

Private Tenants under the Age of 35

Single claimants under the age of 35 have their Housing Benefit restricted to a shared room rate. The restriction does not apply to lone parents responsible for a child, those in receipt of certain disability benefits or care leavers under the age of 22.

To be exempt from these changes you will need to come under the following criteria:

- Care leavers under the age of 22
- Claimants who receive the middle or highest rate Disability Living Allowance care component or Personal Independence Payments and are entitled to a severe disability premium
- Claimants who have a non-dependant residing with them
- Claimants entitled to an extra room for a non resident overnight carer
- Former hostel dwellers who had occupied a homeless hostel for at least three months
- Ex-offenders who are subject to a MAPPA order because they pose a risk of serious harm to the public

Customers who experience a shortfall between their rent amount and the amount of Housing Benefit they receive, will be expected to make up the difference. Alternatively they may want to consider moving to cheaper accommodation or move into shared accommodation.

If you are affected by the restriction to the Local Housing Allowance Shared Accommodation Rate you may find your current accommodation unaffordable and you may need to seek advice and assistance as to what housing options are available to you in securing alternative accommodation

Free impartial advice can be obtained from:

- Isle of Wight Council's Housing Options Team. They can be contacted for advice by telephone on 01983 823040, by email at housing@iow.gov.uk or visit their web service page at iwight.com.
- The Law Centre – www.iowlawcentre.org.
- Citizens Advice Bureaux – www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/isle-of-wight

If you have not already done so you may also apply to join the Island Home Finder scheme to await your turn for permanent affordable social housing, although there is a long wait for housing on the island and this is not to be considered as a quick solution. Applications can be made on line at www.islandhomefinder.org.uk.

Due to the shortage of social housing on the Island, you may need to seek cheaper alternative accommodation in the private sector. Available properties are advertised each week in the County Press as well on independent websites such as www.wightbay.com or other room share websites. You could also look at adverts often placed in shop windows or ask relatives or friends if they know of anyone with a room to rent. Rents vary between each property and you will need to carefully consider what you can afford.

If you need financial help to secure accommodation by way of a deposit or rent in advance this may be available from the Department of Works and Pensions by way of a budgeting loan or you could seek assistance by saving with the Hampshire Credit Union - please visit <http://www.usal.org.uk> for more information.

The Housing Options team in some situations may also be able to provide guidance and assistance.

If you feel that you would benefit from some housing related support and you are receiving support from another agency, such as IDAS etc, they will be able to refer you to the Supporting People Team. Alternatively, the Housing Options Team will be able to arrange a referral for you so that you can access this service. Support can be provided from an independent agency and they will assist you with anything related to your housing ranging from providing assistance to complete application forms to accompanying you on viewings. When making the referral, you can choose from the list of providers as to whom you want to provide that support to you.

You could also apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment for assistance with the shortfall in your rent. There is no guarantee that an award would be granted as this is a discretionary hardship fund and each application is assessed based on its own merit and that person's individual circumstances. To apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment, please complete the application form which can be found in the Housing Benefit Section on www.iwight.com and on the 'Do It Online' tab.

If you have any other queries relating to the information in this document, please email housing.benefit@iow.gov.uk or contact 821000.