

Motherwell & Wishaw Citizens Advice Bureau



Benefit Changes as of April 2016

Housing Benefit



Backdating limit will be reduced from 6 months to 4 weeks for working age claimants.

The Family premium will be abolished in any new claim for HB from 1st May 2016, or existing claims for children born on or after April 2016.

The change may affect those:

- Who are making a new claim for Housing Benefit (existing claims are unaffected)
- Have one or more children
- Have some income or earnings coming in

The amount of Housing Benefit a household in any social housing across the UK can receive is to be limited to the Local Housing Allowance rate for the area.

The change will apply to social housing tenants who take up a new tenancy on or after 1 April 2016, but the restriction will not be triggered until April 2018. LHA rates will be frozen until April 2020

There will be a 4 year freeze on benefits and tax credits this means that there will be no increase in benefits



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Benefit Cap from April 2016:

The Benefit Cap limits total household income from Benefits. Where a household receive more in benefits than the cap their housing benefit will be reduced From April 2016 Cap will be re-set as follows:

Couple or Have Children - £500 to £384.62
Single - £350 to £257.69

The benefits included when seeing if your benefit income exceeds the benefit cap are:

- Carer's Allowance
- Child Benefit & Guardian's Allowance
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Incapacity Benefit
- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance (except when in the support group)
- Maternity Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Widowed Parent's Allowance & Bereavement Allowance
- Universal Credit (unless you have been through a work capability assessment and found to be unfit to work)
- Widows Pension

Some people are exempt from the Benefit Cap.

This means your benefit won't be capped, even if your benefit income is above the limit of the cap. You might be exempt from the cap if:

- you work enough hours to qualify for Working Tax Credit, even if you don't get it
- you've reached the age for getting Pension Credit - although you may not be exempt if you're in a mixed-age couple
- you or your partner get certain benefits for sickness or disability
- you or your partner had been in employment for at least 50 weeks out of the 52 weeks before your last day of work
- you or your partner get War Widows or Widowers Pension

If you require any information on the benefit changes and how it is going to affect you please contact The AFTAR Project who will arrange you an appointment.

Contact: Maria Shelley
AFTAR Project Co-ordinator
Tel: 01698 356777

Email:
maria.shelley@motherwellcab.casonline.org.uk

