

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 and you are likely to need help from Housing Benefit 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 by the Independent Rent Officer Service. This valuation gives you the rent figure, which will be used by the Housing Benefit Office to work out your Housing Benefit, but please read the 'important notes' below.

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 that you will get.**

How to apply (form to be completed in Black Ink only)

This free service has been available since 2nd January 1996. Fill in and sign the attached form, which asks you for details of the property you are thinking of renting. You will need information from the landlord to complete the form as well. Once the form is filled in and signed, send it or take it to the Housing Benefit Office in the area where the property is located.

What happens next?

The Housing Benefit Office will ask the Rent Officer Service to value the property and decide how much rent it would be reasonable to pay. You will normally get your decision within seven days. If they have made a valuation on that property on the same tenancy terms within the last 12 months, that valuation will stand and the Housing Benefit Office will send you a copy of this decision. Page 2 of this leaflet explains the Rent Officer's decision and how it will affect your Housing Benefit.

Keep this part of the leaflet in a safe place and read it again when you get the Rent Officer's decision.

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

IMPORTANT NOTES: 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 aged under 25 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.

The Rent Officer's decision and your Housing Benefit

What will the Rent Officer do?

The Housing Benefit Office will send your application for a Pre-Tenancy Determination to the Rent Officer. You will normally get your decision within seven days. 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 such things as:

- the rent charged;
- the size of your household;
- the general level of rents for property in your area.
- the number of rooms in the property;
- the length and terms of the tenancy; and

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 your circumstances.

If you are single and aged under 25, 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 stand for 12 months from the date they were made.

What will the decision tell me?

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

If the notice is for someone who is single and under 25 years of age, it will state what the maximum rent figure is as well as the average figure for a non self contained room. This will be known as the single room rent. In this case the maximum rent will be no more than single room rent.

It will also give you other information, including details of any services (such as laundry or room 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. The maximum rent figure may be further reduced by the Housing Benefit Office if the figure seems to them to be unreasonably high for your particular accommodation needs.

Will the maximum rent figure be the amount of Housing Benefit that I will receive?

Not necessarily. Your Housing Benefit will generally be worked out using the maximum rent, but if you are under 25 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 on 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. The Housing Benefit Office 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 your Housing Benefit claim rather than the date you applied for your Pre-Tenancy Determination.

If you want to claim Housing Benefit, or need further information, please contact your local Housing Benefit Office and they will tell you what to do next.

Approved application for a Pre-Tenancy Determination

For completion by Local Authority	
Ref Number:	<input type="text"/>
Young Individual – Single Room Rent Required?	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date Application received at Local Authority	<input type="text"/>

Local Authority Stamp and date

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 of the information and to sign the form.

1. Please give your details: Surname: Other names:

2. Address of property for which a Pre-Tenancy Determination is required (including any flat or room number):

 Post Code

3. Your present address (if different from above):

 Post Code

4. Please give details of the proposed tenancy. (You may need to ask for this information.)

How long will the tenancy last? How much is the rent?

How often is the rent paid? (e.g. weekly, monthly, etc.)

Type of tenancy: Shorthold Assured Other (please specify):

Are any services / amenities provided? Yes No If **Yes**, please tick those that are provided within the rent charge:

Cleaning of halls / stairs	Lift	Laundry equipment	Lighting of accommodation
Lighting of halls / stairs	Heating	Laundering of bedlinen by landlord	Water charges
Porter or estate staff	Hot water	Personal laundering by landlord	Gas/electricity for cooking
Counselling and support	Gardening	Cleaning of accommodation	Television

Is the accommodation furnished? Yes No If Yes, fully or partly or minimally furnished

Does the rent include any money for meals? Yes No If Yes, breakfast lunch evening meal

5. Who is the landlord or agent for the property? Name:

Address:

Postcode
Telephone Number

6. Type of property:

- | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Detached house | Detached bungalow | Flat in block | Terraced house |
| Semi-detached house | Semi-detached bungalow | Flat over shop(s) | Bedsit |
| Terraced bungalow | Flat in a house | Hostel | |
| Maisonette | Room or rooms | other (please specify): | |

Number of floors in the whole building: If it is a room(s), how many?

If more than one room, how many are: Bedrooms Living rooms (excluding bathrooms & kitchens)

Give location: Front Centre Rear of building

On which floor is your private accommodation?

All Basement Ground First Second Third

Please indicate the number of rooms in the property by putting a number in the appropriate box (DO NOT TICK):

	Whole house	Sole use	Shared use
Living rooms			
Bedrooms			
Kitchens			
Bathrooms			
Toilets			
Bedsits			
Other			
TOTAL			

Does the accommodation have central heating? Yes No

Does the rent include use of garage? Yes No

7. Are you receiving Housing Benefit at the moment? Yes No

8. Are you single and under 25 years of age? Yes No

9. Please give details of any other people who will be living with you if you take on this new tenancy (please do not include foster children):

Name	Relationship to you	Sex M/F	Age

10. Will the new tenancy be a joint tenancy with any other person?

If **Yes**, please give name(s):

11. 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 Officer.

Landlord / property agent's signature:

Date:

12. 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 :-

The Benefits Section
Carlisle City Council
Civic Centre
Carlisle
CA3 0QG

Telephone (01228) 817000 • Fax (01228) 817266 Typetalk 18001 01228 817000

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 (e.g. your income and the size of your family).

2. If you are single and aged under 25 it is more likely that your maximum rent will be restricted to the average cost of non self contained accommodation in the area to which you are thinking of moving.

3. **You will need to claim Housing Benefit separately, once you have received a Pre-Tenancy Determination and have decided that you want to take up the tenancy. Please contact the Benefit Section for an application form.**