

# Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Changes

FROM 1 APRIL 2019

## These changes may affect you if:

- You are still on Housing Benefit from 1 April 2019 **and**
- You have signed a new or renewed tenancy from 1 April 2016\*
- **Or**, you are on Universal Credit from 1 April 2019, no matter when you signed your tenancy agreement.

\*Please note the rules for supported housing tenancies are different.

## What are the changes?

The Government has decided that the amount you can claim to help pay your rent should be the same as private sector tenants, called the Local Housing Allowance (LHA).

LHA amounts depend on the size of your household and are set for each local area. They can be seen here <http://lha-direct.voia.gov.uk/Search.aspx> or you can ask your local council.

## 'Shared Accommodation Rate' for under 35 years old

The Local Housing Allowance rules state that if you are under 35, single and have no dependent children living with you, the maximum you can claim in Housing Benefit is the 'shared accommodation rate', even if you live alone (there are some exceptions).

- The Government has decided this will apply to social sector tenants who want to claim Housing Benefit or Universal Credit to help pay their rent.

## This rule may affect you if:

- After 1 April 2019 you are still under 35, are on Housing Benefit **and**
- You have signed a new or renewed tenancy from 1 April 2016\*

- **Or**, after 1 April 2019 you are still under 35 and on Universal Credit, no matter when your tenancy started.

\*Please note the rules for supported housing tenancies are different.

## How could this affect me?

The amount of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit you receive to help pay your rent could be reduced, so it may not cover your full rent.

If this happens, you will have to pay the difference from your other income, whether it's benefits or wages.

## Will I also have to pay for any spare rooms?

If you are working age and have spare bedrooms you may already have a reduction in your Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

From 1 April 2019 you will be affected either by the new rules above or by the spare bedrooms rules. Your Housing Benefit or Universal Credit won't be reduced twice.

## What do I need to do now?

### If you think these rules will affect you:

- Check if your Together Housing rent is higher than the Local Housing Allowance amounts for private rented sector tenants in your area.
- If it is, consider how you will pay your full rent.

\*Please note the rules for supported housing tenancies are different.

## Please get in touch if you need more help:

WAKEFIELD	0300 555 5561
ROSSENDALE	0300 555 5556
COLNE	0300 555 5559
PENDLETON	0300 5555567
CALDERDALE / SHEFFIELD	0300 555 5557/8
BLACKBURN	0300 555 5560