

The Welfare Reform Act and Universal Credit



If you currently receive benefits, there are big changes on the way that you need to know about which could affect you directly.

Keep reading to find out more ...

Welfare Reform – what's new?



- The Welfare Reform Act 2012 is new legislation introduced by the UK Government.
- It makes a number of changes that may affect tenants who receive benefits.
- Clyde Valley Housing Association aims to support our customers through these changes – ask your Housing Officer or our Welfare Benefits Officer if you want to find out more.

Welfare Reform – key changes



Universal Credit

The Government plans to merge a number of means-tested benefits, including Housing Benefit, Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance, into a new single benefit.

This new benefit will be called ‘Universal Credit’ – it will be:

- introduced in stages from October 2013;
- paid monthly in arrears as a single payment; and
- paid directly to the ‘head of the household’ who will be responsible for managing their household budget.

This will be a big change for Clyde Valley tenants – tenants will be responsible for making your own rent payments instead of the current system where Housing Benefit is paid directly to us as your landlord.

Welfare Reform – key changes



‘Bedroom Tax’

The Government plans to introduce a ‘bedroom tax’ if you are a household of working age and living in a house bigger than your needs.

This will be introduced in April 2013 and will mean that:

- if you have 1 extra bedroom, benefit will only cover 86% of your rent costs – you will need to make up the difference; or
- if you have 2 or more extra bedrooms, benefit will only cover 75% of your rent costs – you will need to make up the difference.

If you want to find out more and discuss your housing options, such as joining the Common Housing Register or seeking a Mutual Exchange, ask your Housing Officer for more information.

Welfare Reform – key changes



Non Dependant Deductions

If you are a tenant who receives benefit and have adult children living with you, then your benefit will be reduced accordingly – these deductions increased in April 2011, again in April 2012 and will be increased further in April 2013.

Personal Independence Payments

If you are a tenant of working age who currently receives Disability Living Allowance, then this being abolished – from April 2013 if you are disabled you will claim Personal Independence Payments instead (existing claimants will also have to claim the new benefit).

Ask your Housing Officer or our Welfare Benefits Officer if you want to find out more about Non Dependant Deductions or Personal Independence Payments and how these might affect you.

Welfare Reform – key changes



Benefit Cap

From April 2013, the total amount of benefits payable will be capped from April 2013:

- if you are a single person, the maximum will be £350 per week; or
- if you are a couple with or without children, the maximum will be £500 per week.

Ask your Housing Officer or our Welfare Benefits Officer if you want to find out more about the Benefit Cap and how it might affect you.

Welfare Reform – what's next?



Over the coming months, we will be:

- continuing to raise awareness of the changes – through our newsletter, website and also through information leaflets available at reception;
- contacting all our tenants to advise how the changes will affect you – we will write to you or carry out a visit to your home; and
- arranging information days in our office and in our estates, so that tenants can find out more and ask questions.

Ask your Housing Officer or our Welfare Benefits Officer if you want to find out more about the new Welfare Reforms and how they might affect you.

You can also obtain help and advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau or the Department of Works and Pensions.