

## Local Housing Allowance – Information for Landlords

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is used to work out HB for private tenants. A LHA rate is included in the claim based on the number of bedrooms allowed for the tenant's household size. However if the rent is less than the weekly LHA rate, the maximum HB a tenant can receive is the same amount as their rent (they cannot get more money in HB than they pay in rent).

LHA rates are set for different types of accommodation in each local authority area. The rates range from a single room in a shared house up to properties with four bedrooms.

These rates are set every April by the Rent Officer Service Wales (part of the Housing Division of the Welsh Assembly Government). This service is totally independent from the local authority; therefore we have no control over the LHA rates set.

### Who will LHA apply to?

LHA applies to most private tenancies however it **does not** apply to:

- tenancies that started before 1989, or
- tenancies in caravans, mobile homes, houseboats and hostels
- some supported housing schemes
- tenancies where the Rent Officer has decided that a substantial part of the rent is for board and attendance

### The size criteria under LHA

The details of who lives with the tenant (the number of people who share the accommodation with them) are used to work out the number of bedrooms a tenant is entitled to – the number of living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens are not included in the calculation. One bedroom is allowed for each of the following:

- every adult couple (married or unmarried).
- any other adult aged 16 or over.
- any two children of the same gender aged under 16.
- any two children aged under 10.
- any other child, (other than a child whose main home is elsewhere)
- a carer who provides the claimant, their partner, a disabled child or non-dependant adult with overnight care (providing they have a spare bedroom for this purpose).
- a foster child/foster children (only one bedroom is allowed providing they have a spare bedroom for this purpose. The foster-carers must be approved).
- any non-dependant in the armed forces who is temporarily absent from their home (they must intend to return home) e.g. grown up son/daughter living with parents away on operations.
- a couple or disabled child who is unable to share a bedroom because of their severe disabilities as long as certain criteria are met. Please ask us for more information.

### Single people

Single people under the age of 35 will normally be entitled to the shared accommodation rate, whatever type of accommodation they live in unless they are covered by one of the exemptions. Please contact us if you need more information regarding the exemptions.

## **Childless couples**

Childless couples will be entitled to the one bedroom rate of LHA if they rent self contained accommodation. However, if they live in a shared house e.g. if they are a joint-tenant they will normally be entitled to the shared accommodation rate.

## **How will Housing Benefit be paid?**

In **most** cases we will pay your HB directly to the tenant, however, the Council will consider paying HB to the landlord in the following circumstances if:

- paying the landlord will assist to secure or retain the tenancy;
- the tenant is likely to have difficulty managing their financial affairs;
- It is improbable that the tenant will pay their rent. For example, if we are aware that they have consistently failed to pay the rent on past occasions without good reason;
- they have not paid part or all of their rent and the Council considers feels that it is in the best interests of efficient administration to pay the landlord;
- the tenant has left the accommodation with arrears owing to the landlord (in which case payment is limited to the level of the arrears).

Additionally the Council **must** pay the landlord if:

- the tenant has rent arrears of 8 weeks or more; or
- part of their entitlement to Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit is being paid direct to the Landlord or agent.

If you think your tenant has difficulty managing their affairs please advise them/their representative to contact us.

If you know your tenant is in receipt of HB and misses a rent payment you should contact us immediately so that we may review the payment arrangements.

Note - If we pay HB to the landlord it is the tenant's responsibility for paying the difference between the rent due and the HB we pay.

**WELSH TRANSLATION** - If you require a copy of this document in Welsh please contact us on the telephone numbers above.