

Landlord Portal

Our new system offers the functionality for landlords to be able to access information about tenants that you receive benefit payments for via a web portal.

Initially you will be able to:

- View details of the current weekly Housing Benefit entitlement
- Search and check for payments made

We may extend this functionality in the future so that you can:

- Inform us of a change on circumstance that may affect the claim
- Add notes to a claim
- View previously notified changes in circumstance

We are still developing this portal, however if you would like to be set up to access the landlord portal, please e-mail lha@wigan.gov.uk with 'Landlord Portal' in the subject field. We will then notify you of your username and password, and instruction on how to access the system once we 'go-live' with this service.

LHA Rates

To view Local Housing Allowance rates, please visit our web-site:

www.wigan.gov.uk/Services/AdviceBenefitsEmergencies/Benefits/Housing/LHABRMA.htm

Alternatively, if you would like us to e-mail you every month with the latest LHA rates, please send an e-mail to lha@wigan.gov.uk with 'LHA Rates' as the subject.

Christmas Closure

We close for Christmas at 4pm on Friday 23rd December, and re-open on Tuesday 3rd January 2012.



Housing Benefit Newsletter for Landlords

Issue 10 December 2011



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Welcome to issue 10 of our newsletter

In this edition we will feature:

- Welfare Reform – January 2012 changes to LHA
- The AGMA LHA Transition Team
- Our new IT system and changes to payments
- Landlord Portal
- LHA Rates
- Christmas Opening

Welfare Reform - January 2012 changes to LHA

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rules currently restrict the level of benefit for single people under the age of 25 who live alone to the shared accommodation rate. This reflects the rent levels of accommodation with sole use of a bedroom and shared use of at least a living room, kitchen or bathroom. The current shared accommodation rate for Wigan is £57.73 per week (December 2011).

As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review announced last year by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, this age threshold for shared accommodation has now been increased to include those aged under 35.

Current exemptions extend into the new age group, i.e. those who have the severe disability premium included in their benefit assessment, or need an extra bedroom for a carer providing overnight care but does not live in the property. However, care leavers will still be exempt from the shared room rate until the age of 22.

Two further exemptions have been introduced, but these are only for those aged over 25. These are:

Those who have spent as least three months in a hostel or hostels for the rehabilitation or resettlement of homeless people.

Ex-offenders who are being managed under active multi-agency management, within the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), to be rehabilitated back into the community as the pose a risk to the public.

When will tenants be affected?

- Those aged between 25 and 34 living on their own in a self contained property who claim Housing Benefit after 1 January 2012 will be restricted to the shared accommodation rate from the beginning of their award.
- Those aged between 25 and 34 living on their own in a self contained property who claimed Housing Benefit after 1 April 2011, but before 1 January 2012 will move onto the shared accommodation rate on the first anniversary of their claim.
- Those who made a claim for Housing Benefit, or have moved since LHA came into effect in April 2008, and receiving the nine months transitional protection following the April 2011 LHA changes when rates were reduced, will move to the shared accommodation rate when their transitional protection ends.

In April 2011 LHA rates reduced following the revision of how LHA rates are set by the Valuation Office, and the capping of LHA to the four bedroom rate.

Anyone affected by these changes were given nine months protection to give them the opportunity to negotiate a rent reduction, or seek alternative accommodation. So January 2012 will also see the start of this protection coming to an end.

If you have any queries in regards to when your tenants are going to be affected by these changes, please e-mail your questions to lha@wigan.gov.uk.

The LHA Transition Team

Wigan Council, along with 11 other Councils from across Greater Manchester and Cheshire, have founded a specialist team of advisors. The advisors will be offering practical help to tenants with the aim of helping them pay their rent in full or, where they live in accommodation that is too expensive, seeking alternative accommodation that is more suitable for their needs.

From mid-December you can contact the team if you think that you or your tenant could benefit from their help. They can be contacted by telephone on 0845 120 2093 or via their website www.helpwithrent.org.uk.

Our new system and changes to payments

As you will be aware, on 26th September we successfully introduced a new benefits and council tax computer system to our service. May we take this opportunity to thank you for your patience and understanding during the implementation process – we are working hard to reduce the backlog of work that this necessary upgrade created.

Because of the way in which the new system works, from now on everyone (landlords and tenants) will receive regular payments on the same day, every four weeks. In order to do this on 6th October we had to produce payments to ensure that everyone was paid up to the same date (23rd October). You therefore may have received a payment around this time that you were not expecting. Please accept our apologies for any confusion that this may have caused.

Regular payments will be issued as follows:

Date we produce the payment	Date the claim is paid up to	Payment issued to you week commencing
14/12/11	18/12/11	19/12/11
11/01/12	15/01/12	16/01/12
08/02/12	12/02/12	13/02/12
07/03/12	11/03/12	12/03/12
03/04/12*	08/04/12	09/04/12
02/05/12	06/05/12	07/05/12
30/05/12	03/06/12	04/06/12
27/06/12	01/07/12	02/07/12
25/07/12	29/07/12	30/07/12
22/08/12	26/08/12	27/08/12
19/09/12	23/09/12	24/09/12
17/10/12	21/10/12	22/10/12
14/11/12	18/11/12	19/11/12
12/12/12	16/12/12	17/12/12
09/01/13	13/01/13	14/01/13

* Tuesday due to Easter

Please keep this information for your future reference.