



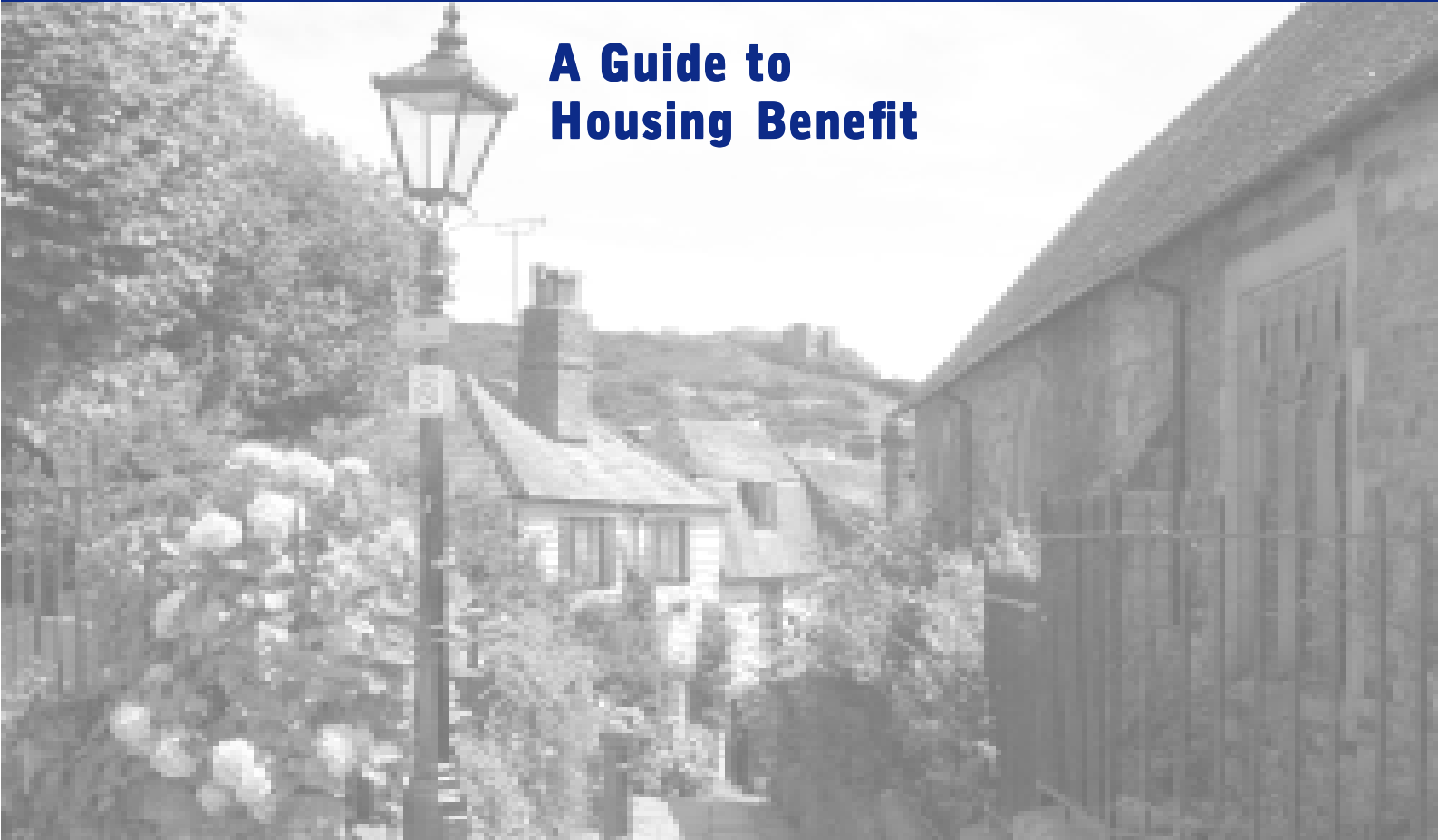
Wealden
District Council


Lewes District Council
www.lewes.gov.uk


Eastbourne
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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A Guide to Housing Benefit



What is Housing Benefit?

A rent payment available to people on low incomes. If you pay rent to a Registered Social Landlord (a housing association) or private landlord, it's called a Rent Allowance. If you're a council tenant, it is called a Rent Rebate.

Who can claim?

If you need to pay rent for your accommodation and you live in the property as your main home, you can claim. This applies to:

- Pensioners
- Low wage earners
- Lone parents
- People on Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance (IB)
- People with disabilities
- Single people
- Couples
- People on Incapacity Benefit

How do I claim?

By completing an application form. You'll be asked to provide proof of ALL your income and savings; proof of the rent you're being charged; proof of your identity and National Insurance Number. However, if you are getting a Pension Credit then the notification letter from the Pension Service together with proof of your identity and National Insurance Number for both you and your partner (if applicable) will be sufficient.

NB: All documents provided must be originals, we won't accept photocopies.

How do you decide if I qualify for help?

We take into account:

- Your income
- Your savings
- The size of your family
- Income received from anyone else who lives with you e.g. grown-up children or parents
- Your rent liability

We don't take into account:

- Attendance Allowance
- Mobility Allowance
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance

and some authorities don't take into account certain elements of War Pensions, War Widows pension or War disablement pensions. Check with your local office for further details.

Even though they're not taken into account, you must still tell us about them. When you receive certain benefits, they can affect the calculation by awarding you extra allowances which can lead to more benefit.

Savings/Capital

- Money in a bank or building society account
- National Savings Certificates
- Shares
- Unit trusts
- Income bonds

There are different rules for savings depending on your age:

Under 60 years: Savings up to £3,000 are ignored

Over 60 years: Savings up to £6,000 are ignored

Maximum savings: £16,000

NB There are some cases when pensioners in receipt of a guaranteed credit may have more than £16,000.

Any savings/capital you have over the above amounts are treated as follows.

Non-pensioners

For every £250 in part or whole that you have, a tariff income of £1 is added to your income for the calculation. Example, a 55 year old with savings of £6,800 would attract a tariff income of £7.

Pensioners

For every £500 in part or whole that you have, a tariff income of £1 is added to your income for the calculation. Example, a 65 year old with savings of £6,800 would attract a tariff income of £2.

Please note that you must tell us about all of your savings no matter how much or how little they are. You must also provide proof.

Your Family

Every April central government sets an 'applicable amount'. This is a weekly figure which represents the minimum amount that you can live on. It varies according to your status (single or couple); whether you have any children; whether you're sick or disabled. The more your income is above the applicable amount the less benefit you'll receive.

Income from other Household Members

The Benefit Regulations assume that anyone who lives in your home aged 18 or over (other than your partner or persons living in your home and paying you rent) is making a contribution to your household costs and is classed as a 'non-dependant'. This means that, in most cases, a deduction will be made from your benefit. The amount of the deduction depends on the non-dependant's : -

- Age
- Income
- Circumstances

Where a deduction applies, it will be made whether or not the non-dependant makes a contribution!

Your Rent Liability

If you rent your property and the amount you pay includes a service charge you should know that some charges are not eligible for Housing Benefit. A deduction will be made from your benefit if your rent includes:

- Heating (personal)
- Lighting (personal)
- Hot water (personal)
- Fuel for cooking
- Meals
- Cleaning
- Laundry
- Leisure items
- Water charges

Charges you can get help with include:

- Communal cleaning
- Communal heating
- Communal lighting

You should also be aware that if you rent your accommodation from a private landlord, we'll refer the rent to the Rent Service. The Rent Officer will determine the maximum level of Housing Benefit you should receive.

When you're looking at prospective rental accommodation please remember that the Rent Officer considers two main factors:

- Rent charged
- Size of accommodation

Rent Charged

The Rent Officer continually monitors the rentals marketplace . On receiving a referral, the Rent Officer either confirms that the rental amount is reasonable or determines the appropriate amount according to the market.

Size of Accommodation

The Rent Officer also looks at the number of rooms you and your family occupy. If the accommodation is larger than you need, the Rent Officer will advise us of the market rent for a similar but more appropriately-sized property. This will normally be the maximum amount of Housing Benefit you can be awarded.

For more information on the role of the Rent Officer, call 01273 829950.

When should I claim?

Housing Benefit is normally paid from the Monday after a claim is received.

If you think you may be entitled you must claim immediately or you may lose benefit.

Benefit will only be backdated if you can prove you had 'good cause' for not claiming earlier.

It's also important to provide all the information requested on the application form to prevent delays in processing your claim.

What about my Council Tax?

If you receive a Council Tax bill for the accommodation you occupy, you can apply for Council Tax Benefit. The application for Housing Benefit covers both rent and Council Tax, therefore one completed application is all that is needed. Any Council Tax Benefit will be credited to your account and a revised Council Tax bill issued.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EASTBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Housing Benefits Office:

1 Grove Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 4UG

Opening Hours:

Monday-Tuesday 0900 - 1700

Wednesday 0930 - 1700

Thursday-Friday 0900 - 1700

Telephone:

01323 410000 (General Queries)

Fax:

01323 415130

E-mail:

housing.benefits@eastbourne.gov.uk (General Queries)

HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Benefits Service:

41 Wellington Square, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 1PP

Opening Hours:

Monday-Thursday 0845 - 1630, Friday 0845 - 1600

Telephone:

01424 781900 (Helpline)

01424 781573 (Overpayments)

Fax:

01424 781541

E-mail:

benefits@hastings.gov.uk (General Queries)
overpayments@hastings.gov.uk (Overpayment Queries)
fraud@hastings.gov.uk (Reporting Fraud)

LEWES DISTRICT COUNCIL

Finance and Community Services:

Council Offices, Fisher Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2DQ

Opening Hours:

Monday-Thursday 0900 - 1645

Friday 0900 - 1615

Telephone:

01273 471600 (General Queries)

Fax:

01273 484066

E-mail:

Benefit@lewes.gov.uk (General Queries)

WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Benefits Service:

Vicarage Lane,

Hailsham,

East Sussex,

BN27 2AX

Opening Hours:

Monday-Friday 0830 - 1730

Telephone:

01323 443500 (General Queries)

Fax:

01323 443146

Email:

benefits@wealden.gov.uk