



THINKING OF RENTING PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION?

DO YOU NEED HELP WITH THE RENT?

BEFORE YOU TAKE ON A TENANCY AND CLAIM HOUSING BENEFIT APPLY FOR A PRE-TENANCY DETERMINATION

If you are thinking of renting accommodation from a private landlord (not the Council) and you are likely to need help from Housing Benefit to pay your rent, you can now find out how much of that rent will be used to work out your Housing Benefit before you decide to rent the property.

A Pre-Tenancy Determination (P.T.D.) is a rental valuation made by the independent Rent Officer Service. This valuation gives you the rent figure which will be used by the Area Finance Office to work out your Housing Benefit.

Remember that when your Housing Benefit is worked out it will take account of your income and other circumstances.

The P.T.D. does not guarantee that you will get Housing Benefit or tell you the amount you will get.

HOW TO APPLY

This is a free service. Fill in and sign the attached form, which asks you for details about the property you are thinking of renting. You will need information from the landlord to fill in the form and they must sign the form as well.

Once the form is filled in and signed, forward it to any Highland Council Service Point.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Your local Area Finance Office will ask the independent Rent Officer Service to value the property and to decide how much rent would be reasonable. You will normally get your decision within seven days. If they have made a valuation on that property, on the same tenancy terms within the last 12 months, that valuation will still stand and the Area Finance Office will send you a copy of that decision. The next page of this leaflet explains the Rent Officer's decision and how it will affect your Housing Benefit.

Keep this part of the leaflet in a safe place and read it again when you get the Rent Officer's decision.

The Rent Officer will send you, the landlord and the Area Finance Office copies of his decision. The information he gives will help you decide whether you can afford the rent that is being asked. If you decide to take the accommodation and you wish to claim Housing Benefit, please **immediately** complete and submit your claim to any Highland Council Service Point. You can get a Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit application form from our Service Points.

PLEASE NOTE

Housing Benefit will only meet in full, rents which are around the general level for properties in the area where you have chosen to live. If your rent is above this level you are unlikely to get all your rent from Housing Benefit.

If you are **single and under 25 years of age** the Rent Officer will decide that the maximum rent used to work out your Housing Benefit will be limited to the average cost of a non self-contained room in the area in which you are thinking of living.

THE RENT OFFICER'S DECISION AND YOUR HOUSING BENEFIT

WHAT WILL THE RENT OFFICER DO?

The Area Finance Office will send your application for a P.T.D. to the Rent Officer. You will normally get your decision within seven days. The Rent Officer may need to look at the property you are thinking of renting, and if so, will make arrangements with the landlord to visit it.

The Rent Officer will consider things such as the rent charged, what services are included in the rent, the number of rooms in the property, the size of your household, the length and terms of the tenancy and the general level of rents for property in the area.

From this information the Rent Officer will decide how much the property is worth in the rental market and how much is generally paid in the area for a property of a suitable size for your circumstances.

If you are single and aged under 25 the Rent Officer will make another decision.

These decisions will be valid for 12 months from the date they were made.

WHAT WILL THE DECISION TELL ME?

The decision notice that the Rent Officer sends you will tell you the maximum rent figure that will generally be used in working out your Housing Benefit.

If the notice is for someone who is single and is under 25 years of age it will state what the maximum rent figure is, as well as the average figure for a non self-contained single room. This will be known as the single room rent. In this case the maximum rent will be no more than the single room rent.

It will also give you other information including details of any services such as laundry or cleaning paid for in the rent. These services are not generally met by Housing Benefit.

The maximum rent figure will go down if your rent includes other charges. The maximum rent figure can be further reduced by the Area Finance Office if the figure seems unreasonably high for your particular accommodation needs.

WILL THE MAXIMUM RENT FIGURE BE THE AMOUNT OF HOUSING BENEFIT I GET?

Not necessarily. Your Housing Benefit will generally be worked out using the maximum rent but if you are under 25 years of age the maximum rent will generally be limited to the single room rent.

The Rent Officer's decision does not guarantee that you will get Housing Benefit or that you will get the amount stated on the decision notice.

The Rent Officer's decision is only an indication of the amount of the rent which may be used to work out your Housing Benefit.

The Area Finance Office will consider your personal circumstances, for example the amount of your income and the circumstances of those living with you.

You may be able to get some additional help with your rent to prevent hardship. This help is known as a Discretionary Housing Payment. Any payment of Housing Benefit will depend on the date of the Housing Benefit claim rather than on the date you applied for your P.T.D.

ADVICE

If you need help or further information about P.T.D.s, Housing Benefit and/or Discretionary Housing Payment please contact any Highland Council Service Point.

IMPORTANT NOTE

A P.T.D. is not a claim for Housing Benefit.

APPLICATION FOR A PRE-TENANCY DETERMINATION

For Official Use Only

Local Authority Ref No: _____

Single Room Rent Required - YES NO
Please Tick

Date Of Application to Local Authority: _____

LOCAL AUTHORITY STAMP

Please answer all the questions and give as much information as you can. You will need to ask the Landlord or Property Agent to provide some of this information and to sign the form.

1. Please give the address including any flat or room number on the property you want the P.T.D. for:

_____ Postcode _____

2. What type of property is it?
(Please tick the appropriate box)

Detached House	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bed-sit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detached Bungalow	<input type="checkbox"/>	Terraced House	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flat in Block	<input type="checkbox"/>	Terraced Bungalow	<input type="checkbox"/>
Semi-detached House	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flat in House	<input type="checkbox"/>
Semi-detached Bungalow	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hostel	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flat over shops	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maisonette	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Room or Rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Please give details of the proposed tenancy.

What sort of tenancy will it be? (Shorthold/Assured/Other)	<input type="text"/>
How long will the tenancy last?	<input type="text"/>
How much is the total rent?	£ <input type="text"/>
How often will you have to pay this amount? (Weekly/Monthly etc...)	<input type="text"/>

4. Number of floors in the whole building

5. On which floor is your private accommodation on?
(Please tick the appropriate box)

All Floors Basement Ground
 First Second Third

6. Users of Accommodation - Please indicate the number of rooms in the property by putting a number in the appropriate box. DO NOT TICK.

	Whole House	Sole use for you and your family	Shared use with other tenants other than your family
Living Room	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Bedrooms	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Kitchens	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Bathrooms	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Separate Toilets	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Bed-sit	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Total Rooms	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

7. If it is a room(s) give location
(Please tick the appropriate box)

Front Centre Rear

8. Is the accommodation furnished?
(Please tick the appropriate box)

Unfurnished Partly Furnished
 Minimally Furnished Fully Furnished

9. Who is responsible for decorating?
(Please tick the appropriate box)

Tenant Landlord Not Known

10. Does the accommodation have
(Please tick the appropriate box)

	YES	NO
Central Heating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Double Glazing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Garage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Does the rent include any money for meals?
(Please tick the appropriate box)

Meal	YES	NO
Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evening Meal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Will the new tenancy be a joint tenancy with other people?
(Please tick the appropriate box)

YES NO

If YES please give their names below:-

13. Are any services or amenities provided which you pay for in you rent?

YES NO

Services/Amenities	INCLUDED IN THE RENT	
	YES	NO
Heating of your accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting of your accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hot Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gas/Electricity for cooking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laundry equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laundering by landlord	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cleaning of the accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Charges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cleaning of common areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting of common areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Who is the Landlord or Agent for the property

Name	
Address	
Telephone Number	<i>This telephone number must be provided to enable contact during normal office hours</i>

15. Please give your details

Title (Mr/Miss/Mrs etc...)	
Name (Full Name)	
Your present address (including the postcode)	
Date Of Birth	
National Insurance Number	
Telephone Number	
Do you receive Housing Benefit at your present address? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	

16. Please give details of any people who will be living with you if you take on the new tenancy.

Name	Relationship to You	Sex Male/Female	Date Of Birth

17. Ask the landlord or property agent to sign here

I am considering granting a tenancy of the above dwelling and give my consent for an inspection of the premises to be carried out by the Rent Officer.

Landlord's Signature _____ Date _____

18. Please sign this declaration

I am considering renting the property above and I intend to apply for Housing Benefit.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

When you have completed all the questions on this form take or send it to the Highland Council Service Point in the area in which the accommodation is situated. You will find their addresses in the telephone directory for the Highlands and Islands.

NOTES

A P.T.D. will tell you the maximum rent which Housing Benefit could meet for the property. It does not tell you how much Housing Benefit you will get, this will depend on your other circumstances (for example, your income and the size of your family). You will need to claim Housing Benefit separately, once you have received the P.T.D. and have decided that you want to take up the tenancy. You can get a Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Form from any Highland Council Service Point or it can be downloaded from www.highland.gov.uk.