

(Annex A to letter)

MODEL LETTER FOR LANDLORDS TO SEND

The Housing Benefit [or housing element of Universal Credit] that you receive in the future is changing

I am writing to you because from 1 April 2018, the way Housing Benefit [or the housing element of Universal Credit] is calculated will be changing.

What does it mean for me?

If you have signed a new or renewed tenancy from **1 April 2016 [1 April 2017 for supported accommodation tenancies]** onwards, the amount of Housing Benefit [or the Housing element of Universal Credit] that you may receive from 1 April 2018 could be restricted.

This is because if you rent from a local authority, a registered housing association or other registered social landlord the amount of Housing Benefit [or the housing element of Universal Credit] you will receive will be capped to the relevant Local Housing Allowance rate for your household size that currently applies to private sector tenants. The Local Housing Allowance rates for your area can be found at <http://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/Search.aspx>

If you are under 35 years old and do not have any dependent children living with you, your eligible rent will be capped to a shared accommodation rate even if you do not share your home with anyone else. The rate for your area can be found at <http://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/Search.aspx>

Will I also have to pay for any spare rooms?

If you are of working age and have one or more extra bedrooms, your rent and any service charges used in the assessment of your Housing Benefit [or the housing element of Universal Credit] is already capped.

If the difference between your rent and the relevant Local Housing Allowance rate for your household is higher than the reduction for under-occupied bedrooms, only the cap will apply. Similarly, if the reduction for under-occupied bedrooms is higher than the relevant Local Housing Allowance rate for your household, only the reduction for under-occupied bedrooms will apply.

If you are of pension age, you will not receive a reduction in the rent used to assess your Housing Benefit for any under-occupied bedrooms but your

rent will be capped to the relevant Local Housing Allowance rate for your household.

Please note – in all cases, you will only receive one reduction.

What do I need to do now?

If you sign a new tenancy or renew a tenancy after 1 April 2016 [1 April 2017 for supported accommodation] you will need to think about whether the rent you pay in the social sector is higher than that allowed for private rented sector tenants.

In particular, if you are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit on or after 1 April 2018, you will need to consider how you will afford any shortfall in your rent. The website links above will help you to determine whether your rent is above the Local Housing Allowance rates for your area.

If you are unsure if this applies to you, please contact us or your local authority.