

Shelter

Housing benefit changes – timetable for implementation

NB: This information is accurate as of 16th June 2011 but is subject to change

DATE	REFORM	MECHANISM
From April 2011	<u>For new claimants</u> - the separate local housing allowance (LHA) rate for five bedroom homes will be abolished so that the maximum rate that can be claimed will be for four bedroom homes.	Secondary legislation (passed)
From April 2011	<u>For new claimants</u> - Claimants will no longer be able to claim a £15 weekly excess if their rent is lower than the amount of LHA they receive.	Secondary legislation (passed)
From April 2011	<u>For new claimants</u> - The percentile of market rents used to calculate Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates will be reduced from the median to the 30 th percentile of local rents.	Secondary legislation (passed)
From April 2011	<u>For new claimants</u> - The maximum LHA payable for each property size will be capped (so that LHA weekly rates cannot exceed £250 for a one bedroom property; £290 for a two bedroom property; £340 for a three bedroom property; and £400 for a four bedroom property).	Secondary legislation (passed)
From April 2011	<u>For existing claimants</u> – existing claimants will be affected by the above changes up to nine months after the date of the anniversary of their claim. ⁱ	Secondary legislation (passed)
From April 2011	An additional bedroom will be included within the size criteria used to assess housing benefit claims in the private rented sector where a disabled person or someone with a long term health condition has a proven need for overnight care.	Secondary legislation (passed)
From April 2011	Non-dependent deductions will be increased in stages over three years.	Via the annual up-rating (no legislation required).

From January 2012	The age threshold for claiming the Single Room Rate (SRR) will be increased from 25 to 35.	Secondary legislation (due to be laid in Parliament in summer 2011).
From 2012-13	Discretionary housing payments (DHP) will be increased from £10 million in 2011-12 to £40 million a year.	No legislation required.
From April 2013	HB will be restricted for working age claimants in the social rented sector who are occupying a larger property than their household size warrants. This is likely to apply to claimants with at least one spare bedroom.	Welfare Reform Bill (currently going through Parliament)
From April 2013	The maximum amount of benefits an out of work household can claim will be capped at approximately £500 per week (£26k per annum) for couples and lone parents and £350 per week for singles.	Welfare Reform Bill (currently going through Parliament)
From 2013	Introduction of the Universal Credit which will incorporate housing benefit for claimants in both the private and social rented sectors.	Welfare Reform Bill (currently going through Parliament)
From 2013/14	LHA rates will be up-rated by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rather than in reference to local rents.	Welfare Reform Bill (currently going through Parliament)

ⁱ Existing claimants will be affected earlier if they move or their household size changes. In these circumstances, only claimants who have their claim assessed before their anniversary date because they become eligible for a larger property will receive nine months transitional protection.

Claimants will not receive the full nine months transitional protection if they move or become eligible for a smaller property under the bedroom calculation during the nine months. Therefore some existing claimants may be affected well before January 2012.

Existing claimants will not receive nine months transitional protection from the loss of the £15 excess; they will lose the excess from the anniversary of their claim.