

## WHAT WILL THE DECISION TELL ME?

The decision notice that the Rent Officer sends you will tell you the maximum rent figure that will generally be used in working out your Housing Benefit. It will also give you other information including details of any services (such as laundry or room cleaning) paid for in your rent which Housing Benefit cannot help with. The maximum rent figure will go down if your rent includes charges for other items. The maximum rent figure can be further reduced by the Housing Benefit office when they come to work out your benefit if the figure seems to them to be unreasonably high for your particular accommodation needs.

## WILL THE MAXIMUM RENT FIGURE BE THE AMOUNT OF HOUSING BENEFIT I GET?

Not necessarily. Your Housing Benefit will generally be worked out using this amount but remember that the Rent Officer's decision does not guarantee that you will get Housing Benefit or tell you the amount you will get. This will be worked out by the Housing Benefit office and will depend on your income and other circumstances. You may be able to get some additional help with your rent if your circumstances are exceptional. If you get Housing Benefit it will be paid from the date of your Housing Benefit claim and not from the date of your Pre-Tenancy Determination application. If you want to claim Housing Benefit or need further information contact your local Housing Benefit office and they will tell you what to do next.

### **Breckland Council**

Revenues Services  
Breckland House  
St Nicholas Street  
Thetford IP24 1BT  
Phone: 01362 656872  
Fax: 01842 756513

### **Forest Heath District Council**

Benefits Section  
College Heath Road  
Mildenhall  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk IP28 7UZ  
Phone: 0800 163030

See our website:  
[www.angliarevenues.gov.uk](http://www.angliarevenues.gov.uk)

## Anglia Revenues Partnership



**Thinking of renting  
private accommodation?  
Likely to need help with the rent?**



**Before you take on a tenancy  
and claim Housing Benefit,  
apply for a Pre-Tenancy  
Determination**

If you are thinking of renting accommodation from a private landlord (not the council or a Housing Association) and you are likely to need help from Housing Benefit to pay your rent, you can now find out how much of that rent will be used to work out your Housing Benefit before you decide to rent the property.

A Pre-Tenancy Determination is a rental valuation by the Independent Rent Officer Service. This valuation gives you the rent figure which will be used by the Housing Benefit office to work out your Housing Benefit.

Remember that when your Housing Benefit is worked out it will take account of your income and other circumstances. **The *Pre-Tenancy Determination* does not guarantee that you will get Housing benefit or tell you the amount you will get.**

## HOW TO APPLY

This free service has been available from 2 January 1996. Fill in and sign a form, which asks you for details about the property you are thinking of renting. You will need information from the landlord to fill in the form and they must sign the form as well. Once the form is filled in and signed, send it or take it to the Housing Benefit Office in the area where the property is located.

You can contact us to get this form.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Housing Benefit office will ask the Rent Officer Service to value the property and to decide how much rent it would be reasonable to pay for it. You will normally get your decision within seven days. If they have made a valuation on that property on the same tenancy terms within the last 12 months that valuation will stand and the Housing Benefit office will send you a copy of this decision. Page 2 of this leaflet explains the Rent Officer's decision and how it will affect your Housing Benefit. **Keep this part of the leaflet in a safe place and read it again when you get the Rent Officer's decision.**

The Rent Officer will send you, the landlord and the Housing Benefit office copies of this decision. The information he gives you will help you decide whether you can afford the rent that is being asked. If you decide to take the accommodation you should claim Housing Benefit at once. You can get a Housing Benefit claim form from your local Housing Benefit office.

## IMPORTANT NOTE

Changes have been made to the way Housing Benefit is worked out for tenants of private landlords. Housing Benefit will now normally only meet in full rents which are around the general level for properties in the area where you have chosen to live. If the rent for your home is above this level you are unlikely to get all your rent from Housing Benefit. Details of these changes are in leaflet RR 3 available from your local Social Security office.

## The Rent Officer's decision and your Housing Benefit

### WHAT WILL THE RENT OFFICER DO?

The Housing Benefit office will send your application for a Pre-Tenancy Determination to the Rent Officer. You will normally get your decision within seven days. The Rent Officer may need to look at the property you are thinking of renting, and if so, will make arrangements with the landlord to visit it.

The Rent Officer will consider things such as the rent charged, what services are included in the rent, the number of rooms in the property, the size of your household, the length and terms of the tenancy and the general level of rents for property in the area.

From this information the Rent Officer will decide how much the property is worth in the rental market and how much is generally paid in the area for a property of a suitable size for your circumstances. This decision stands for 12 months from the date it was **made**.