

Housing Benefit - Temporarily away from your home (Temporary Absence)

Housing Benefit (HB) is only normally payable whilst you are living at the property. However, benefit may still be paid while you are away from home in certain circumstances.

The length of time for which you can continue to claim HB during an absence depends on the reason why you are away.

From 28 July 2016 if your absence (example – you go on holiday) is outside of ‘Great Britain’ you can normally claim Housing Benefit for a maximum of 4 weeks, provided absence is not expected to be more than 4 weeks.

Note - Great Britain does not include Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

In certain circumstances you may be able to claim Housing Benefit whilst you are absent from your home for up to 13 weeks, 26 weeks or 52 weeks. Please ask us for more information.

In all cases the basic qualifying conditions below must always be met:

- you must intend to return to live in the property after the absence ends
- you (or your landlord - if applicable) must not sublet your accommodation whilst you are away
- your absence must not be likely to exceed 4 weeks, 13 weeks, 26 weeks or 52 weeks as appropriate at the start of the absence

If you know that you are likely to be away from your home for much longer than the Housing Benefit rules allow, Housing Benefit cannot normally be paid.

If you wish to claim Housing Benefit under the temporary absence rules you must confirm the reason for your absence, your address during the period of absence and the period you will be absent from your home. You should look to do so prior to the start of the absence period or as soon as you can.

Council Tax Support

The temporary absence rules for Council Tax Reduction are different to the Housing Benefit rules.

- You intend to return to live in the property as your normal home, and
- You are not claiming Council Tax Support for another address, and
- The part of your home you normally live in is not rented out or sublet whilst you are away, and
- The period you are away (temporary absence) will be for no more than 13 weeks. However, special rules apply for people in hospital, people on remand and leaving home due to the fear of violence.

If during the course of the absence it becomes clear you will be away longer than 13 weeks, the Council Tax Support will end immediately.