

YOUR MONEY



Housing Services

The True Cost of Independent Living



A guide to how much it can cost when you move into your own place



Sheffield City Council has compiled the following information to help you decide whether a place on your own is something you can afford.



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Rent

What is rent?

Rent is the charge for living in a flat or house. The rent charge for council properties includes the cost of most day-to-day repairs to maintain the property to a decent standard. However, some private landlords who rent out property in the city may not be as clear about the level of repairs they will carry out to the home.

You can claim help towards paying your rent if you are on a low income.

Typical rents for 2016/17 are:

1 bedroom flat

- around £69 to £91 per week

2 bedroom flat

- around £75 to £96 per week

2 bedroom house

- around £75 to £96 per week

3 bedroom house

- around £82 to £103 per week

4 bedroom house

- around £96 to £109 per week



If you think that you may be entitled to some assistance, you should visit www.sheffield.gov.uk where you can fill in a claim form for housing benefit. Examples of circumstances where people do get housing benefit are:

1. Income support

You can claim 100% of your rent charge if you are in receipt of income support. However, this may not be the case if you have anyone over 18 years old living with you, or you are living in private rented accommodation. Council tenants still have water rates and tenants levy charges to pay as these are not covered by housing benefit.

2. Working and on a low income

An assessment can be done on your income which also includes any savings, tax credits and child benefit. This is then used to calculate the amount of housing benefit that can be awarded to you to help with your housing costs.

3. Pensioners

An assessment can be done on the amount of money you get from your state pension, any private pension(s) and savings. Your age is also a factor in calculating the amount of housing benefit you are awarded.

Changes to benefits

Significant changes are planned by the Government with the gradual introduction of Universal Credit. This will affect the way housing benefit and other state benefits are assessed and paid out.

From April 2013 the Government reduced the amount of housing benefit for working age tenants in homes that have a spare bedroom. If you need advice about benefit changes please call **0114 293 0000 / 0114 205 3333** or visit www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing

Council Tax

What is council tax?

Council tax is one way local councils raise money to pay for their services and is charged on all properties where someone lives. How much council tax someone has to pay is based on the value of their property, and the band into which the property falls. Most properties owned by Sheffield City Council are in band A which is the lowest band and the charge for 2016/17 is £1054.18.

A full council tax bill is based on 2 people over the age of 18 living in a property. However there are a number of ways your bill can be reduced. For example where someone lives on their own or where some people are not counted because they are a student, or where someone who lives in a property is disabled.

If you are on a low income you may also be entitled to housing and council tax support.

If you receive help with your council tax through council tax benefit, from April 2013 the Government changed this scheme to council tax support. If you are below pension age, you will have to pay at least 23% of your council tax. This means that you will have to pay at least £4.36 more per week unless you get single person discount.

For more information about council tax call our helpline on **273 6633** or e-mail council.tax@sheffield.gov.uk If you need help and advice about council tax support or housing benefit, phone **273 6777** or e-mail benefits@sheffield.gov.uk. More information is also available at www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing



Insurance

What is insurance?

There are 2 types of property insurance – buildings and contents.

In most rented property the landlord will insure the building. This cover provides protection for the structure of the property.

Contents insurance

Many people feel more secure if they protect their belongings by taking out contents insurance.

You do not have to have this insurance, but it is recommended that you do to protect yourself, in case your belongings are damaged or stolen.

It is worth looking round different insurance companies to find the right level of cover for you.

Sheffield City Council tenants can take out a basic contents insurance cover and pay a weekly amount in with the

rent. You must pay this charge to us regularly to make sure that your policy remains valid. The scheme insures tenants against risks such as fire, theft and water damage. There is no excess which means you will get the full amount of compensation that you have claimed for, once it is authorised.

Remember – if you fall behind with your rent, your contents policy is cancelled. You are then not insured and not covered for any compensation. You do not get your money back either.

The amount you have to pay for contents insurance depends on the amount of cover you require.

Figures currently available indicate that pensioners who are Sheffield City Council tenants can get cover from as little as £0.93 per week. Other tenants can get cover from as little as £1.39 per week.

Furniture Charges

What are furniture charges?

Some Sheffield City Council properties are advertised as furnished. This means that you can move into a home without the cost of finding furniture first. Furniture Choice Packages start at £10.00 per week for 2016/17.

Sheffield City Council includes the furniture charges in with the rent. You can claim help towards paying for the charge if you are on a low income and get housing benefit. However, if the situation changes and you do not get any housing benefit then the full furniture charge must be paid every week and can become an expensive commitment.

To find out more about the insurance scheme for Sheffield City Council tenants contact our call centre on **0114 293 0000** or **0114 205 3333**. For others, who are not council tenants or who require more than the basic cover of insurance, there are a number of companies who advertise insurance policies. It is worth checking as many as you can to get the best deal, as you can save money by doing this. Do not assume that because you have been with a company for a number of years that you are getting the best deal.

For those with access to the internet, you can use a number of websites to compare what insurance companies offer and how much it costs.



Water rates

What are water rates?

Each home has a water supply and there is a charge for this. In Sheffield the 2 water companies that provide the water supply are Yorkshire Water and Severn Trent Water.

If you rent your home from Sheffield City Council the water rate charge is included in with the rent. The amount that you have to pay is worked out based on the rateable value of each property.

You must pay this charge out of your income. Even if you get housing benefit to cover the cost of your rent, you must still make sure the water rate charge is paid every week.

If you own your own home or live in private rented accommodation, your water rate bill is a separate charge. You are usually required to pay your water rates in monthly instalments.

Severn Trent Water can be contacted on **0845 7500 500** (www.stwater.co.uk)

Yorkshire Water can be contacted on **0845 1242 424** (www.yorkshirewater.com)

Typical water rate charges for year 2016/17 are:

1 bedroom flat - around £7.20 per week

2 bedroom flat - around £9.51 per week

2 bedroom house - around £7.20 / £8.62 per week

3 bedroom house - around £8.62 / £9.35 per week

4 bedroom house - around £9.67 / £10.86 per week

District Heating Charge

What is district heating charge?

Some Sheffield City Council properties are advertised with district heating. This means that there is a shared heating system with others. The cost of heating the home is a weekly charge.

Typical district heating charges for year 2016/17 are:

Studio flat - £7.77 per week

1 bedroom flat - £11.85 per week

2 bedroom flat / house - £13.64 / £14.69 per week

3 bedroom house - £15.81 per week

Metered heating

In some properties tenants now pay a standing charge of £4 per week (50 weeks per year) and pay for the heat and hot water used in their home separately as a **consumption charge**. The consumption charge is currently 3.38 pence per kw/h (when comparing this rate with other energy providers you will need to add around 20% to their rate to arrive at a like for like comparison)

If you use it wisely metered heat could be cheaper for you.



Gas/Electricity Charges

What are gas/electricity charges?

Every home has an electricity supply and in order to use it, payments must be made to the company who is responsible for it. Many homes also have a gas supply, for heating and/or cooking. This must also be paid for.

For a number of years, different energy supply companies have been able to compete to supply gas and electricity to homes. However, not all companies

offer a supply to every area and it is important to check which companies operate in the area in which you live, and which one offers you the best deal. You can usually save money if you use the same company for both your gas and electricity supply.

Users of electricity and gas have been defined and placed into three categories. Citizen Advice has published the following information for 2017.

Because electricity and gas prices fluctuate these figures may change during the year.

Low Users – (based on annual consumption of 1,650kWh electric, 10,000kWh gas) pay on average **£75 per month**

Medium Users – (based on annual consumption of 3,300 kWh electric, 20,500kWh gas) pay on average **£100 per month**

High Users – (based on annual consumption of 4,950kWh electric, 28,000kWh gas) pay on average **£175 per month**

TV Licence

What is a T.V. Licence?

Most people have to pay for a T.V. Licence for their home.

Checks are made regularly and there is a large fine for anyone who doesn't have a proper licence.

Pensioners over 75 years old do not have to pay for a T.V. Licence. If you live in residential care, you may also be able to get a concessionary T.V. Licence. Blind people can also get a reduction of 50% of the full cost of a T.V. Licence.

The cost of a colour licence is £145.50 per year. The cost of a black and white licence is £49.00 per year.

For more information call 0300 790 6131 or visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk

Food

Once you have budgeted for all your bills, there is also the cost of food and general living expenses.

A weekly food bill can and does vary a lot depending on where you shop. A guide of what is considered to be an **acceptable level of housekeeping**, (depending on the size of your household) is:

1 Adult

- £51.74 per week

2 Adults

- £103.49 per week

1 Adult & 1 Dependant

- £81.25 per week

1 Adult & 2 Dependants

- £110.76 per week

1 Adult & 3 Dependants

- £140.27 per week

2 Adults & 1 Dependant

- £133.00 per week

2 Adults & 2 Dependants

- £162.51 per week

2 Adults & 3 Dependants

- £192.02 per week



Examples of how much it will cost you to live in a range of different sized homes per week. Please remember however that this list doesn't include everything and that some of these figures are estimated. The figures depend on the size of your home, how many people there are in your family, what you eat, how much energy you use etc. Some costs may also change during the year.

How much does it cost to live in these homes per week?

	Studio	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Rent	£69.00	£79.00	£79.00	£92.00	£109.00
Council Tax	£20.27	£20.27	£20.27	£20.27	£20.27
Insurance	£1.39	£1.39	£1.39	£1.39	£1.39
Water rates	£7.20	£7.20	£8.62	£9.35	£10.86
Furniture Charges from	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00
District Heating	£7.77	£11.85	£13.64	£14.49	£15.81
Gas/electricity <small>Based on medium use</small>	£18.50	£18.50	£28.00	£40.00	£50.00
TV Licence	£2.79	£2.79	£2.79	£2.79	£2.79
Food	£52.00	£52.00	£110.76	£162.51	£192.02
Total	£188.92	£203.00	£274.47	£352.80	£412.14

is paid as a one-off payment and does not affect your other benefit entitlements. It is not a loan and you do not have to repay any back once it has been awarded.

This list is not exhaustive and it depends on your circumstances as to whether you are able to apply for this sort of help.

For further information about these and other possible payments contact Jobcentre Plus on 0800 0556 688

www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits

Benefit changes

Please remember the Government is making big changes to welfare benefits. If you want to talk to someone about what these changes could mean for you, we have a specialist Welfare Benefit Reform Team to help. You can contact them on **0114 293 0000** or **0114 205 3333**. Further information is also available at www.sheffield.gov.uk/benefitchanges

Additional Income and Assistance

What are these?

Some people may need help and support when they move to live independently. Others, already living in their own home and suffering severe financial hardship, may be able to claim additional income and assistance.

Examples of these include:

1. Tax Credits
2. Disability Living Allowance/ Personal Independence Payment
3. Carer's Allowance
4. Community Care Grant

Some of these extra allowances are paid on a weekly basis and are classed as extra income for benefit purposes. You must therefore report any change in your circumstances to the appropriate authorities.

Some allowances, such as the community care grant are different. Community care grant

Contact Housing Services



Phone: Call Centres 0114 293 0000
0114 205 3333
Repairs 0114 273 5555



Online:
Enquiries: www.sheffield.gov.uk/contacthousing
Website: www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing

Follow us:   



Write: Council Housing Service
PO Box 483
M33 0DH



Visit Us: To find your local office please telephone us or alternatively you can visit our website and search for your local office using our interactive map.

Some calls may be monitored by Sheffield City Council and its partners for quality and training purposes.



Need help accessing our services?

A translation of this leaflet is automatically available in the languages below. It can also be made available in other languages on request.

Arabic

تتوفر نسخة مترجمة من هذه الكراسية باللغة العربية

Farsi

ترجمة ان برگچه در فارسی دستیاب است

Somali

Turjibaanka guub-yarahaan waxaa lagu heli karaa Soomaali

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Sheffield City Council
www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing



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