

Further information on changes to Housing Benefit

What are the changes? From 1 April 2013 The Government is introducing size limit rules into Housing Benefit for working age people renting from a local authority, a registered housing association or other registered social landlord.

The new rules will restrict the size of accommodation you can receive Housing Benefit for based on the number of people in your household. The new rules allow one bedroom for:

- every adult couple (married or unmarried)
- any other adult aged 16 or over any two children of the same sex aged under 16
- any two children aged under 10 any other child, (other than a foster child or child whose main home is elsewhere)
- a carer (or team of carers) who do not live with you but provide you or your partner with overnight care

How could you be affected?

It is possible that the amount of Housing Benefit you get to pay your rent and any service charges could go down.

If you are assessed under these rules as having more bedrooms than are necessary for your household you will be considered to be under-occupying that property.

If you are under-occupying there will be a reduction in your Housing Benefit.

To find out more about Housing and Council Tax Benefit call or visit our website

Cannock Chase Council 01543 464292
www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk
email **benefits@cannockchasedc.gov.uk**

Stafford Borough Council 01785 619478
www.staffordbc.gov.uk
email **benefits@staffordbc.gov.uk**

The amount allowed for rent and any service charges will be reduced by:

- 14% for under-occupancy by 1 bedroom
- 25% for under-occupancy by 2 bedrooms or more

If you are thinking of moving you need to consider these changes before renewing or making a new tenancy agreement.

You may be able to get a Discretionary Housing Payment to make up all or some of the reduction-contact the Benefit Service to find out more.

When will these changes take effect?

The new size limit rules are due to take effect on 1 April 2013.

The Benefit Service will write to anyone affected to alert them to the fact they may be under-occupying and to confirm the information they hold. They will then write again to confirm any reduction in Housing Benefit and how much the reduction will be, before any such reduction takes effect.

It is important that you start to consider what your options might be now and where necessary talk to your landlord or local authority.

Where to go for more Information

- The Citizens Advice service provides a wide range of advice. Contact your local citizens advice bureau or visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- Shelter offers confidential housing, welfare benefits and debt advice through a network of advice services;
- freephone Housing Advice Helpline on 0808 800 4444 8am-8pm Monday-Friday and 8am-5pm Saturday-Sunday and online at www.england.shelter.org.uk get advice www.shelter.org.uk
- Information about Housing Benefit can be found at www.direct.gov.uk



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