

# Housing Benefit

**If you have Parkinson's, you may have some concerns about how you'll manage financially – if you can't work or if you need help with your day-to-day needs, this can lead to extra costs. But there is some financial support available, so it's important to find out what benefits you're entitled to.**

**This sheet explains what Housing Benefit is, who qualifies, how to claim and what information you need to supply.**

## What is Housing Benefit?

Housing Benefit is a benefit to help people pay their rent. All local authorities run a Housing Benefit scheme. They are given money by the government to cover most of the costs of the scheme.

### Do I qualify?

You need to be responsible for paying the rent on your home, which is the place where you and any members of your family normally live.

You can get Housing Benefit if you receive income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance or the Guarantee Credit element of the Pension Credit. These benefits are known as 'passporting' benefits.

If you don't receive one of these passporting benefits, you can get Housing Benefit if you (or you and your partner together) have £16,000 or less in savings and your income is low enough.

Housing Benefit is worked out by comparing your income with a set of amounts, called allowances. These are based on the circumstances of the people in your household (you, your partner and any dependent children). If your (and your partner's) income is below the total of these amounts, you will get Housing Benefit. If your income rises above these allowances, the amount of Housing Benefit you get will go down. If your income becomes high enough, Housing Benefit will stop.

Nearly all of your income will be taken in to account, but some will be ignored, including Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance, and a certain amount of your earnings.

You will get less Housing Benefit if you have over £6,000 in savings – each £250 (or £500 if you are over the qualifying age for Pension Credit\*) over £6,000 is treated as if it gives you an income of £1 a week.

\*Until April 2010, the qualifying age for Pension Credit was 60. Between April 2010 and April 2020, the qualifying age will increase to 66.

## How do I claim Housing Benefit?

If you claim a passporting benefit (see previous page), the application for this will include a shortened claim-form for Housing Benefit. If you're claiming the passporting benefit over the phone, you can also claim for Housing Benefit at the same time. You may be sent a paper copy of the information you give, so you can confirm it is correct.

Otherwise, you should apply for Housing Benefit on a form that you can get from your local authority. Check whether your local authority accepts Housing Benefit applications by telephone or online.

Remember to photocopy any claim-form that you fill in, and ask for a receipt when you hand it in. This might help to prevent any problems in the future.

If you need any help with your application, contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau, Law Centre or Housing Advice Centre.

Your local authority will assess your claim for Housing Benefit and make a decision on whether you qualify or not. If you disagree with their decision, you should ask them to look at it again. You might also be able to appeal their decision at an independent appeal tribunal. Your local authority will give you details about this. Speak to your local Citizens Advice Bureau, Law Centre or Housing Advice Centre, who may be able to help you to appeal.

## How much is Housing Benefit?

If you live in a property owned by a local authority or housing association, Housing Benefit can normally cover all of your 'eligible rent' if your income is low enough. Eligible rent is your actual rent, minus any amounts for heating, water and other non-allowable costs that may be included in your rent.

If you live in private rented accommodation and claimed Housing Benefit before April 2008, your eligible rent is calculated in a similar way. But the amount can be restricted again if the rent is assessed as too high or the property too large for your needs. People with Parkinson's may be protected from some of these restrictions.

For claims made after April 2008 for private rented accommodation, each local authority decides how much rent can be covered using a standard 'local housing allowance'. This is a flat-rate allowance, and the amount that is set depends on the area you live in and who you live with. This figure is used whatever the actual amount of rent you pay, though from April 2011 the amount of local housing allowance cannot be more than your actual rent.

In each case, amounts are taken away if an adult who lives with you (other than your partner) is expected to pay towards the rent.

## How will I be paid Housing Benefit?

If you pay rent to your local authority, Housing Benefit is given as a rebate towards your rent account. If this isn't the case for you, Housing Benefit is normally paid straight into your bank account, but it can be also paid by cheque. Sometimes it can be paid straight to your landlord. Ask your local authority about this.

## What are Discretionary Housing Payments?

These are extra payments, not part of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, but they are still handled by your local authority. They can only be given to people who qualify for at least some Housing Benefit or Main Council Tax Benefit (see our information sheet Council Tax Benefit). You can claim for these if there is a gap between the eligible rent or council tax you have to pay and the amount of benefit you get to cover it.

Your local authority can give you a form to apply for Discretionary Housing Payment, or you can write a letter requesting it.

Disability can be considered when a local authority decides whether you qualify for Discretionary Housing Payments, so it's important to give all details of any disability needs. If you aren't given Discretionary Housing Payments, there is no right to appeal, but you can ask a local authority to look at a decision again if you aren't happy with it.

This information sheet only offers general information. If you think you should be able to claim Housing Benefit, you should contact your local authority housing office.

## More information and support

We have information sheets on other benefits you may be entitled to. You can download these from our website at [parkinsons.org.uk](http://parkinsons.org.uk) or see the back page of this sheet for details of how to order these for free.

### Our helpline

For more help and information on rights and benefits, you can contact our dedicated employment and benefits adviser on the Parkinson's UK helpline on **0808 800 0303** (calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks) or email [hello@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:hello@parkinsons.org.uk)

## Information and support workers

Our UK-wide network of information and support workers can also provide details about benefits and help you with the application process. You can find your local information and support worker online at [parkinsons.org.uk/isw](http://parkinsons.org.uk/isw) or call our helpline for details.

### Local groups

Speak to others about their experiences at your local Parkinson's UK group. Visit [parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups](http://parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups) or call our helpline for details of your nearest meeting.

### Online forum

Speak to others in a similar situation through our online discussion forum at [parkinsons.org.uk/forum](http://parkinsons.org.uk/forum)

## Thank you

Thank you to Disability Alliance for updating this information sheet.



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## Housing Benefit

If you have comments or suggestions about this information sheet, we'd love to hear from you. This will help us ensure that we are providing as good a service as possible.

We'd be very grateful if you could complete this form and return it to [Information Resources, Parkinson's UK, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ](mailto:publications@parkinsons.org.uk). Or you can email us at [publications@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:publications@parkinsons.org.uk). Thanks!

### Please tick...

- I have Parkinson's. When were you diagnosed? .....
- I'm family/a friend/a carer of someone with Parkinson's
- I'm a professional working with people with Parkinson's

Where did you get this information sheet from?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> Information and support worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parkinson's UK local group or event | <input type="checkbox"/> Ordered from us directly       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our website                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other .....                    |

We're the Parkinson's support and research charity. Help us find a cure and improve life for everyone affected by Parkinson's.

### Can you help?

At Parkinson's UK, we are totally dependent on donations from individuals and organisations to fund the work that we do. There are many ways that you can help us to support people with Parkinson's. If you would like to get involved, please contact our Supporter Services team on **020 7932 1303** or visit our website at **parkinsons.org.uk/support**. Thank you.

### Parkinson's UK

Free\* confidential helpline **0808 800 0303**

Monday to Friday 9am–8pm, Saturday 10am–2pm. Interpreting available.

Text Relay **18001 0808 800 0303**

(for textphone users only)

**hello@parkinsons.org.uk**

**parkinsons.org.uk**

\*calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks.

### How to order our resources

**01473 212115**

**resources@parkinsons.org.uk**

**parkinsons.org.uk/publications**

We make every effort to make sure that our services provide up-to-date, unbiased and accurate information. We hope that this will add to any professional advice you receive and will help you to make any decisions you may face. Please do continue to talk to your health and social care team if you are worried about any aspect of living with Parkinson's.

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How useful have you found the information sheet? (1 is not useful, 4 is very useful) 1 2 3 4

Have you found the publication easy to read/use?  Yes  No

What aspects did you find most helpful? .....

Were you looking for any information that wasn't covered? .....

Do you have any other comments? .....

If you would like to become a member of Parkinson's UK, or are interested in joining our information review group, please complete the details below and we'll be in touch.

Membership  Information review group (who give us feedback on new and updated resources)

Name .....

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