



A guide for students

This leaflet explains about housing benefit and local council tax support for students.

Can students claim housing benefit and local council tax support?

Most **full-time** students cannot claim housing benefit because the Government expects them to use other money like their grant, student loan or access funds to pay their rent.

The housing benefit and local council tax support regulations say that a student is a person who is studying at a college of further education or a university.

For housing benefit, a full-time student is someone who studies at a college or university for 16 hours or more a week. If you are not sure whether you are a full-time or part-time student, contact your college or university who will be able to give you advice.

Which students can claim housing benefit and local council tax support?

You might be able to claim if you:

- are a part-time student;

- are a student who is responsible for a child or young person (as part of a couple or on your own);
- are a single foster parent;
- are state pension age or over;
- get Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or income related Employment and Support Allowance;
- meet the conditions for the Disability Premium or Severe Disability Premium;
- have not been able to work for 28 weeks due to illness;
- qualify for a Disabled Students' Allowance because you are deaf;
- are under 21 and not in higher education;
- have a partner who is not a student (they need to claim, not you); or
- have to interrupt your course due to illness or caring responsibilities (and the college or university have agreed to this).

If you are not sure whether you can claim, you can always contact the housing benefit and local council tax support section for advice.

Can student nurses claim housing benefit?

The same rules for students apply to students funded by the National Health Service. If you're not sure, phone the benefit section for advice.

Can students from abroad claim housing benefit?

If you are a student from Europe, you can only claim housing benefit if you fall into one of the categories of students who can claim. See the section 'Which students can claim housing benefit and local council tax support?'

If you come from outside Europe you will probably not be able to claim any housing benefit, even if you are in one of the groups of students who can. It depends on the conditions under which you came into this country and we will need information about your immigration status (the conditions under which you are allowed to stay in the UK, as set out by the Home Office) before we can deal with your housing benefit claim.

Can students who rent property from a university or college claim housing benefit?

Yes, if you are a full or part-time student and are entitled to claim housing benefit, you can claim for the accommodation you rent from your university or college. You can also qualify for housing benefit when you are not studying.

This only applies when you live in the property to go to your course.

You might qualify if the university or college rents accommodation on a temporary basis from a council, housing association or private landlord, and you are in one of the categories of students who can claim housing benefit.

Phone the housing and local council tax support section to find out more about this.

I have to maintain two homes – one at college and one at home. Can I claim housing benefit?

We usually only pay housing benefit for the home you are living in and paying rent for. You may be able to get help for two homes if you are:

- a student or trainee; or
- part of a couple and have to live in separate rented accommodation because of your course or work.

You may be able to claim housing benefit but it depends on your circumstances. You should check with the housing and local council tax support section, so contact them for advice.

If I am a student who can claim housing benefit, how much will I get?

How much you will get depends on your income. We work out your income as if you get the full amount of student loan available to you, even if you don't actually receive it all. We ignore the first £10 a week of this money. If you get a bursary for nursing or midwifery diploma courses, you cannot get a student loan so we don't have to count any loan income.

If you are a non-diploma nursing student, we count any grant and the full amount of loan income in the same way that we do for all students.

The rules we use to work out housing benefit for students are complicated. If you have any questions, you can always phone your local council for advice.

How do I claim benefit?

Just fill in a housing benefit and local council tax support claim form which you can complete online at iwight.com

What proof do I need to give you?

As well as your fully filled-in claim form, we need the following things to work out your claim:

- Proof of your financial assessment (details of your student grant or loan).
- Proof of all your other income and savings.
- Full details of your course, including term dates and which year you are in.
- Proof of your rent.
- Proof to show if you are a full-time or part-time student.
- Proof of your identity and your National Insurance number.

The application form will tell you what we need to see, but if we need more information we'll write or phone you and ask you for it.

I live in a property with other students. Will we have to pay council tax?

No, you won't normally have to pay council tax. If you live in a property that only students live in, you can claim an exemption from council tax (where you do not have to pay council tax). To do this, everyone in the property must provide their student certificates to the council tax office. If the council tax office doesn't get certificates for everyone in the property, they will issue a council tax bill.

I live in a hall of residence. Will I have to pay council tax?

No, you won't normally have to pay council tax as the property is exempt so you don't need to claim an exemption.

I share my accommodation with other people who are not all students. Will I have to pay council tax?

The rules about who is responsible for council tax are complicated where full-time students and people who are not students share accommodation. We would need to look at each case individually. Contact the council tax department for more advice.

Where can I get more advice?

If you want more help or advice, contact your local council or your university or college. They might have an advice centre that can help you. Alternatively, you could contact your local Citizens' Advice Bureau or Welfare Rights Service. You can find their contact details in your local phone book or by searching the web.

Where can I get more advice?

If you would like more information on benefits, please refer to our website at iwoight.com and follow resident services, then scroll down to the benefits and council tax tab. Alternatively visit direct.gov.uk

If you want more help or advice, you can contact us at:

Tel: 01983 823950

Email: housing.benefit@iow.gov.uk

Documents may be provided to:

Customer Services Centre

County Hall,
Newport,
Isle of Wight
PO30 1UD

Opening times:

8.30am to 5pm, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
8.30am to 4.30, Friday.

Ryde Help Centre

Ryde Library,
101 George Street,
Ryde,
Isle of Wight
PO33 2JE

Opening times:

9am to 12.15pm and 1.30 to 5pm, Monday, Tuesday and Friday.

Council tax

www.iwoight.com/revsandbens 'Do it online'

Email: council.tax@iow.gov.uk

Tel: 01983 823901

Contacting the Isle of Wight Council

Web: www.iwoight.com

Tel: 01983 821000

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Saturday, 9am to 1pm

You can also get more help from the following websites:
www.dwp.gov.uk – Department for Work and Pensions
www.voa.gov.uk – The rent service at the Valuation Office
www.citizensadvice.org.uk – Citizens Advice

Independent advice

If you need independent advice, contact your local citizens advice bureau. You can find their phone number (and the numbers for other local advice agencies) in the phone book and at your local library, or by visiting the council website.

Or you can visit:

www.iowlawcentre.org – IW Law Centre

www.ageuk.org.uk – Age UK

www.islehelp.org.uk – Isle Help

www.frontlineiow.org – Frontline Advice Centre

This leaflet is a guide and does not cover every circumstance. Some of the information in this leaflet may have been simplified and some information may become out of date because of changes to the law. We recommend that you get independent advice before making financial decisions based on this leaflet.

Isle of Wight Council, Revenues and Benefits,
Council Offices, The Broadway, Sandown, PO36 9EA

Telephone (01983) 823950

Email housing.benefit@iow.gov.uk

Web www.iwoight.com

If you have difficulty understanding this document, please contact us on 01983 821000 and we will do our best to help you.