

HOUSING BENEFIT

There have been many reforms to Housing Benefit over the last few years. These include restrictions to the Local Housing Allowance, which has reduced entitlement to Housing Benefit for those in privately rented accommodation.

If you live in social housing: a council or housing association property, and you claim housing benefit to help pay your rent you could also be affected by the “Bedroom Tax”.

The government has stated that most people will have a reduction to their Housing Benefit entitlement if they are under occupying their property.

How many bedrooms are you entitled to?

You are entitled to one bedroom for:

- Each adult couple
- Any other person aged 16 or over
- Two children of the same sex under the age of 16
- Two children under the age of 10 regardless of their sex
- Any other child
- A carer (who does not normally live with you) if you or your partner need overnight care

There are some groups of people who are exempt from the under-occupancy penalty (Bedroom tax). An extra room will be allowed for:

- An overnight carer
- Foster parents who are in between caring responsibilities
- Families who have a member absent because they are serving in the armed forces
- Supported Exempt (specified) accommodation
- A disabled child who has been medically assessed as needing their own room

- A disabled adult who cannot share a bedroom, or who needs a non-resident overnight carer

Social Housing - What happens if I have a spare bedroom?

If you have one 'spare' bedroom your housing benefit will be reduced by 14% of the rent you pay every week. If you have two or more spare bedrooms, you will lose 25%.

If your benefit is reduced, you will have to pay the difference between the housing benefit and your total weekly rent charge. You may be able to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment from the Local Authority if you are vulnerable and will struggle to make up this difference. These are however, only given for a short amount of time and are not a permanent solution (See Discretionary Housing Payments).

Southdown is a leading provider of care, support and housing services for vulnerable people across Sussex

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