



# Local Housing Allowance Update

## Break in claim

Legislation for LHA states that private tenants' Housing Benefit claims will be assessed under this scheme in the following circumstances:

- If it is a new claim;
- If they change address;
- Or if they have a break in their claim of one week or more.

Original guidance stated that customers could not withdraw their claim in order to take advantage of this new scheme—claims could

only be withdrawn if they had a change in their circumstances that would cause their entitlement to end.

This issue caused a lot of debate, both within DWP and Local Authorities, as well as Welfare Advice agencies and Landlords.

We have now received new guidance from DWP on this matter. This issue has been reconsidered, and they have advised that a customer can

no longer be prevented from withdrawing a claim to benefit.

This means that any customer wishing to withdraw their Housing Benefit claim can do so.

If they wish to reclaim Housing Benefit, there must still be a break of one week or more between their claims.

## More info...

Local Housing Allowance rates are published monthly—The Rent Service website has details of the rates for all areas, as well as the facility to calculate bedroom requirements, and search for BRMA's (Broad Rental Market Areas) that properties fall into. The site is available to the public:

<https://lha-direct.therentservice.gov.uk/Secure/Default.aspx>

West Lancashire District Council also publicise the rates applicable to this area on a monthly basis on the council website, as well as information leaflets for tenants and landlords. Information from landlord forums held in the run up to LHA is also available on the site:

[www.westlancsdc.gov.uk](http://www.westlancsdc.gov.uk)

Alternatively, if you wish to speak to an advisor about a more specific issue, you can call the Benefit Contact Centre on 01695 585080 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, and 9am to 4.45pm on a Friday.