

What is a pre housing tenancy determination?

If you are planning on renting from a private individual and you want to know how much housing benefit will pay towards the rent before you commit yourself then you can apply for what's called a pre-tenancy determination. Housing benefit is only paid to those individuals with the right to benefits in the UK and only those on low incomes, especially those on benefits such as income support and job seekers allowance. Housing benefit can cover the full rent or only part of the rent leaving you to pay the shortfall.

This pre-tenancy determination must be applied for before the tenancy starts or is renewed, and before the client makes or renews a housing benefit claim, and must have the landlord's consent. The application, which must be made on a special form, can be delivered in person, posted or faxed. The local authority will send it to the rent officer (known as a valuation officer in N. Ireland) for the pre-tenancy determination and must do so within two days of receiving the application.

The rent officer will make a determination and send a copy to the applicant, the landlord and the local authority. This should be done within five days of the rent officer receiving the application. The determination will show the rent officer's assessment of the local reference rent and the relevant rent for housing benefit purposes. It will be valid for twelve months from the date it is made.

If an application for a pre-tenancy determination has previously been made in respect of a housing benefit claim for the same property by a past tenant, the local authority must inform the applicant, enclosing a copy of that determination, within four days of her/his application. If a previous referral to the rent officer is used, it must be for a tenancy on the same or similar terms and for the same household composition, and must have been made within the last twelve months.

If people are relying on housing benefit to pay their rent, then they must inform the local council regarding any changes to their circumstances. This includes people moving in or out of the property or increasing or decreasing the number of paid hours in employment. Failure to inform the local council could mean that housing benefit is overpaid which will mean the local council will ask for it back if and when they find out.

About the Author

Davinos Greeno works for the [green companies](#) and [fairtrade shopping](#) directory that lists 100s of Organic and Ethical Companies

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