

Do you have more
bedrooms than
the Government
says you need?

From April 2013,
the Government have
reduced the amount of
Housing Benefit some
people can claim.



Under rules called the **Housing Benefit size criteria**, if you have more bedrooms than the Government says you need, you will lose part of your Housing Benefit. Your local council should tell you if this affects you.

We think you
may be affected.
What should
you do?



You must **make sure that all of your rent is paid**. If you do not, you will fall behind and be at **serious risk of losing your home**.

If you are worried about paying your rent, speak to us as we may be able to help you find a solution.



This leaflet explains some of the options that may help you. If you'd like to discuss these options with us, **call our service centre**.

What should I do?

You need to start budgeting now to make sure that if you are affected by this benefit rule you can pay any shortfall in your Housing Benefit.

To help you with this, you could do the following.

- 1 Find the extra money you will need from your existing income.** As long as you continue to pay your full rent, you do not need to do anything else.
- 2 Increase your income**
 - Are you currently unemployed but able to look for work?
 - Are you currently working part-time and able to increase your hours or work full-time?
 - Are you considering taking in a lodger, boarder or subtenant?
- 3 Consider moving to a home with fewer bedrooms where you would be entitled to keep more of your Housing Benefit.**

How can I increase my income?

Our Financial Inclusion team can give you advice about your benefits and how to manage your money, and our employment advisors can help you get into work. If you would like to speak to them, please call our service centre. They will take your details and arrange for someone to call you back.

If you are considering taking in a lodger, boarder or subtenant, you must get permission from us to do this. You can let only one room to a lodger, boarder or subtenant. To find out more, or apply for permission, call our service centre. [Taking someone in can affect your benefits](#). Our Financial Inclusion team can tell you how.

How can I move to a smaller home?

Mutual exchange

Many residents can swap their homes with another tenant from a council or housing association. This is called a mutual exchange.

As one of our tenants, you can use the national HomeSwapper website to find someone with a smaller property to swap with. This service is free to our residents and will search nationwide for you. The website address is www.homeswapper.co.uk

There is also a website specialising in properties that have been adapted to make them more accessible for people who have mobility problems or disabilities. The website address is www.accessible-property.org.uk

How can I move to a smaller home?

Move to another property

Depending on where you want to live, the process for applying for a move will be different and any move may take time. [Please call our service centre to find out more and what the next steps are](#). Our staff can also advise you on where we may be able to transfer you to.


You may be able to move to another landlord's property within your area by registering with your local authority. Or, if you are considering a move to a different local authority, check their website where you can find information about who is eligible to apply. While you wait for a move, you must not fall behind with your rent payments.

What if I have rent arrears?

[To move you must be up to date with your rent account](#). If you have considered these options but you have rent arrears, please call our service centre.



The new benefit rules apply from April 2013, so now is the time to get help and support.



If you are worried about your situation, speak to us as we may be able to help you find a solution.





Get more information
about the **Housing
Benefits Size Criteria**
by calling the number
that relates to your area

Contact us

Call the number that relates to the area where you live.
Service centre opening hours are 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday.

London: **0300 303 1061**

Thames Gateway: **0300 303 1062**

Kent: **0300 303 1773**

South West: **0300 303 1063**

Isle of Wight: **0300 303 1772**

West: **0300 303 1064**

Other ways to contact us

Email: servicecentre@shgroup.org.uk

Write to: **Service Centre, Southern Housing Group,
PO Box 643, Horsham RH12 1XJ**

Online: www.shgroup.org.uk

For help with translations, or if a large type, Braille or taped summary would be useful, contact the Service Centre.

Arabic	لتلقي المساعدة في الحصول على نسخ مترجمة أو إذا كان من المفيد بالنسبة لكم تلقي نسخ مطبوعة ببطباعة مكثرة، أو بطريقة برايل للمكفوفين، أو مسجلة كملخصات على شريط تسجيل صوتي، فيرجى الاتصال بمركز الخدمة Service Centre.
Bengali	অনুবাদে সাহায্য পেতে হলে অথবা বড় অক্ষর, ব্রেইল অথবা টেপে রেকর্ডকৃত সারসংক্ষেপ শুনতে চাইলে সার্ভিস সেন্টারকে 0300 303 1682 নাম্বারে ফোন করুন।
French	Contactez le Centre de services pour obtenir de l'aide sur les traductions, ou si un résumé en gros caractères, en Braille ou enregistré s'avère nécessaire.
Somali	Si lagaaga caawiyo turjumista ama haddii aad jeclaan lahayd farta waaweyn, farta indhoolayaasha (Braille) ama warbixin kooban oo cajilad ku duuban, la xiriir Xarunta Adeegga.
Spanish	Si necesita traducciones o resúmenes en letra grande, Braille o casete, póngase en contacto con el Centro de Servicios.
Turkish	Tercüme konusunda yardım için, veya iri puntolu, Braille körlere alfabetisi ile yazılmış ya da ses kaydı olarak bir özet isterseniz, 0300 303 1683'ten Hizmet Merkezi'ni arayın.



Southern Housing Group is a charitable housing association.
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