

Housing Benefit and Reporting a Change in Circumstances

If you receive Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support and your circumstances change you must report this immediately.

Changes can affect the amount of benefit you're entitled to or how much council tax or housing benefit you need to pay. If you don't report the changes, you might not receive enough benefit or you may be paid too much and you may have to pay it back.

WHAT CHANGES DO I NEED TO REPORT?

Income, benefits and savings

If you or your partner's income stops, starts, goes up or goes down.

Income includes:

- wages,
- tax credits,
- maintenance payments
- pensions/occupational or works pensions

If you or your partner start or stop receiving benefits, for example:

- Income support
- Jobseekers allowance
- Employment and Support allowance
- Tax Credits
- Any other benefits

Savings – if you (or your partner's)

- Go over £6,000 for the first time
- Go over £16,000
- Go down significantly because you have had to spend some
- If you are working age, having savings of £6,000 or more, and they increase by £250 or more
- You or your partner reach qualifying age for state pension credit and your savings go over £10,000 for the first time

Household changes

You must report the following changes:

- Someone moves in or out
- Your partner moves in or moves out
- You get married
- You sublet
- Someone who lives with you has a change in income
- Any of your children leave school
- You stop receiving child benefit for any of your children
- When any of your children turn 18 – you must also report if they are staying at school, going to college, starting work or claiming benefits.
- Your partner dies:
 - If your partner was the main claimant, the claim will end
 - You will need to make an online claim within one month so you will can be housing benefit and/or council tax support from the date your partner died
 - If you take more than a month to make your claim, you will need to backdate your benefit form and ask for it to be considered for payment from the date your partner died.
 - Provide the original death certificate

Housing and rent

You must report the following changes:

- You move house (or are about to). Report this as soon as possible to prevent housing benefit being paid to the previous landlord and to make sure you get the right amount of benefit.
- You are liable to council tax. Report this immediately so you are not overcharged.
- Report when your rent goes up or down
- There is a change in the service charges you pay
- The property you live you in changes

Other changes to your housing situation may affect your Housing Benefit

Being away from home temporarily – you must let Housing Benefit know:

- Where you are going
- How long you expect to be away from home
- What is the reason for you being away

To get Housing Benefit when you are away from home temporarily, you must:

- Intend to return
- Not let or sub-let your home
- Not to be away from your home for longer than the period allowed for your circumstances

If your absence from home is **within Great Britain** (England, Wales and Scotland) Housing Benefit may be paid for 13 or 52 weeks as follows:

13 weeks

- Going into a residential home or nursing care home on a trial basis, providing you intend to return home if the trial is unsuccessful
- Away from home for any other reason, such as a holiday, providing you intend to return to your home at the end of the holiday or visit, etc

52 weeks

- Being held in custody pending trial or sentence ('on remand')
- Living in an approved bail hostel or an address away from your normal home as a condition of bail
- In hospital
- In a care home or independent hospital, for example, during respite care
- Receiving medically-approved* care away from home
- Away from your home because your partner or child is undergoing medical treatment or medically approved* convalescence
- Away from home providing medically-approved* care for someone else
- Undertaking a Government approved training course

*Note: Medically-approved means that a medical professional (nurse, doctor) has approved the treatment or convalescence.

If your absence from home is **outside Great Britain** Housing Benefit may be paid for 4 or 26 weeks (please note that Northern Island, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands are all **outside** of Great Britain) as follows:

4 weeks

- Going into a residential home or nursing care home on a trial basis, providing you intend to return home if the trial is unsuccessful
- Away from home for any other reason, such as a holiday or visiting family abroad, providing you intend to return to your home at the end of the holiday or visit
- Being held in custody pending trial or sentence ('on remand')
- Living in an approved bail hostel or an address away from your normal home as a condition of your bail
- Away from home providing medically-approved* care for someone else
- Undertaking a Government approved training course

26 weeks

- In hospital
- In a care home or independent hospital, for example, during respite care
- Receiving medically-approved* care away from home
- Away from your home because your partner or child is undergoing medical treatment or medically approved* convalescence

*Note: Medically-approved means that a medical professional (nurse, doctor) has approved the treatment or convalescence.