns 16), we may also need to change your LHA as that person may need an extra room.

## **I am moving to a new home. How can I find out what my maximum housing benefit will be?**

You will need to find out the LHA rates for the broad rental market area you are looking to move into. We will publish the LHA rates on both our council website and on the television screens in the reception areas of Barrhead and Eastwood Park council offices.

You will then need to work out how many bedrooms your household needs, based on the conditions in the 'number of rooms' section. This is not the number of rooms necessarily in the property, but the number of rooms your household will need. The Local Housing Allowance rate for that number of rooms in the broad rental market area will be the maximum housing benefit you will receive, regardless of how much the rent you have to pay.

When you move home, we will apply the relevant LHA for your new property.

## **I don't agree with the Local Housing Allowance rate. Can I appeal?**

No, it is not possible to appeal against the LHA rate. This is because the level is set for the whole BRMA.

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

### **Opening hours:**

We are open 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 by fax:**

Phone: 0141 577 3002

Fax: 0141 577 3255

### **In person:**

Visit Customer Service Officers at Barrhead Council Offices, Main Street, Barrhead, G78 1SY and at Council Headquarters, Eastwood Park, Rouken Glen Road, Giffnock G46 6UG (no appointment necessary).

### **E-mail:**

benefits@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

### **Website:**

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/localhousingallowance

### **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 ਵਿੱਚ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਇਥੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

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

# **Local Housing Allowance**



## **A guide for tenants**



7th edition valid from April 2015

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/localhousingallowance

## **What is Local Housing Allowance?**

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) was introduced in April 2008 as the method used to work out the maximum housing benefit to be awarded to tenants who rent from a private landlord. The amount that tenants receive will depend upon their income, capital and savings.

From April 2013 LHA rates will only be reviewed on an annual basis. Rates will be published on our council website page at [www.eastrenfrewshirecouncil/localhousingallowance](http://www.eastrenfrewshirecouncil/localhousingallowance)

## **Who does LHA apply to?**

Everybody who rented accommodation from a private landlord and claimed on or after 7 April 2008 has their housing benefit worked out using LHA. If you are already receiving housing benefit, the rules will not change until you change your address or you have a break in your claim for one week or more.

Local Housing Allowance does not affect you if:

- your home is rented from East Renfrewshire Council
- you rent your home from a registered social landlord
- you live in a caravan, mobile home or houseboat
- you live in certain supported accommodation
- your tenancy started before 2 January 1989
- the rent officer has decided that a large part of the rent your tenant pays is for board and attendance.

If you rent your home from a private landlord and are in one of these above groups your housing benefit will continue to be worked out under the rules prior to 7 April 2008.

## **I am already receiving housing benefit. Will my housing benefit change?**

Your benefit will continue to be calculated in the same way. Your benefit entitlement may change following a change in your circumstances and/or a change in the rent officer's decision regarding what is a fair rent for your property. If you move address or stop claiming housing benefit for one week or more, we will work out your new claim under LHA rules.

## **How will LHA work?**

The rent service has divided the country into broad rental market area (BRMAs). These areas are made up of a number of neighbourhoods. In each area there will be a wide mix of properties located within a reasonable distance of various public facilities such as health, education, leisure, personal banking and shopping.

## **Broad rental market areas**

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East Renfrewshire has two broad rental market areas:

- Renfrewshire/Inverclyde for Barrhead, Neilston and Uplawmoor areas
- Greater Glasgow for all other East Renfrewshire areas

From April 2013 LHA rates will only be reviewed on an annual basis.

The council publishes the LHA rates for both BRMAs on our council website and on the reception television screens in Barrhead and Eastwood council offices.

## **Number of rooms**

We will decide how many rooms, according to the housing benefit rules, you will need. If you live in one room and share some facilities (for example a kitchen or a bathroom) with other people, there is a special Local Housing Allowance rate. From 1 January 2012, if you are a tenant aged under 35 and live on your own, you will also be paid this rate.

If this rate does not apply to you, we will work out the number of rooms as shown below.

One bedroom for the following:

- A couple
- Someone who is 16 or over
- Two children of the same sex until they are 16
- Two children who are younger than 10
- A child (someone under 16)

Each person is only counted once, in the first group that applies to them.

We do not count everyone when working out how many rooms you need. We count you and your partner, as well as any children or young people you are responsible for. If you have any other adults who are not boarders or lodgers, we also count those. However, we do not count joint tenants.

From 1 April 2011 we will take into account the cost of an extra bedroom if the tenant or their partner needs overnight care and there is a bedroom in the property that the carer uses for overnight stays as part of caring for them. (This applies to all relevant tenants, whether they are under the LHA rules or not.)

## **Larger families who need more than four bedrooms**

From 1 April 2011 the maximum rate LHA payable will be limited to the four bedroom rate appropriate for the BRMA where you live.

## **The rent is higher than the Local Housing Allowance.**

The maximum benefit you will receive is the LHA rate for the size of your household, in your area, for the month you claim in. If your rent is more than this figure, you will need to make up this shortfall yourself.

If you are having difficulties with this, please contact our Money Advice team on 0141 577 8420 or East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau on 0141 881 2032.

## **If my rent increases, will my Local Housing Allowance also increase?**

From April 2013, if your rent increases or decreases your housing benefit will be reassessed. The maximum housing benefit we will pay will be the LHA rate for the size of your household.

## **I would like housing benefit paid to my landlord. Is this possible?**

Under LHA, we will pay your housing benefit direct to you, either into a bank account or by cheque. It is your responsibility to make sure you pay the right amount of rent at the right time. From 1 April 2011, we can make payments straight to your landlord if we think this will help you keep your existing tenancy or get a new tenancy. We will only do this if we think you will have difficulty managing your rent, if you are behind with your rent or if we do not think you will pay your rent. We will make a decision on every case individually and may ask you to provide us with reasons and evidence for why we should pay your landlord. If you would like more help with this, contact us on 0141 577 3002 or our Money Advice team on 0141 577 8420, East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau on 0141 881 2032.