

## Changes to benefits

### What this guide is about



This guide is to tell you about some changes to benefits.



Benefits is money that some people or their families can get when they need help to pay for things.



Some examples are

- Housing Benefit
- Disability Living Allowance or DLA.



The government is changing some of the benefits that people get.



This guide talks about the changes to each benefit.



## What is in this guide

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## Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment



Disability Living Allowance helps some disabled people buy the things they need.

It is called DLA for short.



Disability Living Allowance will stop over a few years. This will start in 2013.



There will be a new benefit called Personal Independence Payment instead. This benefit will be for people between 16 and 64 years old.

It is called PIP for short.



People who get DLA can ask to get PIP instead.



Most people will need to go to a meeting with someone like a nurse to see if they can get PIP.



Less people will get support from the new PIP benefits money.

## Housing Benefit



Housing Benefit helps people pay the rent on their home.



The government is changing some of the rules for how much money people can get.



The changes will be for people who live in homes owned by

- the council
- groups called housing associations.



The government says they will look at how many bedrooms people have in their home.



The government says that people only need a certain number of bedrooms.



If people have more bedrooms than the government thinks they need they will get less Housing Benefit money.

How the government will work out how much Housing Benefit money people get



The government says they will pay for 1 bedroom for each person living in a home.



But if 2 people live together as a couple they will only get money for one bedroom.



Children younger than 16 will have to share a bedroom if they are either both boys or both girls.



All children younger than 10 will have to share a bedroom.

Some disabled people can have an extra bedroom.



This is if they have a carer that comes to their home and stays overnight.



The carer must stay with them sometimes but not live there.

Some disabled children will also be able to have their own bedroom.



If people have a spare room or more bedrooms than they need they will get less money.

If they can't find the extra money themselves to pay the rent they will have to move home.

## A new benefit called Universal Credit



Universal Credit is the name of a new benefit.



When Universal Credit starts some other benefits will stop.



Universal Credit will be there instead of these benefits.



Lots of disabled people will be better off under Universal Credit. But some people won't be.



For example, at the moment, some disabled people get support called the Severe Disability Premium.



This benefit helps some disabled people who live on their own and who don't have a carer that is paid for.



This support will stop when Universal Credit starts. Many disabled people will lose out.



At the moment, families with a disabled child get extra money to help them.



When Universal Credit starts many families with disabled children will get less money.

## Employment and Support Allowance



Employment and Support Allowance helps people who can't work because they are ill or have a disability.

It is called ESA for short.



Most people go to a meeting with someone like a nurse to see if they can get ESA.

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There are different types of ESA benefit.

To work out what sort of ESA benefit you can get, the government looks at things like



- if you have worked before and paid National Insurance.  
(This is money you pay the government when you are working to put towards things like your pension and some benefits)



- how much money you have



- if you can work or not.

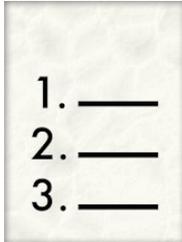


Some people who get ESA may only be able to get the money for one year.



These are people who the government thinks can get ready for work.

They are people who



- get a type of ESA called Contributory ESA
- are in something called the Work Related Activity Group of ESA



People who don't have much money may be able to get a different type of ESA instead.



If you get ESA you can check which type you get.

## Council Tax Benefit



Some people get help to pay their council tax.

They get something called Council Tax Benefit.



Local councils will soon be in charge of giving people this benefit.



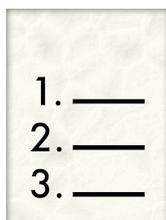
We know that councils are getting less money. This means councils may give some people less money for their Council Tax benefit.

## Local Housing Allowance

Local Housing Allowance money helps some people pay their rent.



The people who get this live in homes that are not council homes.



There will be changes to this benefit.



The changes will mean that people get less money from this benefit.



People may not be able to afford their home any more.

## How much money people can have



The government says they will only pay a certain amount of benefits money to people each week. This means that people with children or people who live together as a couple can only get up to £500 a week from benefits.



While a person living on their own can only get up to £350 a week from benefits.

## How to find out more about changes to your benefits



If you want support to understand the changes you can ask people like

A person who supports you



The people who look after housing at your local council. They are usually called the housing team.



Mencap's helpline. Phone them on 0808 808 1111 or e-mail them at [help@mencap.org.uk](mailto:help@mencap.org.uk)



If you want to know more about the benefit changes you can contact Mencap's campaigns and policy team.



Phone them on 020 7696 6952



E-mail them at [campaigns@mencap.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@mencap.org.uk)

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