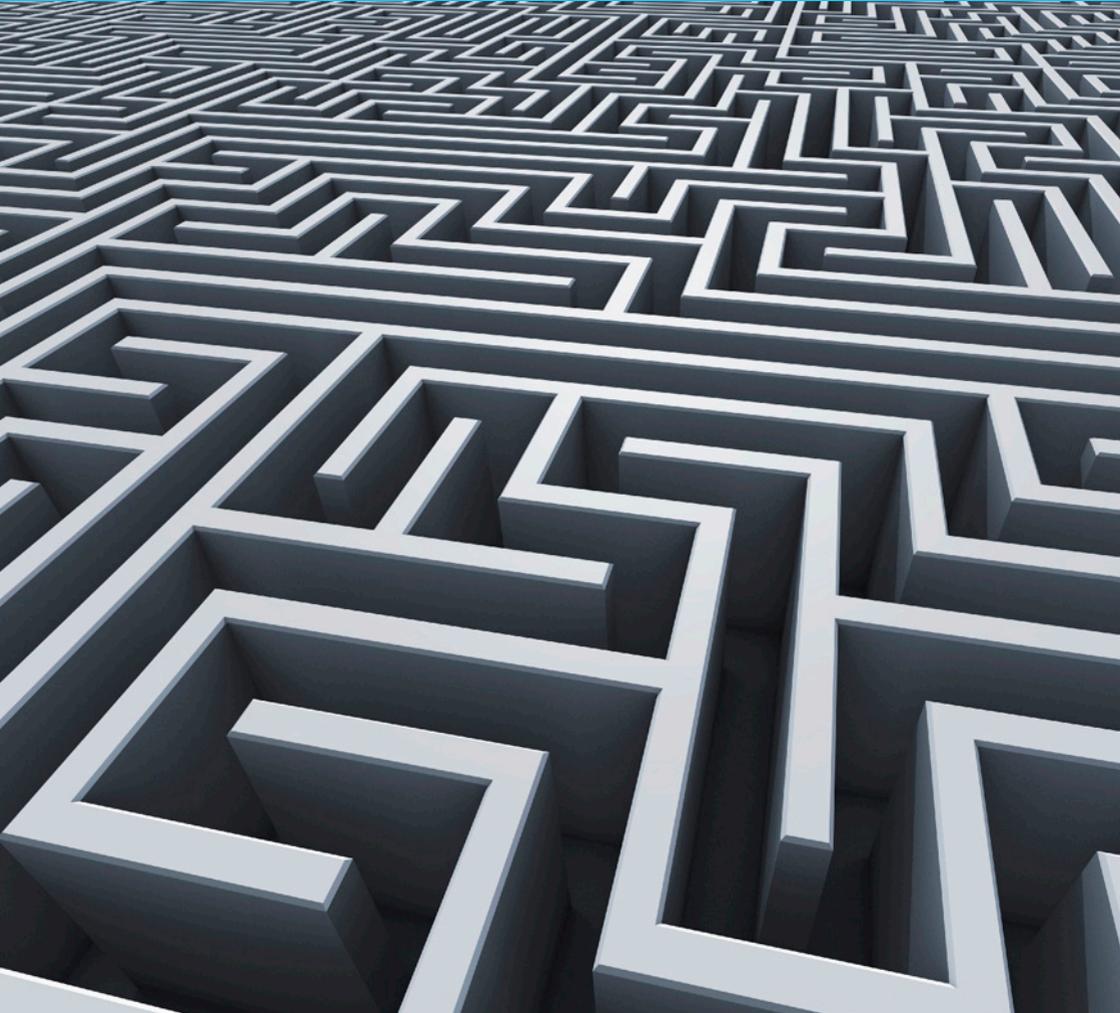


Welfare Reform

Housing Benefit

Under Occupancy Deductions

(The Bedroom Tax)



We are a voluntary and membership organisation working with and for people affected by homelessness. We connect knowledge and expertise to improve policy, practice and perceptions of homelessness.



glasgow homelessness network



On the 1 April 2013 Under Occupancy Deductions, also known as the ‘bedroom tax’ will come into force for people living in the social rented sector and receiving Housing Benefit.

What are Under Occupancy Deductions and who will be affected?

Under Occupancy Rules mean that people who are working age, are in receipt of Housing Benefit and are living in a house deemed too large for their needs, i.e. they have one or more bedrooms than they require, will receive a reduction in the amount of Housing Benefit they receive.

This will impact upon:

- i) Separated parents who share the care of their children and who may both have an extra bedroom(s) to reflect this. These new rules mean that the right to an additional bedroom for the child/children will only apply to the main care giver, determined by who receives child benefit.
- ii) Couples who have a spare bedroom that they may use occasionally, including to accommodate visiting grandchildren or older children.
- iii) Foster carers because foster children are not counted as part of the household for benefit purposes.
- iv) Families with disabled children who have an extra bedroom will be classed as under occupying
- v) Disabled people including people living in adapted or specially designed properties and have an extra bedroom will be classed as under occupying their property.

How will entitlement be assessed?

One bedroom will be allowed per person or per couple living as part of the household, with the following exceptions:

- i) A child of 15 or under will be expected to share with another child of the same gender;
- ii) A child of 9 or under will be expected to share with one other child aged 9 or under, regardless of gender.
- iii) A disabled tenant or partner who needs a non resident overnight carer will be allowed an extra bedroom.
- iv) People over State Pension Credit age will not be affected, including when only one member of a couple is over the age of 61.

What is a bedroom?

Bedrooms come in varying sizes, it will be the Housing Association or Landlords decision on what is classed as a bedroom within their properties.

How much money will I lose if I have an extra bedroom?

If you are found to have one extra bedroom you will lose 14% of your housing benefit; if you are found to have two or more extra bedrooms you will lose 25% of your housing benefit.

Are there any exemptions for people who are, or have been, affected by homelessness?

The UK Government have not yet released detailed information on how these rules will impact upon people who are currently homeless and living in larger Temporary Accommodation Proprieties, including Temporary Furnished Flats, than they require, or if there will be an exemption period for people accessing a Scottish Secure Tenancy through a Housing Association after a period of homelessness.



Supported Accommodation that is provided by a registered charity, housing association or voluntary organisation which also provides care, support and/or supervision to residents will be exempt from the Under Occupancy Rules.

Advice and Information

Many Housing Associations are working to notify tenants affected by these changes. Tenants who would like more information on their position should contact their Housing Association.

Independent advice and information on the changes can be accessed through local Welfare Rights Officers, Money Advice Agencies and Citizens Advice Bureaux. Local advice and information services can be found at: <http://www.gain4u.org.uk/>

If you have any questions, comments or ideas on improving this briefing for future updates, please contact Johanna Speirs at GHN :

 **Telephone** 0141 420 7272
 **Email** johanna@ghn.org.uk

© GHN | March 2013