

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 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 valuation by the Independent Rent Service. This valuation gives you the rent figure which will be used by the Housing Benefit office to work out your Housing Benefit. But see the notes under the heading IMPORTANT NOTE.

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

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 the Housing Benefit office in the area where the property is located.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Housing Benefit office will ask the Rent Service to value the property and to decide how much rent it would be reasonable to pay for it. 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 still 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 Service will send you, the landlord, and the Housing Benefit office copies of this 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 Housing Benefit claim form from your local Housing Benefit office.

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 the rent for your home is above this level you are unlikely to get all your rent from Housing Benefit. If you are single and under 25 years of age, in the majority of cases 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 Service will give you that figure.

If you are single, under 25 years old and are severely disabled, your maximum rent may not be subject to the Single Room Rent. Please contact the Council's Benefits Section on 577330 for more information.

THIS IS NOT A CLAIM FOR HOUSING BENEFIT

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does not guarantee that you will
get Housing Benefit or tell you
the amount you will get.**

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 Service. 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 Service 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 the tenancy and the general level of rents for property in the area.

From this information The Rent Service 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 25 years of age, The Rent Service will usually 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 were made.

WHAT WILL THE DECISION TELL ME?

The decision notice that The Rent Service sends you will tell you the maximum rent figure that will generally be used in working out your Housing Benefit.

If the notice is for someone who is single and is 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 single room. This will be known as the single room rent. In this case the maximum rent will usually be no more than the single room rent.

It will also give you other information including details of the Rent Officer valuation of services (such as water charges, laundry, fuel charges) paid for in your rent. These services are not met by Housing Benefit and the Rent Officer's maximum rent figure is net of these

in eligible charges. The maximum rent will go down if your rent includes meals. The maximum rent figure can be further reduced by the Housing Benefit office if the figure seems to them to be unreasonably high for your particular accommodation needs.

You must apply for Housing Benefit straight away on a separate form if you decide to take the accommodation.

The Pre-Tenancy Determination does not guarantee that you will get Housing Benefit or tell you the amount you will get.

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 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 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. If the accommodation is in the Thanet area contact (01843) 577330.

Approved application for a Pre-Tenancy Determination

RA

For completion by Local Authority

Local authority stamp and date

A. Young individual; single room rent required

YES NO

B. 50% top-up still applies? YES NO

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

.....
.....
..... Postcode

3. Your present address (if different from above)

.....
.....
..... Postcode

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

(a) Who is the Landlord or Agent for the property?

Name
Address
..... Postcode
Telephone number (during normal office hours only)

You will need to get the Landlord or Property Agent to sign the declaration over the page (Question 11).

(b) How much is the total rent? £

(c) How often will you pay this amount?

(i) Once a week/once every two weeks/once a month/other (please give details)

(ii) If weekly, number of weeks (do not include rent free weeks)

(d) What sort of tenancy will it be? (Shorthold/Assured/Other) (please give details if other)

(e) How long will the tenancy last?

(f) 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		
Water charges		
Gas/electricity for cooking		
Counselling and support		

(g) Does the rent include a charge for Personal Care? YES NO
If YES how much? £ _____ week/month

(h) Does the rent include any money for meals? YES NO
(If YES please give details below)

Meal	YES	NO
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Evening Meal		

5. (a) Type of property

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> detached house | <input type="checkbox"/> bedsit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> detached bungalow | <input type="checkbox"/> terraced house |
| <input type="checkbox"/> flat in block | <input type="checkbox"/> terraced bungalow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> semi-detached house | <input type="checkbox"/> flat in a house |
| <input type="checkbox"/> semi-detached bungalow | <input type="checkbox"/> hostel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> flat over shop(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> maisonette |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> room or rooms |
- Number of floors in whole building

(b)(i) If it is a room(s), how many
(ii) If it is a room(s) give location front centre rear
(iii) If more than one room, how many are:
bedrooms living rooms
(excluding bathrooms and kitchens)

(c) On which floor is your private accommodation?
 all floors basement ground
 first second third Other

(d) 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	Shared Use included in tenancy
Living rooms			
Bedrooms			
Kitchens			
Bathrooms			
Toilets			
Bedsits			
Other			
Total			

(e) Does the accommodation have central heating? YES NO
(f) Does the rent include the use of a garage? YES NO
(g) Is the accommodation furnished? YES NO
If YES, is it: fully furnished partly furnished

6. Are you getting Housing Benefit at the moment? YES NO
7. Are you single? YES NO

8. Date of birth

9. Please give details of all other people who will be living with you if you take on this new tenancy.

Name	Relationship to you	Sex M/F	Date of birth

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

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.

Landlords 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 local Housing Benefit office in the area in which the accommodation is situated. You will find their address in the local telephone directory.

**If the accommodation is in the Thanet area, please send this form to the:
BENEFIT SECTION, P.O. BOX 9, MARGATE, KENT CT9 1XZ**

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 25 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 to which you think you are moving. Please contact the Council's Benefits Section if you are severely disabled to see if this does not apply to you.
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 your local Housing Benefit office.