



choice 

The Benefit Cap



Working
together for
positive change

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT CAP?



The Benefit Cap is an upper limit on the amount of benefit a household can receive. For the Benefit Cap to apply, someone in the household must be in receipt of Housing Benefit.

What does the change mean?

The Government now adds up how much money you get from a range of benefits, including: Bereavement Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance and Housing Benefit.

If the total comes to more than the maximum amount allowed, your Housing Benefit payments will be reduced.

In November 2016, the overall amount of benefit you can receive was capped to weekly amounts of:

£257.69

per week for single claimants

£384.62

per week for lone parents or couples (with or without children)

If your household is, or becomes affected by the Benefit Cap, you will receive a Housing Benefit award notification from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, advising that your Housing Benefit amount will reduce due to the Benefit Cap.

An additional Supplementary Payment, available until 31 March 2020 to cover any loss of Housing Benefit, may be available for households with children identified as being affected by the Benefit Cap from 7 November 2016.

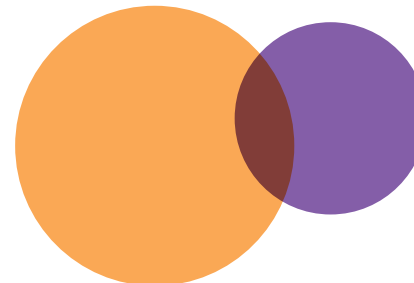
If you do not qualify for a Supplementary Payment, you can apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment to make up for the reduction in your Housing Benefit entitlement.

WHAT TO DO NEXT



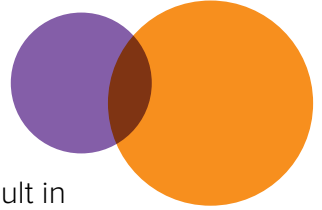
You can find out how Welfare Changes might affect you in a number of ways:

- 1 Phone our Services Centre: **0300 111 2211**
- 2 Email our Services Centre: **enquiries@choice-housing.org**
- 3 Visit Choice's website: **www.choice-housing.org**
- 4 Visit the Government's Welfare Changes website: **https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/welfare-changes**
- 5 Contact the Independent Welfare Changes Helpline on **0808 802 0080**



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WELFARE CHANGES



As you may be aware, Welfare Changes will result in changes to the benefits system in Northern Ireland. Some of the current benefits will cease to exist and new benefits and payment systems will be introduced.

Some of the changes have already taken place and others will follow in forthcoming months.

Choice is advising its customers about the changes introduced as a result of welfare reform. We will be outlining the main changes, what they mean and when they will come into effect and undertaking regular advice clinics to inform tenants of upcoming changes and how they can prepare for them.

MAKE THE CALL



To check if you're getting all the money you're entitled to Make the Call free to the Benefits Advice Line on **0800 232 1271**



or alternatively, text **CHECK to 67300** and an advisor will call you back. All calls are confidential and a friend or relative can even make enquiries on your behalf.

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