

Stays in different hostels or refuges that add up to at least 3 months in total can be added together.

The hostels or refuges where you have stayed which you want to count towards your three months must have provided meals or shared kitchen facilities. While living there, you **must** also have received support and resettlement services.

If you were placed in a hotel or B&B because you were homeless during the coronavirus pandemic, this *could* count as a hostel as long as you received care and support of the same type as you would have received in a hostel.

Example

Lena is 22.

Last year, she spent six weeks in a women's refuge. A year earlier, she spent two months in a hostel for homeless people, with support and resettlement services.

Early this year, she moved into a private rented flat which costs £80 per week, but the housing costs in her UC award were worked out using the Shared Accommodation Rate, because she was under 25 when she made her claim.

Lena must let the DWP know about her time in the hostel and refuge if she wants her housing costs element increased to cover her full rent.

Other Special Circumstances

Disability Benefits

Your housing costs are worked out using the one bedroom LHA rate if you get:

- PIP – daily living component
- DLA – middle or high rate care
- Armed Forces Independence Payment

This **does not apply** if you claim Housing Benefit for your rent if someone gets Carers Allowance or the carers element of Universal Credit for looking after you.

Former Prisoners

You qualify for the one bedroom LHA rate if:

- You are 25 or over and,
- Your release from prison is managed under multi agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) - Level 2 or 3.



For more information go to www.citizensadvice.org.uk or contact our Citizens Advice Helpline: 0800 144 8848



Potteries Gold is a Citizens Advice Staffordshire North & Stoke-on-Trent project to help people in Stoke-on-Trent cope with changes to the benefit system www.snsCab.org.uk/about-us/potteries-gold
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Local Housing Allowance for Single People

Means-tested Benefits No. 19



Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

If you rent the place you live from a [private landlord](#), the benefit you get towards your rent might be reduced to your [Local Housing Allowance \(LHA\)](#).

A [private tenant's benefit](#) for housing costs is based on the size of home Government regulations say they need.

For example, a [single person over 35](#) usually cannot get help with housing costs above [£86.30 per week](#), the LHA for a [self-contained one-bedroom home](#) in North Staffordshire, even if their actual rent is higher than this.

If [children](#) or [other people](#) live with you, as part of your household, you may be allowed more than this.



The LHA rules apply whether you get help with housing costs in your [Universal Credit \(UC\)](#), or you claim [Housing Benefit \(HB\)](#).

They apply to [working-age people](#) and to [people over State Pension age](#).

However, different rules apply if you rent from a [Council or Housing Association](#), or if you are [living in a hostel or refuge](#).

Your HB or UC might also be reduced due to the [Benefit Cap](#).

The Shared Accommodation Rate

If you are [under 35 and single](#), and you don't have other adults or children living with you, your housing costs will usually be based on the [LHA Shared Accommodation Rate \(SAR\)](#).

This is based on the cost of renting a fairly cheap [room in a shared house](#), without your own kitchen or bathroom.

If this applies to you, you can usually get no more than [£60.95 per week](#) for private rented housing costs if you live in North Staffordshire.

Exceptions for some Under 35s

Some single people living alone who are [under 35](#) can have their housing costs based on the [LHA for a one-bedroom home](#), which is up to [£86.30](#) in this area.

The rules changed on [1st June 2021](#) to include more people.

- **Care leavers under 25**

Before the rules changed, you could only qualify for this rate if you were [under 21](#). You now qualify for the [one bedroom self-contained rate](#) until you are 25.

Ask the DWP or the council to look at your benefit again if you're affected by this change.

You count as a [care leaver](#) if you were in [care when you were 16 or 17](#).

If you claim Housing Benefit, you count as a care leaver if [social services provided you with housing](#) when you were 16 or 17.

Example

Emile is 23. He was in Local Authority care until he was 18. He lives alone in a flat he rents for [£75 per week](#).

He lost his job in April this year and claimed Universal Credit at that time. This currently includes just [£60.95 per week](#) towards his rent, because he is under 35.

If Emile contacts the DWP now, to let them know that he used to be in care, he should get the equivalent of [£75 per week](#) for his housing costs.



- **If you lived in a Hostel or Refuge**

If you are any age under 35 and claiming for housing costs as a single person, you can now get the one bedroom LHA rate if you have spent at [least 3 months](#) living in a [homeless hostel or refuge](#). The old rules only allowed this if you were [aged 25 or over](#) but [under 35](#).

Ask the DWP or the council to look at your benefit again if you're affected by this change.

Although you must have lived in hostels or refuges for at least 3 months, this could have been [at any time since you were 16](#).