

Housing Benefit Explained

What Is It?

You may be entitled to Housing Benefit if you are on a low income and need help to pay your rent and service charges. Housing Benefit does not cover all service charges. Please ask if you need to know more.

Housing Benefit will not help you to pay the cost of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services you use in your home.

How Much?

The amount of Housing Benefit you receive will depend on:

- The rent and charges you have to pay
- How much of what you have to pay is eligible for this benefit
- Your circumstances (for example your income, capital and savings)
- Who lives in your household and what their circumstances are

If you want to find out how much Housing Benefit you are likely to get, you can contact Boston Mayflower on 01205 318500 (your Housing Team will be happy to help) or your local council. You can also use the Web Benefits Calculator on your local council's website.

Who Decides?

Housing Benefit is administered by your local council. Decisions have to be made in accordance with rules laid down by central government. Your local council will inform you by letter of the amount of Housing Benefit to be paid and from what date it has been awarded. You have the right to appeal against any decision that you feel to be unfair. Please ask if you want to know how to do this.

Who Can Claim?

You can make a claim if you are:

- A tenant OR
- The married or unmarried partner of a tenant AND
- Living in the property for which benefit is claimed

(Other people can apply in certain circumstances. Please ask if you are unsure.)

How To Claim

You must complete a claim form. These can be obtained from your local council or any of our offices.

Information To Support Your Claim

You will need to provide original, not photocopied, documents to support all the statements you make in your claim.

You will see what types of evidence you have to provide as you go through the claim form. Generally you need to provide proof of:

- Your identity and that of your partner
- Your household
- The income of any non-dependants (in other words anyone over the age of 18 who lives with you and is not paying you as a boarder)
- Your income and that of your partner
- Any capital belonging to you, your partner, or your children

If you are currently receiving
Housing Benefit from your local council,
have already supplied all this information,
and there has only been a simple change in
your situation (for example you have
moved) you may only need to give evidence
to prove the change in circumstances rather
than complete a new full claim. Please check with
your local council.

If you are unsure what proofs to include, please ask before making your claim.

Incomplete Claims

If you cannot provide all the proofs with your claim you have two options:

- Make your claim anyway. You will be told what extra documents are required
- Make a "short claim" giving details of your name and address (forms are available from your local council or Boston Mayflower)

Please note that not all councils operate the short claim scheme.

You will then have one month to provide the additional information/the completed full claim form without losing any entitlement.

Please note:

- If you don't make this deadline, your claim may be cancelled
- If you are finding it difficult to get the information, it is vital to contact the council and explain the problem

Where To Claim

If you live in the Borough of Boston

Since September 2004 Boston Mayflower and Boston Borough Council have operated a joint scheme so that claims can be made and verified at the offices of either organisation. Because this is a special arrangement, you will need to complete a consent form if you wish Boston Mayflower to handle your claim (consent forms are available at any of our offices).

Please note that claims by the self-employed can only be handled by Boston Borough Council.

It is best to hand in your form in person so that any queries can be sorted out there and then.

However Boston Borough Council may be able to visit you at home if you have mobility problems.

You can also make an application by post. If you want to send your claim to Boston Mayflower please send it to: Boston Mayflower, PO Box 162, Boston, PE21 6WZ.

Please send claims via special delivery to safeguard your valuable papers.

• If you live outside the Borough of Boston

Claims should be made at your local council offices.

How Will Housing Benefit Be Paid?

Housing Benefit is normally paid:

- Direct to Boston Mayflower by your local council
- 4 weeks in arrears (in other words, payments are for the previous 4 weeks)

The money will be credited to your rent account on the same day it is received. To check that Housing Benefit is being paid please contact your Housing Team.

When Will Your Housing Benefit Start?

Normally, Housing Benefit is awarded from the Monday after your claim is received. So if you hand your form in on a Monday, your claim will start from the following Monday.

Always get a receipt so that you have proof of the date when you made your claim. The processing of your claim may take a number of weeks, but benefit will be paid from the award date.

You can apply for Housing Benefit to be paid for a period before you make your claim - for example if you were unable to make a claim earlier because you were ill or away from home. However, you will need to state on your claim:

- Why you could not make the claim before (you may be asked to provide evidence)
- What date you want the claim to start

Your local council will decide whether your claim can be backdated.

Discretionary Housing Payment

Some councils have limited funds available each year to help people who are receiving Housing Benefit but still have some rent to pay and are finding it very hard to do so.

To apply for a top-up, you must make an application to your local council (forms are available from the council). Any award will be for a limited period and can only be for housing costs normally eligible for Housing Benefit.

Changes In Circumstances

It is very important that you notify your local council promptly of any changes in circumstances if you are already receiving Housing Benefit.

Starting Work And In Receipt Of Housing Benefit

If you start working after a period of 26 weeks on Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance (or similar benefit), you may be entitled to continue getting Housing Benefit at the same rate for a period of four weeks after your new job begins. Please ask for further details.

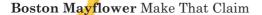
Where To Go For Advice

Please contact your Housing Team on 01205 318500. For in-depth advice we also have a Benefits Liaison Officer who is based at Friars House.

Alternatively, you can speak to:

- The Benefits and Revenues Team at your local council
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau

For contact details of these agencies please ask your Housing Team or go to the Money Matters section of our website at: www.bostonmayflower.org.uk



This leaflet describes some of the benefits that you may be entitled to, and how to claim them. If you would like it translated into your own language please let us know by contacting us on 01205 318500, through our website or at our offices.



Farsi

این جزوه برخی از مزایایی که حق شماست و چگونگی مطلابه آنها را توصیف می کند. اگر می خوامید که به زبان خودتان ترجمه شود، لطفا با ما با شماره تلفن 318500 01205، از طریق وب سایت ما یا با دفترهای ما نماس بگیرید.



Pashto

دغه رسلاله یوشمیر ګټمې چې ناسمې یبې ښایبې مستحق یاست اودمغوئ د ادعا (مطلابه) کولو څرګوالئ څرګندوې. که غواړئ چې دغه رسلاله د تاسې پخپله ژبه وژباړل شي لطفا په لاندنځېتلفونې شمیرې 01205 318500 سره د موږ سره د تماس، زموږ د ویب سایت له لارې یا زموږپه دفترونو کې موږ ته ووایاست.



Russian

Здесь описываются некоторые льготы, на которые вы можете иметь право, и как их добиться. Если вы хотите перевести эту брошюру на ваш родной язык, сообщите нам об этом: позвоните по тел. 01205 318500, зайдите на наш сайт или приезжайте к нам в офис!



Turkish

Bu broşür, faydalanabileceğiniz bazı yardımları ve bunları nasıl talep edebileceğinizi açıklamaktadır. Broşürün kendi dilinize tercüme edilmesini isterseniz, lütfen 01205 318500 numaralı telefonumuz, web sitemiz veya ofislerimiz aracılığıyla bizimle temasa geçerek talebinizi iletin.



German

In dieser Broschüre sind einige Leistungen aufgeführt, auf die Sie unter Umständen Anspruch haben, außerdem wird erklärt, wie Sie diese Leistungen beantragen können. Falls Sie eine Übersetzung der Broschüre in Ihre Muttersprache wünschen, teilen Sie uns dies bitte telefonisch unter der Rufnummer 01205 318500, über unsere Website oder über unsere Niederlassungen mit.



Portuguese

Este folheto descreve alguns dos benefícios aos quais pode ter direito e como pode pedi-los. Se pretender que este folheto seja traduzido para a sua língua, contacte-nos através do 01205 318500 ou através do nosso website, ou dirija-se aos nossos escritórios.

creating affordable homes and empowering communities



Polish

Ta ulotka opisuje niektóre świadczenia, do których możecie być uprawnieni oraz w jaki sposób można się o nie ubiegać. Gdybyście chcieli państwo otrzymać ulotkę przetłumaczoną na wasz język, prosimy o kontakt pod numerem telefonu 01205 318500, poprzez naszą stronę internetową lub bezpośredni kontakt w naszym biurze.



Boston Mayflower

Friars House, Quaker Lane, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 6BZ

t: 01205 318500 **f:** 01205 318501

e: mail@bostonmayflower.org.uk www.bostonmayflower.org.uk

24-Hour Emergency Repair Freephone 0800 1691530