

The **Potteries Gold** Post

CHRISTMAS BENEFIT CUT FOR HUNDREDS OF POTTERIES FAMILIES!

LOWER BENEFIT CAP HITS CITY ON 19TH DECEMBER

The original Benefit Cap was set at £350 per week (including housing costs) for a single person and £500 per week for a family.

This is set to fall to **£296.35 per week** for a **single person** and **£384.62 for couples and families**. Families in Stoke-on-Trent whose benefit was already capped faced the new limit from **7th November**, while families who haven't been capped before are affected from **19th December**.

Is your family affected?

The Council estimate that **over 500 families** in Stoke-on-Trent will be affected. Most benefits are counted for the Benefit Cap, including Child Benefit. If you get more than the limit, your **Housing Benefit** or **Universal Credit** is cut. If you don't get either of these benefits, you won't be capped.

Families with two parents risk being capped if they have **three or more children** and have rent or housing costs of more than £50 per week. **Lone parent families** are likely to be over the limit with **three children** and housing costs of over £92 per week.

The Benefit Cap doesn't apply if...

- You or your partner are **'working'**. This means you get **Working Tax Credit**, or work enough hours that you could claim it.
- You, your partner, or a dependent child, get a disability benefit - **DLA, PIP** or **Attendance Allowance**, or **Employment and Support Allowance** at the **Support Group rate**.

- You get **Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit**.
- You get a **War Widow's/Widower's** or a **War Disablement Pension**.
- You are entitled to **Carer's Allowance** or get **Guardian's Allowance**.

If you worked **at least 50** of the last **52 weeks** and didn't claim Jobseekers Allowance, ESA or Income Support during that time, the Benefit Cap does not apply for the **first 39 weeks** of your claim.

If your benefits are capped...

Get benefits and budgeting advice **quickly**. Don't let arrears build up. You could ask your Council for a **Discretionary Housing Payment** to cover the Housing Benefit you have lost. You will need to give them full details of your expenses and income. Help is not guaranteed.

Check if you or someone in your family should get **disability benefits**. Get advice before making a claim for **Carer's Allowance**, as this may mean the person you care for gets less money.

Contact our advice line, 0344 111 444, or the Council's housing options service if you are threatened with **homelessness**.

Find work if you possibly can.

Contact us for more advice if your family gets **Universal Credit**.

Potteries Gold is a **Citizens Advice Staffordshire North & Stoke-on-Trent** project to help people in Stoke-on-Trent cope with changes to the benefit system

- ★ **Benefit Talks for your community group** ★ **Pop-Up Benefit Advice** ★
- ★ **PIP/ESA Workshops** ★ **Benefit Leaflets** ★ **The Potteries Gold Post** ★ **Volunteering** ★

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