

# Your guide to Under-Occupation

(known as the Bedroom Tax)



## This information only applies if you are a tenant of Ashfield and you are of working age.



### What is the 'Bedroom Tax'?

- From April 2013, there may be changes to the amount of Housing Benefit you receive depending on the number of bedrooms in your home. If you have a "spare" bedroom you will be regarded as 'under-occupying' the property and the amount of Housing Benefit you receive will be reduced
- The 'bedroom tax' will only apply to people who are of working age, who receive housing benefit **and** have one or more "spare" bedrooms (Working age is currently classed as people under 61 years of age)

We describe below what we mean by a spare bedroom:

- If you are under occupying your home by one bedroom your housing benefit could be reduced by up to 14%
- If you are under occupying your home by two or more bedrooms your housing benefit could be reduced by up to 25%
- If your housing benefit is reduced you may be required to pay the shortfall



### How are the numbers of bedrooms I need calculated?

- One bedroom for each adult or couple
- Two children of the same sex under the age of 16 will be expected to share a bedroom
- Two children of the opposite sex under the age of 10 will be expected to share a bedroom. For example if you have a boy aged 9 and a girl aged 8 they are expected to share a bedroom
- A carer is allowed a bedroom where they provide *overnight* care to a person with a disability

#### Exceptions cannot be made for the following: -

- Separated parents who share the care of their children
- Parents whose children visit but are not part of the household
- Couples who use their "spare" bedroom when recovering from an illness or operation
- Foster children (as they are not counted as part of the household for benefit entitlement purposes)
- Families with disabled children who may require their own bedroom
- Disabled people including people living in adapted or specially designed properties

## Ashfield District Council, you receive housing benefit

If you receive a letter from Ashfield District Council asking for your family details please complete and return it as it will help us identify who may need support and advice.



### **If I have a spare bedroom that I do not use or is used for other purposes will my Housing Benefit be affected?**

- From April 2013, depending upon their circumstances, households who have one or more spare bedrooms will have their housing benefit reduced

Examples of a spare bedroom:

- A couple with two children, a boy aged 9 and a girl aged 8, living in a 3 bedroom house are classed as under-occupying by one bedroom and therefore will lose 14% of their housing benefit (approximately £12.00 per week)
- Single person or couple living in a three bedroom house, are classed as under-occupying by two bedrooms and therefore will lose 25% of their housing benefit (approximately £22.00 per week)



### **If I am likely to lose some of my housing benefit what are my options?**

- You can register for a transfer into a smaller property on Homefinder by contacting Ashfield Homes Limited on **01623 608907** or by visiting **[www.amhomefinder.co.uk](http://www.amhomefinder.co.uk)**
- You can register for a mutual exchange on the National Homeswapper Scheme with another tenant looking for a larger property. Log on to **[www.HomeSwapper.co.uk](http://www.HomeSwapper.co.uk)**
- You can try to increase your income by taking in a lodger (you will need permission from your landlord)
- You can try to increase your income by trying to find work (contact your local Job Centre Plus)
- Stay in your home and pay the shortfall from your other income



## Where can I get help and advice?

If you think you may be affected by these changes please get in touch in the first instance with Customer Services at Ashfield District Council. You can do this in a number of ways:

- In person at Urban Road, Kirkby in Ashfield NG17 8DA
- By telephoning Customer Services on **01623 457237**
- By email to **customerservices@ashfield-dc.gov.uk**



## Further information may also be available from other websites

### Citizens Advice

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

### National Debt line

[www.nationaldebtline.co.uk](http://www.nationaldebtline.co.uk) or telephone **0808 808 4000**

### Department for Work and Pensions

[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

If you require a large print or audio version of this document, please contact the Corporate Communications Unit on 01623 457004.

#### GUJARATI

કોઈ સહાયની બધી માહિતી મોટી છાપમાં, કસ્ટોમર સર્વિસ ઓફિસમાં અથવા અન્ય ભાષાઓમાં મળી શકે છે. કૃપા કરી કસ્ટોમર સર્વિસ ઓફિસનો (01623) 450000 પર સંપર્ક સાધો.

#### CHINESE

當地政府的所有資料現均用大字體版、錄音帶、凸文版和其它語言製作。請致電(01623) 450000 與顧客服務部接觸。

#### POLISH

Wszelkie informacje Rady Miejskiej (Council) dostępne są również dużym drukiem, jako audio, pismem Braille'a oraz w innych językach. Prosimy o kontakt z Customer Services tel. (01623) 450000.

#### KURDISH

هەر جی زانیاریکی نه نۆجۆمه نه هه به ناماده به به شیوهی چاپی گهۆره، وه کاسینی نۆمار کراو، وه به برابری (نوو سینی نایه نه بو کهسانی کۆره)، وه ههروهها به زمانه کانی نر. نکابه به یوه نگی بکه به به شیخی خزمهت کردنی مه عمیل له سهه زماره نه له فۆن: (01623) 450000

#### URDU

کاؤنسل سے متعلقہ ہر قسم کی معلومات بڑے پرنٹ، آڈیو، بریل اور دیگر زبانوں میں دستیاب ہے۔ براؤن ہیریائی کسٹمر سروسز (صارفین کے لیے خدمات) سے فون نمبر (01623) 450000 پر رابطہ کریں۔

### Ashfield District Council

Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, NG17 8DA Tel: 01623 450000  
[www.ashfield-dc.gov.uk](http://www.ashfield-dc.gov.uk)



Ashfield