

Housing Benefit for landlords

This information is for private landlords of properties in Northern Ireland. Tenants can find advice [here](#).

Your tenants may need help to pay their rent. Usually, this means applying for [Universal Credit](#).

Tenants can claim Housing Benefit if they:

- are over State Pension age
- were already claiming Housing Benefit when they moved into your property

Applying for Housing Benefit

The Housing Executive deals with Housing Benefit applications.

Tenants can [apply for Housing Benefit online](#) or by returning an application form to the Housing Executive. An [advice agency](#) can help if they cannot do this themselves.

Landlords must complete a certificate of occupation for the claim to be approved.

Waiting for the first Housing Benefit payment

It can take a couple of weeks before the first Housing Benefit payment is made. It can take longer if the applicant hasn't sent all the information needed.

Tenants may be able to [get a grant or loan while they're waiting for their first payment](#). Your tenants should [get advice](#) if they're worried about paying rent.

Your tenant can choose whether Housing Benefit payments will go to them or to you directly.

How often Housing Benefit is paid

Housing Benefit pays every four weeks in arrears. You should keep this in mind, especially if you charge rent on a monthly basis.

How much Housing Benefit pays towards rent

Housing Benefit rarely covers the full amount of rent in a privately rented property. Depending on the tenant's circumstances, there is a maximum amount of housing costs it will pay.

When deciding how much Housing Benefit to pay, the Housing Executive considers the tenant's:

- personal circumstances
- income, savings and assets
- household or family, their income and circumstances

Who Housing Benefit pays

If your tenant arranges for payments to go directly to you, talk to them about how they will pay any shortfall between the Housing Benefit payment and the full rent.

Sometimes the first payment can mistakenly go to the tenant even if they've been told it will be paid to you.

Make sure to check your bank account regularly. Speak to your tenant if you haven't had a payment when you were expecting one.

Set up a direct payment if your tenant owes rent

You can ask Housing Benefit to pay you, instead of the tenant. They can only do this against the tenant's wishes if they owe at least six weeks' rent.

Contact the Housing Executive to ask for payments to go directly to your bank account.

You can also ask for a deduction from your tenant's other benefits to go towards rent arrears. You can only do this if they are still claiming Housing Benefit for your property.

[Use this booklet to apply for a deduction.](#)

Extra help if Housing Benefit does not cover rent

Tenants can apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) if their Housing Benefit does not cover all their rent. Housing Rights can help tenants to apply for this payment.

Help to pay rates

When your tenant applies for Housing Benefit, they will also be assessed to see if they are eligible for help with rates.

For tenants getting Housing Benefit, help with rates is called Rates Relief. Rates Relief can be paid to either:

- a tenant
- a landlord, or
- Land & Property Services

[Contact Landlord Advice](#) if you have questions about Housing Benefit.

More advice

- [Getting help towards rent](#)

- [Issues with social security benefits](#)