

Cut your Rent payments and Council Tax

Find out if you should be paying less.

How could I pay less Rent or Council Tax?

If you are on a low income and pay rent, Housing Benefit could help towards paying your rent.

Council Tax Benefit could help to pay towards your Council Tax bill.

Can home-owners get help with Council Tax?

Yes. Council Tax Benefit is available to home-owners and tenants alike.

It is the amount of income and savings you have which counts not whether you own your home or are a tenant.

Do you have to be unemployed or retired to get this help?

No. It is the amount of income you have which counts, not whether you are employed or not. People on low wages can get Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit even if they don't get any other benefit.

People who are retired or who are unemployed can also get Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit if they have a low income.

How are Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit worked out?

We will work out if you qualify for help, taking account of your individual circumstances. This will include your income, your capital, and the size of your household.

If you were entitled to these benefits you would normally be awarded them from the Monday after you make a claim. So it is important to claim without delay. For people of pension age, depending on your circumstances, an award can be "backdated" to cover a period before you claim – but this is limited to a maximum of 3 months.

For people of working age the limit is 6 months – but only where the person can prove they had good cause for not applying earlier.

To find out more please contact our Customer Service Advisors on 01506 776800.

In addition, the West Lothian Council's website www.westlothian.gov.uk has information about Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit which is updated regularly.

This website also has a **benefit calculator** that you can use to estimate the amount of benefit you may be entitled to.

You can pick up a claim form at your local council office. The staff there will be able to help you.