



SOUTHWARK LEGAL ADVICE NETWORK

working together to provide high quality advice

www.southwarkadvice.org.uk

MAJOR CHANGES TO THE HELP THAT PRIVATE TENANTS GET WITH THEIR RENT

FROM APRIL 2011 THE GOVERNMENT HAS INTRODUCED NEW RULES THAT MAKE CHANGES TO LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE (LHA) - THE HELP YOU GET TO PAY YOUR RENT. THESE CHANGES MAY MEAN YOU GET LESS HELP.

THESE CHANGES ARE FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE A PRIVATE LANDLORD – SO THEY DON'T APPLY TO COUNCIL TENANTS OR HOUSING ASSOCIATION TENANTS.

Maximum Amounts of Local Housing Allowance

The maximum amount of LHA for a one bedroom property is now £250 per week.

£290 per week for a two bedroom property.

£340 per week for a three bedroom property.

£400 per week for a four bedroom property.

The amount allowed for a 4 bedroom property is the maximum you can get, even if you have a larger family and need more than 4 bedrooms.

These changes affect all new claims from April 2011 and existing claimants 9 months after annual review unless size of household changes.

When the council works out how much LHA people will be entitled to they have to look at the average rents in the lowest 30% of the market.

If your rent is higher than this, you will be expected to find money to meet the shortfall in your rent.

NO £15 SURPLUS

Before April 2011 the rules allowed you to keep up to £15 of the surplus if your rent was below the LHA maximum.

From April 2011 this rule has changed and you will no longer be able to keep this amount.

This applies for new claims from April and for existing claimants from the date of annual review of your claim.

EXTRA ROOM FOR CARER

From 1 April 2011, if you or your partner have a disability or health problem that means you need overnight care from a carer who does not live with you, and you have an extra bedroom available for the carer, you may be able to get more Housing Benefit towards the cost of the extra bedroom.

This can be backdated for the entire period when you qualify for it, after 1 April 2011.

If you were already claiming Housing Benefit on 1 April 2011, it is up to you to tell your local authority if you need an extra bedroom for an overnight carer, as they may not know already.

If you are worried about how these changes affect you contact the

**Southwark Citizens Advice Bureaux Service on
0844 499 4134**

or

**Blackfriars Advice Centre on:
020 7358 7035**

The Southwark Legal Advice network website

www.southwarkadvice.org.uk

has full details of the opening times of advice agencies in the Borough and links through to useful websites that can give more information on changes to Local Housing Allowance.