

Housing Benefit

What is Housing Benefit?

Housing Benefit is paid by the local council to help people on low income to pay their rent. It can cover rent and some service charges, such as the cleaning of communal areas. However it does not cover any charges for heating, water or electricity. It also does not cover charges for care and support.

Who can claim?

Anyone on a low income who has to pay rent can claim Housing Benefit. It does not matter if you are working or not.

How to claim

If you think that you might be entitled to Housing Benefit you should contact your local authority. They will give you a claim form to complete. You should complete and return the form within one month to make sure that you don't lose benefit. They can be contacted on 0300 1234 121 or e-mail benefits@cornwall.gov.uk

When to claim

You should claim Housing Benefit as soon as possible, as it will usually only be paid from the Monday after you let the Housing Benefit department know that you want to claim. In some circumstances Housing Benefit can be backdated.

You should ask for a receipt for your claim form.

What to do once you have made a claim

You should continue to pay your rent whilst your claim for Housing Benefit is being decided. Claims can take a long time to be decided and if you are not entitled you could end up in arrears.

The local authority may write to you for further information before they can decide your claim. You should provide it within four weeks, or contact them to let them know why you cannot provide the information. If you do not they can end your claim and you will lose out on benefit.

Make sure you always ask for the name of the person that you speak to, and for a receipt for any other information that you provide.