

Resident Summary

Claiming Housing Benefit

Version: 08/2007

Introduction

This summary provides you with information about Housing Benefit. You may be able to claim this benefit if you're on a low income and need financial help to pay all or part of your rent.

This summary applies to all rented tenants with:

- Southern Housing Group Ltd, and;
- Southern Home Ownership Ltd.

Homeowners may also be able to claim financial assistance through benefit.

For more information, please contact the Housing Benefit office at your local council.

Who can get Housing Benefit?

You may get Housing Benefit if you pay rent and your income and savings are below a certain level. If you are a shared owner and pay rent on part of your home you may be eligible for housing benefit on the rental element.

If you live with a partner or civil partner only one of you can get Housing Benefit.

How much do you get?

How much you get depends on your personal and financial circumstances. The most Housing Benefit you can get is the same as your 'eligible' rent. This is the amount used to work out your benefit but may not be the same as your full rent. We will always clearly state in our charges what part of the rent and service charge is eligible for Housing Benefit.

What is 'eligible' rent?

Eligible rent includes:

- rent for the accommodation

- some charges for services, such as a lifts, communal laundry facilities or play areas

Even if it's included in your rent, you won't get any Housing Benefit for things such as charges for heating and water.

How it's paid

Housing benefit is usually paid straight into your rent account but it may also be paid direct to you if you prefer. If you owe us more than eight weeks rent we can ask for it to be paid direct to us.

Effect on your other benefits

Housing Benefit won't affect any of your other benefits.

How you can claim

Please contact your local council if you would like to claim housing benefit. They will ask you to complete a claim form.

It can take several weeks before you hear the result of your claim. In the meantime, we will still be charging you rent. You must start making payments towards your rent as soon as you move in, or you will owe us money and we will contact you about it.

When you hear how much Housing Benefit you are being awarded, you will know how much of your weekly rent will be covered and how much you have to find yourself. Contact the Customer Service Centre Income Recovery Team if a back payment of Housing Benefit will not cover everything you owe.

What if my circumstances change?

You must tell your local council if your circumstances change as this may affect your housing benefit. Such changes may include a change in your income, taking in a lodger, or a

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change in circumstance of someone else in your household.

If you don't tell them as soon as a change happens, they can backdate any changes when they do find out. You could end up owing a large sum of money.

If the housing benefit has already been paid to us directly, it will have to be repaid, and this will put you in serious breach of your tenancy which may put your home at risk.

Your responsibilities

Paying your rent on time is still your responsibility, even if some or all of it comes from Housing Benefit.

It is up to you to:

- get your claim in on time
- send the right information to the Housing Benefit office
- tell the council about any change in your circumstance

- pay in full and on time, any part of the rent and other charges that are down to you
- check your rent position regularly to ensure you are receiving the Housing Benefit you believe you are entitled to.

Further information

If you would like any more information on this or any of our other policies please contact us using the details below.

Owner of the version: PST

Date of next review: TBC

Contact us

If you live anywhere in the UK except the Isle of Wight, phone us on **0300 303 1771**

If you live on the Isle of Wight, phone us on **0300 303 1772**

All residents

Service Centre opening hours
8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday

Email us at
service.centre@shgroup.org.uk

Write to us at **Service Centre,
Southern Housing Group,
PO Box 643, Horsham RH12 1XJ**

Visit our website at
www.shgroup.org.uk

For help with translations, or if a large type, Braille or audio summary would be useful, please contact the Service Centre.

Arabic

لمساعدتك في الترجمة يرجى الاتصال بمركز الخدمة على هاتف 0300 303 1771.

Bengali

অনুবাদ সাহায্য পেতে হলে সার্ভিস সেন্টারে 0300 303 1682 নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

French

Si vous souhaitez recevoir de l'aide avec vos traductions, appelez le 0300 303 1771.

Somali

Wixii ah caawimo turjumaan ka soo wac Xarunta Adeegga telefoonka 0300 303 1771.

Spanish

Si necesita que le ayudemos con alguna traducción, llámenos al 0300 303 1771.

Turkish

Tercüme konusunda yardım için 0300 303 1683 'den Hizmet Merkezi'ni arayın.