

Under-Occupation Bedroom Tax



Under-Occupation - Bedroom Tax

Question

If I have a bedroom over my housing need will my housing benefit entitlement be affected?

Answer

- From April 2013, depending upon their circumstances people or families who have one or more bedrooms above their housing need will have their benefit entitlement reduced.
- They will have to make up the shortfall from the remainder of their benefit entitlement.



If you require further information or advice on the welfare reforms please read our help and advice leaflet 7 within this pack.

Question

What are the circumstances in which people's benefit will be reduced due to the bedroom tax?

Answer

- The bedroom tax will apply to people who are of working age and have one or more bedrooms above their housing need (see overleaf).
- Working age is currently classed as people under 61 years.
- In future years this age classification will rise as the Government has introduced proposals to increase the state pension age for men and women to 66 years by 2020.
- Housing costs will only be paid for one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household (see overleaf).
- Housing cost entitlement will be reduced by 14% of the gross rent for under-occupation of one bedroom.
- Housing cost entitlement will be reduced by 25% of the gross rent for under-occupation of two or more bedrooms.
- People will have to make up any shortfall from the remainder of their welfare benefit entitlement.

Question

Will there be any exceptions to the under-occupation charge?

Answer

The rules will allow housing costs to be paid in the following instances:

- One bedroom for each adult or couple living as part of the household.
- A child aged under the age of 16 would be expected to share with another child of the same gender.
- A child aged 10 or under is expected to share with one other child aged 10 or under, regardless of gender.
- A bedroom for a non-residential carer is allowed where they provide overnight care to a person with a disability.
- An extra bedroom will be allocated for approved foster carers.
- A bedroom will be allocated to non-dependant children (ie son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter) who are in the Armed Forces whilst temporarily away 'on operations' regardless of their length of absence, as long as they intend to return to live at home.
- An extra bedroom for a severely disabled child who would disturb another child if they were to sleep in the same room.

Exceptions will NOT be made in the following instances:

- Separated parents who share the care of their children.
- Parents whose children visit but do not live with them and are not counted as part of the household.
- Couples who use their "spare" bedroom when recovering from an illness or operation.
- Families with disabled children who may require their own bedroom.
- Disabled people including people living in adapted or specially designed properties.