

Factsheet B1: Main Benefit Changes announced from 2013

From 2013 there have been many changes to benefits, and some of the changes are going to be introduced over a long period of time so they will not affect everyone at the same time. These are just some of the main ones.

Some changes have already happened, such as the end of some parts of the social fund, and changes to retirement age and housing benefit rules.

From April 2013

Council Tax Benefit was abolished, and replaced by **Council Tax Support** from your local authority, who will also take over responsibility for a **Local Assistance Scheme** which replaces the **Social Fund**.

The **Bedroom Tax** started to be applied, which means that you may have been assessed to see if you have 'spare' bedrooms in your house if you are living in social housing. There is a formula for how many rooms you are allowed. If they decide you have 'spare' rooms, you receive less **Housing Benefit**.

From June 2013

If you were between 16 and retirement age in June 2013 and wanted to claim a disability benefit for the first time, you could no longer claim **Disability Living Allowance**. You needed to start a claim for **Personal Independence Payment**, which is the replacement for Disability Living Allowance.



This does not apply to children, as **Disability Living Allowance for children** will continue. It also does not apply to anyone over 65, as **Attendance Allowance** will also continue.

From September 2013

Some people on means-tested benefits will have had a '**benefit cap**' applied, which for a couple means they are not able to receive more than £500 per week in benefits, and single people are not able to receive more than £350 per week. This will not be applied to anyone who is working, receiving disability benefits or receiving **Employment and Support Allowance** if they are in the support group.

From October 2013

If you are receiving Disability Living Allowance and your award is due to run out during any time from October 2013 onwards, then you will be invited to claim **Personal Independence Payment** instead (anyone with an indefinite award does not have to worry about this until 2105). The same thing will apply if you need to report a change in your circumstances.

From April 2014

Everyone who is currently getting **Incapacity Benefit** should have been moved across to being assessed for **Employment and Support Allowance** (which replaced Incapacity Benefit). This process should be completed by the end of 2014.

From October 2015

Anyone who is still receiving Disability Living Allowance will gradually be reassessed for the **Personal independence Payment** or PIP. This will happen even where people have a 'lifetime' or 'indefinite' award, as Disability



Living Allowance no longer exists. It will take until 2017 for everyone to go through this process. You will receive a letter telling you when to claim Personal Independence Payment – we do not advise that you do anything before you get that letter, except perhaps to think about what medical evidence you might be able to provide at the time of your assessment.

2015-2017

The new benefit **Universal Credit** will be starting in this area. First of all this will be for new claimants who at the moment would be expected to sign on for **Jobseeker's Allowance**. The plan is that people who will benefit from changing to Universal Credit will be moved first. Everyone on Employment and Support Allowance will be the last to be moved.

See our factsheets on individual benefits for more information.

If you require further information or would like this factsheet in an alternative format you can contact us by calling: 01508 491210, by emailing: info@equallives.org.uk, or by writing to: Equal Lives, 15 Manor Farm Barns, Fox Road, Framingham Pigot, Norfolk, NR14 7PZ.

