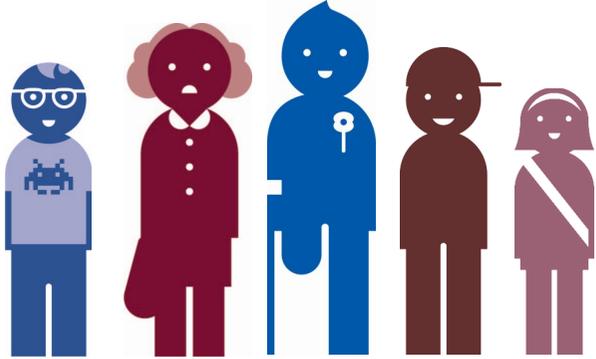


Changes to other benefits.

If your benefits are not capped because you get DLA or PIP, be extra careful when you have to renew your claim. If you lose your disability benefit, you could lose Housing Benefit too, so get advice or come to one of our workshops for help.



Claudia and Bob have 3 children.

Bob used to get DLA at the higher rate for mobility and his family weren't affected by the Benefit Cap. But Bob has been told he isn't entitled to PIP, which means the Benefit Cap now applies. The family get:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| ESA (Work-related activity group) | £143.90 |
| Child Tax Credit | £170.03 |
| Child Benefit | £48.10 |

The £384.62 Benefit Cap means Bob's family will only get £22.10 a week in Housing Benefit. Their rent is £100 per week so, as well as Bob's DLA, they lose £77.90 Housing Benefit per week as well.

If Bob can win an appeal and get PIP, they will get their Housing Benefit back as well as the disability benefit.

What can you do if your benefit is capped?

Get money and housing advice. If you are worried about how you will manage when your benefit is cut, seek advice as soon as possible. If you get into arrears with your rent, you may be evicted from your home, so it is important not to ignore this.

Find work. You could avoid the cap by working enough hours to enable you to qualify for Working Tax Credit or, if you are receiving Universal Credit, be earning more than £430 a month after deductions.

Claim a benefit that would exempt you from the cap. Find out if you may be due one of the benefits which would mean the cap would not be applied to you. Get advice from us about benefit entitlement.

Apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment from your local Council Housing Benefit Office. You will need a detailed budget to show you need help and the payment may be strictly time-limited.

For more information go to www.citizensadvice.org.uk or contact our Citizens Advice Helpline: 03444 111 444

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
www.snsca.org.uk/about-us/potteries-gold
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Potteries Gold

Guide to...

The Benefit Cap



What is the Benefit Cap?

The original Benefit Cap was intended to stop people 'on benefits' having a higher income than someone working and earning the average full-time UK wage of £26,000.

On 7th November 2016, the Benefit Cap for couples and families was reduced to £20,000 a year or £384.62 a week.

For single people without children it is £15,410 a year (£296.35 a week).

Almost all benefits are counted, including Child Benefit and Housing Benefit, although Council Tax Support is not.

Most people don't receive this much in benefits and will not be affected. In Stoke-on-Trent, the Benefit cap will mainly affect families who have 3 or more children.

How does the Benefit Cap work?

The Benefit Cap is applied by cutting your Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, but not other benefits.

Unless you get either of these benefits, your benefit won't be capped, but if you are a family receiving more than £384.62 a week, your Housing Benefit or Universal Credit will be reduced.

You will have to be left with at least 50p per week, so you still count as entitled to Housing Benefit, and can qualify for other help linked to getting this benefit.

Example:

Saira and Sam have three children. If they were not working, they would get:

£114.85 Jobseeker's Allowance

£170.03 Child Tax Credit

£48.10 Child Benefit

This is £332.98 per week

The Benefit Cap of £384.62

means they cannot get

more than

£51.64 per

week in

Housing

Benefit.



Is everyone's benefit limited by the Benefit Cap?

The Benefit Cap is targeted at single people and families who the Government believes could get into work.

They accept that in some cases, special circumstances may mean you cannot work and need extra money to live on.

If you or your partner are already working, you aren't capped. You are treated as working if you get Working Tax Credit or are working enough hours to qualify for WTC.

If you get Universal Credit you are treated as working if you and/or your partner have earnings/joint earnings of £430 a month.

The Benefit Cap will not apply if: You, your partner or a child or young person you claim for gets:

- Attendance Allowance or
- Disability Living Allowance or
- Personal Independence Payment

You or your partner get:

- Employment and Support Allowance *with the Support Component* or:
- Universal Credit that includes the *limited capability for work-related activity element*;
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Pension Credit
- War Widow/Widower's Pension or
- Guardian's Allowance or
- Carer's Allowance.

If you cannot get Carer's Allowance because you get JSA, ESA or another benefit that overlaps with it, you are exempt too.

