



Thinking of Renting Private Accommodation? Likely to Need Help with the Rent?

Before you take on a tenancy and claim housing benefit, apply for a Pre-Tenancy Determination

If you are thinking of renting accommodation from a private landlord (not the council or a Housing Association) and you are likely to need help to pay your rent, you can now find out how much of that rent will be used to work out your Housing Benefit before you decide to rent the property.

A Pre-Tenancy Determination is a rental valuation by the independent Rent Officer Service. This valuation gives you the rent figure which will be used to work out your Housing Benefit.

Remember that when your Housing Benefit is worked out it will take account of your income and other circumstances. **The Pre-Tenancy Determination does not guarantee that you will get Housing Benefit or tell you the amount you will get.**

HOW TO APPLY

This free service has been available since 2 January 1996. Fill in and sign the attached form which asks you for details about the property you are thinking of renting. You will need information from the landlord to fill in the form and they must sign the form as well. Once the form is filled in and signed, send it or take it to your nearest Housing Benefit office the addresses of which are given later.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We will ask the Rent Officer Services to decide how much rent it would be reasonable to expect you to pay for the accommodation. You will normally get your decision within seven days. If they have already made a valuation on the property on the same tenancy terms within the last twelve months that valuation will stand and we will send you a copy of the decision.

Keep this part of this leaflet in a safe place as you

may need to refer to it again when you get the Rent Officer's decision.

The Rent Officer will send you, the landlord and us copies of the decision. The information he gives will help you decide whether you can afford the rent that is being asked. If you decide to take the accommodation you should then claim Housing Benefit at once. You can get a Housing Benefit claim form from any of the offices listed overleaf.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Housing Benefit will only meet in full rents which are around the general level for properties in the area where you have chosen to live. If your rent is above this level you are unlikely to get all your rent from Housing Benefit.

If you are single and under 60 years of age the maximum rent which will be used to work out your Housing Benefit will be limited to the average cost of a non self-contained room in the area in which you are thinking of living. The Rent Officer will give you that figure.

WHAT WILL THE RENT OFFICER DO?

We will send your application for a Pre-Tenancy Determination to the Rent Officer. The Rent Officer may need to look at the property you are thinking of renting, and if so, will make arrangements with the landlord to visit it.

The Rent Officer will consider things such as the rent charged, what services are included in the rent, the number of rooms in the property, the size of your household, the length and terms of your tenancy and the general level of rents for property in the area.

From this information the Rent Officer will decide

how much the property is worth in the rental market and how much is generally paid in the area for a property of a suitable size for you and members of your family who live with you.

If you are single and under 60 years of age, the Rent Officer will make another decision. This will be based on the cost of a non self-contained room (where you have shared use of kitchen and toilet facilities) in the same area as the property for which you are seeking the Pre-Tenancy determination. These decisions will stand for 12 months from the date they are made.

WHAT WILL THE DECISION TELL ME?

The decision notice that the Rent Officer sends you will tell you the maximum rent figure which will generally be used in working out your Housing Benefit. Generally, this figure is arrived at by using two figures worked out by the Rent Officer. The first is the figure that is a reasonable rent for the property, or one of a suitable size for you and your family. The second figure is the average rent based on properties of the same size in the area.

If the Rent Officer's decision is for a single person under 60 the notice will show an amount for a non self contained single room as well as the amounts for the actual property. In these cases the maximum rent will be the lowest of all these amounts.

It will also give you other information including details of any services (such as laundry or cleaning) paid for in the rent. These services are not generally met by housing Benefit. The maximum rent figure will go down if your rent includes other items, for example water charges, meals and heating. The maximum rent figure can be further

reduced if we think that the figure seems to be unreasonably high for your particular accommodation needs.

WILL THE MAXIMUM RENT FIGURE BE THE AMOUNT OF HOUSING BENEFIT I GET?

Not necessarily. Your Housing Benefit will generally be worked out using the maximum rent but if you are under 60 years of age the maximum rent will generally be limited to the single room rent.

The Rent Officer's decision does not guarantee that you will get Housing Benefit or that you will get the amount stated in the decision notice.

The Rent Officer's decision is only an indication of the amount of the rent which may be used to work out your Housing Benefit.

We will need to consider your personal circumstances, for example the amount of your income and the circumstances of those living with you.

You may be able to get some additional help with your rent to prevent exceptional hardship.

Any payment of Housing Benefit will depend on the date of the Housing Benefit claim rather than on the date you applied for your Pre-Tenancy Determination.

ADVICE

If you need help or further information, contact your local Housing Benefit office at:-

FOR ALL ENQUIRES PHONE 01795 417555

Sheppey Area

Sheerness District Offices, Swale Borough Council, Trinity Road, Sheerness ME12 2PG
For appointments only phone 01795 585609.

Sittingbourne Area

Sittingbourne District Offices, Swale Borough Council, East Street, Sittingbourne ME10 3HT
For appointments only phone 01795 417200

Faversham Area

Faversham District Offices, Swale Borough Council, Preston Street, Faversham ME13 8NY
For appointments only phone 01795 594456

Opening hours - Monday to Thursday 9.00 am to 4.45 pm, Friday from 9.00 am to 4.15 pm.
Closed on Wednesdays from 1 pm. Appointments may be made by ringing the offices.

APPROVED APPLICATION FOR A PRE-TENANCY DETERMINATION

Local Authority Stamp

Office Use Only

Single room rent YES/NO

UPRN:

Date received:

PLEASE ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS AND GIVE AS MUCH INFORMATION AS YOU CAN. YOU WILL NEED TO ASK THE LANDLORD OR PROPERTY AGENT TO PROVIDE SOME INFORMATION AND TO SIGN THE FORM.

1. Please give the address, including any flat or room number, of the property for which you want a Pre-Tenancy Determination:

.....

 Postcode

2. Type of property:

- detached house
- detached bungalow
- flat in block
- semi-detached house
- semi-detached bungalow
- flat over shop(s)
- room or rooms
- other.....
- bedsit
- terraced house
- terraced bungalow
- flat in a house
- hostel
- maisonette

Number of floors in whole building
 How many rooms do you have?

(Do not count the kitchen, bathroom or toilet)
 If it is a room(s) give location:
 front centre rear
 On which floor is your private accommodation?
 all floors basement ground
 first second third

3. Who is the landlord or agent for the property?
 Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number (during office hours only)

4. Please give details of the proposed tenancy. You may need to ask your landlord for this information.
 What sort of tenancy will it be? (Shorthold/ Assured/Other) (please give details)
 How long will the tenancy last?

How much is the rent? £

How often are you due to pay this amount?
 Every week/fortnight/month/other

Please state

Please indicate the number of rooms in the property by putting a number in the appropriate box. **DO NOT TICK**

	Whole House	Sole Use Included in Tenancy	Share Use Included in Tenancy
Living Rooms			
Bedrooms			
Kitchens			
Bathrooms			
Toilets			
Bedsit			
Other			
TOTAL			

Are any services or amenities provided? Yes No
 If YES, please give details below:

Services/Amenities	Included in Rent	
	YES	NO
Cleaning of common areas		
Lighting of common parts		
Lift		
Porter or Estate staff/gardening		
Laundry equipment		
Laundering by landlord		
Heating		
Cleaning of accommodation		
Lighting of accommodation		
Hot water		
Gas/Electricity for cooking		
Counselling and support		

Is the accommodation furnished? Yes No
 If YES, is it fully furnished partly furnished
 Does the accommodation have central heating?
 Yes No
 Does the rent include the use of a garage? Yes No
 Does the rent include any money for meals? Yes No
 If YES, please give details:

Meal	YES	NO
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Evening Meal		

Please give your details:
 Surname

Other names

Present Address

.....

Postcode Date of Birth

6. Are you getting Housing Benefit at the moment? Yes No
 7. Please give details of any other people who will be living with you if you take on this new tenancy.

Name	Relationship to you	Sex M/F	Age

8. Will the new tenancy be a joint tenancy with any other person?
 Yes No. If YES, please give their name(s) below

9. Ask the landlord or Property Agent to sign here:

I am considering granting a tenancy of the above dwelling and give my consent for an inspection of the premises to be carried out by the Rent Office.

Landlords' signature..... Date

10. Please sign this declaration yourself:

I am considering renting the property described above and I intend to apply for Housing Benefit

Your Signature..... Date

When you have completed all the questions on this form, take or send it to your nearest Housing Benefit office.

NOTES

1. A pre-Tenancy Determination will tell you the maximum rent which Housing Benefit could meet for the property. It does not tell you how much Housing Benefit you will get. This will depend on your other circumstances (for example, your income and the size of your family).

2. If you are single and under 60 years of age, it is more than likely that your maximum rent will be restricted to the average cost of non self-contained accommodation in the area.

3. You will need to claim Housing Benefit separately once you have received the Pre-Tenancy Determination and have decided that you want to take up the tenancy. You can get a Housing Benefit claim form from any of our Housing Benefit offices.