

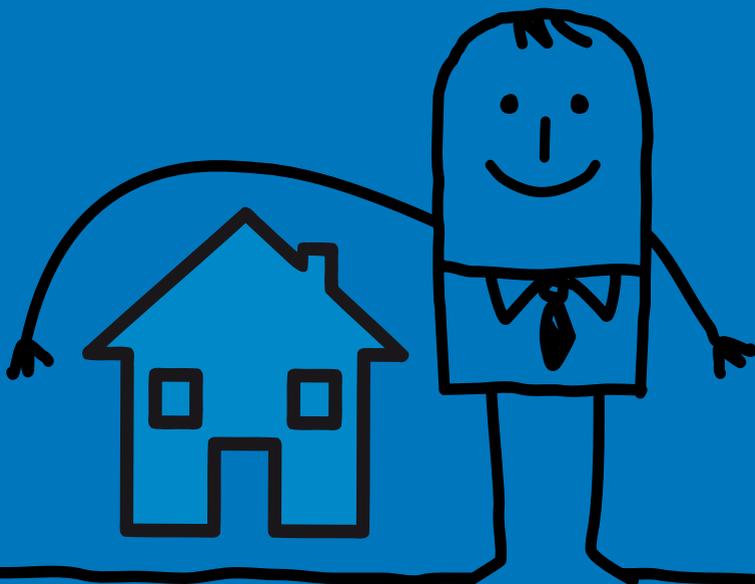
Benefit Changes

ARE YOU PREPARED?

4. Housing Benefit



The Government is making big changes to welfare benefits. **Find out how the changes affect you.**



From April 2013 the Government is reducing the amount of housing benefit some people can claim. Under the new rules if you have more bedrooms than the Government says you need, you will lose part of your Housing Benefit.

Question

Will my benefit be affected by the bedroom tax?

Answer

The bedroom tax will apply if you:

- Claim Housing Benefit
- Are of working age
- Live in a property considered too large for your needs

The bedroom tax will not apply if you and your partner receive pension credits. In April 2013 the pension credit age will be around 61 years and 6 months.

Question

What happens if I have a spare bedroom?

Answer

If you have one 'spare' bedroom your Housing Benefit will be cut by 14%. If you have two or more spare bedrooms it will be cut by 25%.

If your benefit is cut you will have to pay your landlord the difference between your housing benefit and your rent.

Question

What is a spare bedroom?

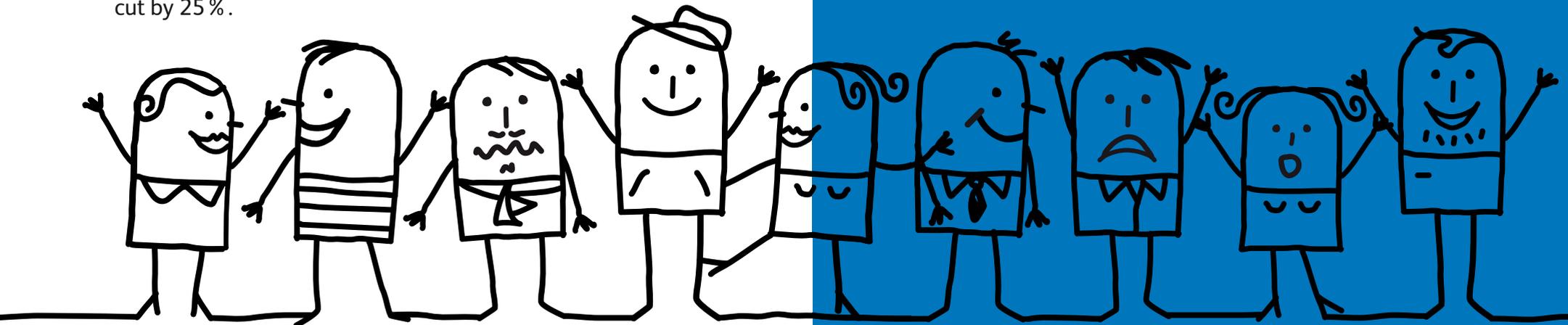
Answer

Under the new rules you will be allocated one bedroom for:

- each adult couple
- any other person aged 16 or over
- two children of the same sex under 16
- two children under the age of 10 regardless of their sex
- a carer (who does not normally live with you) if you or your partner need over night care

Exceptions **will not** be made if:

- You and your partner need to sleep apart because of a medical condition
- The main residence of your children is another address, but you have a spare room for when they stay with you.



Example

Mr and Mrs Smith live in a two bedroom house costing £70 a week in rent. At the moment Housing Benefit covers the full cost of their rent. Under the new rules they will have one spare bedroom.

Their Housing Benefit will be reduced by 14 % of their rent (14 % of £70 = £9.80). Their Housing Benefit will be reduced by £9.80 to £60.20 per week. They will have to pay £9.80 per week towards their rent.

Local Housing Allowance

The way that Local Housing Allowance rates are worked out has changed.

This means that most Local Housing Allowance rates have gone down. For more information and to view the most up-to-date Local Housing Allowance Rates for Rotherham visit:

www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/10112/

Local Housing Allowance Rates will now only be reviewed once a year. New rates will be published each April.

Who can I talk to about the benefit changes?

DWP Helpline:..... **0845 6057 064**

Citizens Advice Bureau:..... **0844 4111 444**
(landline)

0300 3300 650
(mobile)

Housing and Council Tax Benefit:..... **01709 336065**

Housing Contact Centre..... **01709 336040**