

Local Housing Allowance

Information for Tenants



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



From April 2008, as part of the Government's Financial Inclusion Policy there will be a change to the way we pay Housing Benefit. This will be known as Local Housing Allowance (LHA). This change will affect people who live in privately rented accommodation (but not Housing Associations or Registered Social Landlords) who make a new claim for Housing Benefit, change address to a private rented tenancy or reclaim benefit after a break in claim. LHA is a flat rate allowance towards rent costs, calculated on the basis of the circumstances of the tenant (such as family size) and the area they live in. The scheme has been designed to pay the same amount to tenants with similar circumstances living in the same area. It is intended that tenants will trade between quality and price of their accommodation.

Local Housing Allowance - Rights and Responsibilities

For example, if your rent is less than the 'Rent Service determined' LHA for the type of property you need you will be able to keep any extra money up to a maximum of £15. However, if your rent is more than the LHA you will normally have to pay the extra yourself.

You will not be affected by these changes if:

- You rent your property from the council
- Your landlord is a housing association
- Your rent has been registered as a 'fair rent'
- Your tenancy started before 1989
- You live somewhere where you are provided with care, support or supervision
- You live in a caravan, mobile home or house boat.

The benefit scheme is being changed to make it fairer and easier. As well as some people receiving more money, in most cases LHA will be paid directly to tenants unless considered vulnerable. In such cases payments will be made to the landlord. In order to protect vulnerable customers we will use our discretion in deciding whether Housing Benefit should be paid direct to the landlord.

LHA is based on the number of bedrooms that a household needs and not the number of rooms in the property. The allowances are set by The Rent Service each month and are available from the Council's web site, as well as being published in the Hub. These are the maximum amounts that customers will be entitled to depending on income, savings and circumstances. The claim is based on the rate applicable for the month the claim is made and will be reviewed after a year unless there is a change in circumstances.

You can obtain further details from the Department for Work and Pensions website.

This leaflet can be provided in large print, braille, CD, audio tape and computer disc.

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