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«Addressee 1»  
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May 2012

## About your benefit

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Dear «Salutation»

We're writing to let you know about a change that may affect how much benefit you get.

From April 2013, there will be a 'cap' (a maximum limit) on the total amount of benefit that people can get.

The actual amount of the cap won't be fixed until later this year, but we currently expect benefit will be limited to:

A maximum of £500 a week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If your household is made up of a couple (with or without children), or</li><li>• If you are a lone parent (and the children you have responsibility for live with you).</li></ul>
A maximum of £350 a week	<p>If you are a single person and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• you have no children, or</li><li>• the children you have responsibility for don't live with you.</li></ul>

The benefit cap being introduced in April 2013 is not the same as the changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) which have been taking place since April last year.

## How will this affect me?

Our records show that you may be affected by the cap.

From April 2013, your Housing Benefit may go down to make sure that the total amount of your benefit is not more than the cap level. You may have to use money from your other benefits to pay towards the rent for your home if your circumstances do not change before the cap is introduced.

## Which benefits count towards the cap?

These benefits all count when working out how much you can get a week:

- Bereavement Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Child Benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance (except where it is paid with the support component)
- Guardian's Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Incapacity Benefit
- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Maternity Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Widowed Parent's Allowance
- Widowed Mother's Allowance
- Widow's Pension
- Widow's Pension (age-related)

## Households that aren't affected by the cap

The cap won't apply to you if you, your partner or any children you are responsible for qualify for Working Tax Credit or have been awarded any of the following benefits:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Industrial Injuries Benefits
- Personal Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance, if paid with the support component
- War Widow's or War Widower's Pension

## How can I find out more about this?

We have a helpline if you need more information about how this may affect you. The helpline staff will provide general information about the changes and the support you can get but they will not have access to all of your benefit information.

The helpline number is **0845 605 7064** or textphone 0845 608 8551 for people with hearing or speech impairments. The helpline is open from 8am to 6pm and will be available from 9 May 2012.

You can also find more information online at [www.direct.gov.uk/benefitcap](http://www.direct.gov.uk/benefitcap)

## What can I do to stop the benefit cap applying to me?

Finding work could mean that the cap wouldn't apply to you. Qualifying for Working Tax Credit will mean that you are not affected by these new rules.

A job can also give you the chance to learn new skills, meet new people and boost your confidence. If you've been out of work for a while, the thought of getting a job may make you nervous, but there is help and support available for you.

If you already regularly see a Jobcentre Plus adviser, a Work Programme provider or a Work Choice provider, they will continue to support you to look for work and help you to get the skills you may need to find a job. If you are not currently in contact with one of these, you will shortly be offered an appointment to discuss the help and support that might be available to you. By calling the helpline, you may be able to arrange to get this support more quickly.

Lots of information you might need is available online at **[www.direct.gov.uk/jobseekers](http://www.direct.gov.uk/jobseekers)** where you can get help looking for work, and information on how to update your skills, write a CV, apply for jobs and prepare for an interview.

You can find out more about Working Tax Credit at **[www.direct.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.direct.gov.uk/benefits)** including how many hours you need to work to qualify for Working Tax Credit.

If you wish to discuss your housing options or any other changes to Housing Benefit, you should contact your local authority.

### **Call charges**

Call charges are correct as at the date of this letter.

Calls to 0845 numbers from BT land lines should cost no more than 5p a minute with a 13p call set-up charge. You may have to pay more if you use another phone company or a mobile phone, or if you are calling from abroad.

### **Textphones**

Our textphone numbers are for people who cannot speak or hear clearly. If you don't have a textphone, you could check if your local library or citizens advice bureau has one.

Textphones don't receive text messages from mobile phones.