

Local Housing Allowance rates for February 2012

Property size	Outer South West London (152)	Inner South West London (145)	Outer West London (160)
	Weekly rates (calendar month)	Weekly rates (calendar month)	Weekly rates (calendar month)
Shared accommodation	£80.77 (£350.00)	£83.50 (£361.83)	£76.15 (£329.98)
1 bedroom	£196.15 (£849.98)	£230.00 (£996.67)	£173.08 (£750.01)
2 bedrooms	£253.85 (£1,100.02)	£288.46 (£1,249.99)	£207.69 (£899.99)
3 bedrooms	£311.54 (£1,350.01)	£340.00 (£1,473.33)	£253.85 (£1,100.02)
4 bedrooms	£400.00 (£1,733.33)	£400.00 (£1,733.33)	£298.85 (£1,295.02)

There are important changes to the Local Housing Allowance rates from 1st April 2011. Please read the information on page 2.

A new set of LHA rates is available every month so please make sure you have the latest information. We will usually work out your housing benefit using the LHA rate for the month that you make your benefit claim.

To find out which LHA rate will be used to work out your benefit you need to know the size of the property that you are entitled to and which area of the Borough your property is in. Every property in this borough is in Outer South West London, Inner South West London or Outer West London. To find out this information please look on the LHA Direct website <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk>. This does not always mean that you will get this amount of Housing Benefit because we have to take other things into account, such as how much weekly income you have.

If you have any other queries about the Local Housing Allowance you can:

- Look on our website
www.richmond.gov.uk/housing_benefit/local_housing_allowance
- Phone us on 08456 122660
- Visit us at the Civic Centre, 44 York Street, Twickenham TW1 3BZ. We are open from 9 am to 5.15 pm from Monday to Thursday and from 9 am to 5 pm on Friday.

The Local Housing Allowance rates are changing from 1st April 2011

The changes to the Local Housing Allowance rates from 1st April 2011 are -

- The maximum property size allowed is four bedrooms. You can still choose to rent a larger property but the 4 bedroom rate is the highest amount we can use to work out your benefit.
- There are upper limits so that the weekly Local Housing Allowance rates in any area cannot be more than:
 - £250 a week for a one bedroom property
 - £290 a week for a two bedroom property
 - £340 a week for a three bedroom property
 - £400 a week for a four bedroom property
- All Local Housing Allowance rates have been reduced to lower amounts – these are now worked out so that about 3 in 10 properties are affordable to people on Housing Benefit. The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) calls these new rates the 30th percentile LHA rates. There is more information on the VOA website at <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk>

If you are getting or thinking of claiming Housing Benefit, you need to consider these changes before you agree a new tenancy or renew an existing tenancy with a private landlord.

When will I be affected by the changes?

If you make a new claim or change of address claim on or after 1st April 2011, and you are paying rent to a private landlord, we will use the new rules to work out your Housing Benefit.

If you are already getting Local Housing Allowance that started before 1st April 2011, you will not normally be affected by these changes straight away. You will be protected from any reduction in your Local Housing Allowance rate for up to 9 months. This protection starts from the date that we first review your Local Housing Allowance rate after April 2011 (unless there is a change in your circumstances before then).

For more details please contact us on 08456 122660 or visit our website at www.richmond.gov.uk/housing_benefit/local_housing_allowance .

Please contact us if you need a copy of this leaflet in Braille, large print, on audio tape or in another language.