

CAN I GET HOUSING BENEFIT?

If you are on Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance or earning a low income, you may be able to get Housing Benefit. However, Housing Benefit may not pay all the rent if the rent is considered too high for the area. This is the Rent Officer's decision.

If you are single and under the age of 25, you will probably only be able to get Housing Benefit for the average cost of one room.

Please remember that if you take on accommodation which is more expensive than Housing Benefit will pay for, you will have to pay the shortfall yourself.

If you need any more information on Housing Benefits please contact your local Housing Benefits Officer.

CAN I GET HELP WITH THE DEPOSIT OR RENT IN ADVANCE?

The Benefit Agency (DWP) can give loans but only in rare cases.

Your Council may operate a Rent Deposit Scheme. Please ask for further details, some landlords may be willing to negotiate on rent deposits.

The material contained in this leaflet is designed to provide general information only. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is accurate, it does not constitute legal or professional advice. Any information and advice provided is used at your own risk and is not the responsibility of the Local Authorities listed. Produced by the Lincolnshire Benchmarking Group of local council's.

ONCE YOU HAVE FOUND ACCOMMODATION YOU SHOULD KEEP ALL THE PAPERWORK ABOUT YOUR TENANCY IN A SAFE PLACE. YOU SHOULD HAVE SOME OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING.

- Tenancy agreement
- Inventory
- Housing Benefit papers
- Rent book / receipts
- Landlord's address and telephone number
- Receipt for the deposit and rent in advance
- All letters to and from your landlord or agent.

HOUSING LAW CAN BE VERY COMPLEX AND IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM OR YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT YOUR HOUSING RIGHTS ALWAYS GET ADVICE BEFORE YOU ACT.



LINCOLNSHIRE BENCHMARKING GROUP

- **REMEMBER - YOU CAN GET CONFIDENTIAL HOUSING ADVICE FROM YOUR LOCAL HOUSING ADVICE OFFICER.**

Contact your Housing Advice Officer at:

**The Housing Department,
Boston Borough Council,
Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston,
Lincolnshire, PE21 8QR**

**Tel: (01205) 314200
Fax: (01205) 364604**



**FINDING
PRIVATE RENTED
ACCOMMODATION**
Know your housing rights

If you need somewhere to rent, this leaflet will help you find a place to live and help you decide if it's the right place for you.

The Housing Department, Boston Borough Council,
Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston,
Lincolnshire, PE21 8QR
Tel: (01205) 314200 Fax: (01205) 364604

FINDING PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION

There are many different types of accommodation around. For example, you can rent a self-contained flat, a bed-sitting room, or live with a family who provide you with meals.

Often the best way to decide what type of accommodation you want is to be clear about your own housing needs.

- How many bedrooms do you need?
- Do you have any furniture?
- Do you have a pet?
- Is there anyone in your family who cannot climb stairs?

LBG HOW DO I FIND SOMEWHERE?

Most local papers have an 'accommodation to rent' section. Because of the high demand for properties in the area it is important to follow up advertisements as soon as possible.

Local estate agents act as agents for a large number of landlords. Please ask your local Housing Advice Officer for a list of estate agents in the area.

Always check with the estate agency first to see whether they accept people with children, people out of work, or people with pets. Check what their charges are and the type and price-range of accommodation available.

Newsagents' windows often display accommodation available. Some supermarkets also advertise accommodation.

Your Council may have a landlord's accreditation scheme. Please ask, they may provide you with a list of accredited landlords.

LBG WHAT WILL I NEED TO TAKE WITH ME?

Be prepared to go to a number of estate agents and look at a number of flats and rooms.

Take with you:

- a map of the area;
- pen and paper;
- a supply of coins or phonecards for telephone calls;
- a bus timetable;
- a mobile phone;
- a Pre-tenancy Determination form. (This will enable you to establish the maximum Housing Benefit levels applicable. You can obtain these from your local Council office.)

You may be asked for:

- money for a deposit;
- money for rent in advance;
- references from your bank or possibly your former landlord;
- a Pre-tenancy Determination form.

LBG WHAT DO I NEED TO ASK?

Read your tenancy agreement very carefully before signing it. It should give you details about most of the things you need to know before you decide to take the accommodation. If anything is not clear, ask your landlord or your Housing Advice Officer.

Questions you may wish to ask

- Which rooms are mine?
- Which rooms do I share?
- What are the shared areas, such as hallways and gardens?

Questions you may wish to ask (contd.)

- Is there an inventory of the furniture and fittings?
- What furniture is provided?
- Is bedding provided?
- Does it have kitchen equipment?
- Does it have a washing machine?
- How much is the rent?
- Does it include water rates?
- What else does it include?
- Is the rent paid weekly or monthly?
- How is the rent collected?
- Will I get a rent book, or receipts?
- How much is the deposit and what does it cover?
- Will I have to register for gas, water and electricity?
- What are the arrangements for the gas and electric meters?
- Were the meters read when the last tenant moved out?
- Is there a current gas CORGI Safety Certificate?
- Does the landlord provide services such as meals?
- Who cleans the shared areas?
- Can I use the garden?
- Who is responsible for decorating?
- Will the property and my possessions be insured?
- Who is the landlord and agent (name, address and phone number)?
- Can someone move in after I have signed the tenancy agreement?
- Can I gain an agreement as to when repairs will be carried out?