

## Changes to other benefits.

If your benefits are not capped because you or someone in your family gets **DLA or PIP**, be extra careful when you have to **renew your claim**.

If you lose your disability benefit, you could lose Housing Benefit or Universal Credit too.

### Example:

Claudia and Bob have 3 children.

Bob was getting DLA at the higher rate for mobility but, when he had to change to PIP, he was turned down for that benefit.

The Benefit Cap now applies. The family get these benefits:

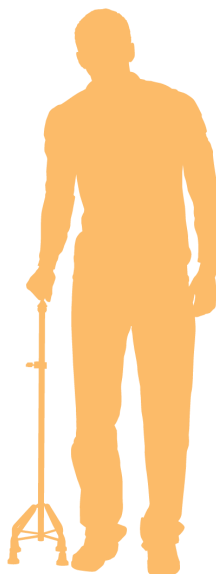
- ESA (Work-related activity group) £117.40
- Child Tax Credit £174.62
- Child Benefit £49.15

Total: **£341.17** per week

Bob's family will only get **£43.45** a week Housing Benefit, even though their rent is £100, as their benefits are limited to **£384.62 per week**.

They have lost **£54.59** Housing Benefit as well as Bob's DLA.

If Bob **wins a PIP appeal**, they should get their lost Housing Benefit back as well.



## What to do if your benefit is capped

### Get money and housing advice.

Seek advice as soon as possible. If you get into arrears with your rent, you may be evicted from your home.



**Find work.** If you can work, you could avoid the Benefit Cap by earning the equivalent of **16 hours at the minimum wage**. You could also make up some of the money cut from your benefits with earnings from part-time work.

### Claim a benefit that exempts you from the cap.

Find out if you may be due one of the benefits which would mean the Benefit Cap would not apply to you. Ask us for more information.

**Ask 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](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or contact our

**Citizens Advice Helpline: 0800 144 8848**



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

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# The Benefit Cap

## Means-tested Benefits No. 3



## What is the Benefit Cap?

The Benefit Cap is the upper limit on your benefits if you are out of work.

For couples and families it is **£1666.67** per calendar month or **£384.62** a week.

For single people without children it is **£1116.67** a month or **£296.35** a week.

Most people don't get this much in benefits and will not be affected, but it can hit the income of larger families very hard.

## How does the Benefit Cap work?

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

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

If you do not get Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, your benefit cannot be capped.

If you are a family entitled to more than **£384.62 a week**, your Housing Benefit or Universal Credit is may be reduced to bring your benefits down to this level.

If you get **Housing Benefit**, you have to be left with **at least 50p per week**. This is so that you can qualify for help linked to getting HB, such as **discretionary housing payments** from your Council.



## The Benefit Cap and Housing Benefit

Families with fewer than three children are not likely to be affected by the Benefit Cap in this area, but larger families might be.

### Example:

Saira and Sam have three children. They get:

- £117.40 Jobseekers Allowance
- £174.62 Child Tax Credit
- £49.15 Child Benefit

This is **£341.17** per week

They have to pay **£110 per week** rent. The Benefit Cap limits their benefits to **£384.62** per week, so their Housing Benefit is cut to **£43.45** per week, leaving them with **£66.55** rent to pay.

## The Benefit Cap and Universal Credit

If you have to claim UC, you could be hit harder by the Benefit Cap than families on Tax Credits and Housing Benefit.

### Example:

Jane and Nick have six children. They own their own home. Jane looks after the younger children full-time.

Under the old system, they got up to **£546** from Jobseeker's Allowance, Tax Credits and Child Benefit when Nick was out of work. None of these benefits are capped.

Nick's short-term job has just ended. They must claim UC, but will get no more than **£384.62 per week**, made up of UC and Child Benefit.

## 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 with the limited capability for work-related activity element;**
- **Carer's Allowance**
- **Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit**
- **Pension Credit**
- **War Widow/Widower's Pension** or
- **Guardian's Allowance.**

If you are a **carer** who cannot get Carer's Allowance because you **get another benefit that overlaps with it**, you are exempt too.

If you get **Tax Credits**, you are not capped if you and/or your partner work **enough hours for Working Tax Credit**.

For Universal Credit, your benefits are not capped if you and your partner have earnings, or joint earnings at least equal to working **16 hours per week at the minimum wage**.

Your benefits are not capped for **nine months** if you have worked for **50 of the last 52 weeks**.