

Welfare reforms

The first of the major welfare reforms that will impact on many Dudley tenants claiming Housing Benefit comes into effect in April.

Under occupation (bedroom tax)

If you live in council accommodation or other social housing, and are assessed as having more bedrooms than you need, your Housing Benefit could be reduced.

You are classed as under occupying your home if you have more bedrooms than you need. The guidelines are that a separate bedroom is allowed for:

- **each couple or single adult over 16**
- **any two children of the same or opposite sex under age 10**
- **any two children/young people of the same sex under age 16**

If you are classed as under occupying the amount of Housing Benefit you receive will be reduced. There are two rates for the reduction:

- a) If you have one extra bedroom your Housing Benefit will reduce by 14% of your full weekly rent.**
- b) If you have two or more extra bedrooms your Housing Benefit will reduce by 25% of your full weekly rent.**

The bedroom tax does not affect people who are of state pension age.

For information about carers and other situations, such as fostering, visit the Government websites:

www.gov.uk

www.dwp.gov.uk

or phone **Dudley Council Plus** on **0300 555 2345**

If your Housing Benefit (and therefore your rent payment) is reduced because of under occupation you will have to pay the difference to your landlord – Dudley Council. To set up a payment method contact Dudley Council Plus on 0300 555 2345.

If your rent is not paid and you run into arrears you risk losing your tenancy.

Other welfare reforms

Other changes to benefits, such as the benefits cap and Universal Credit, will be introduced later in the year. For more information please visit the following websites, pick up a leaflet from your housing office, Dudley Council Plus or your local library or telephone Dudley Council Plus on 0300 555 2345.

Department for Work and Pensions

www.dwp.gov.uk

responsible for welfare and pension policy

DirectGov

www.gov.uk

government services and information

Dudley Council

www.dudley.gov.uk/benefits

information on benefits

