

# Number of Spare Bedrooms, according to the Housing Benefit Size Criteria, in Working Age Households in the Social Rented Sector in Great Britain

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# Introduction

In April 2013 the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy was introduced for working age Housing Benefit (HB) claimants in the social rented sector. Claimants are assessed as having spare bedrooms in their accommodation if they have more bedrooms than their household is deemed to need according to the following criteria:

One bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household, with the following exceptions:

- child aged 15 or under would be expected to share with one other child of the same gender; and
- child aged 9 or under would be expected to share with one other child aged 9 or under, regardless of gender.

A bedroom will also be allowed for a non-resident who provides frequent overnight care for the claimant or their partner, and for each severely disabled child that cannot share a room but would otherwise be expected to. Also one bedroom is allowed for a foster child/ren and a bedroom for any adult child serving in the Armed Forces who continues to live with their parents but is away on operational duty. Data and modelling limitations, however, mean that the estimates provided here do not take into account these additional provisions.

This statistical release provides wider context than working age HB claimants in the social rented sector and presents estimates of the number of spare bedrooms, according to the criteria above, in 2010-11 for all working age households in the social rented sector. These estimates are broken down by country (England, Scotland and Wales).

The scope of the publication is restricted to working age households as the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy will not apply to pension age households in the social rented sector.

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# Background

## Housing Benefit

1. From 1 April 2013 the Government has introduced the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy for new and existing working age HB claimants living in the Social Rented Sector. The size criteria, used to determine whether the Spare Room Subsidy should be removed, replicate those that apply to HB claimants in the Private Rented Sector and whose claims are assessed using the Local Housing Allowance rules. The applicable maximum rent will be reduced by 14% where a claimant is under occupying by one bedroom and 25% where they are under occupying by two or more bedrooms.
2. Further information on the impact of this measure on HB claimants is available at: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/eia-social-sector-housing-under-occupation-wr2011.pdf>

## The Family Resources Survey

3. The Family Resources Survey (FRS) collects information on the incomes and circumstances of private households. Data for the survey is collected between April and March each year and covers the United Kingdom.
4. Further background information and statistics derived from the survey can be found at <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/frs/>.

# Methodology

5. The figures from the FRS are based on a sample of households which have been adjusted for non-response using multi-purpose grossing factors which align the FRS to regional population by age and sex. Estimates are subject to both sampling error and remaining non-response error.
6. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100,000.
7. The definition of a household used in the FRS is a single person or group of people living at the same address who either share one meal a day or share the living accommodation. A household may include more than one benefit unit, defined as a single adult or a married or cohabiting couple plus any dependent children.
8. The FRS excludes non-private households, e.g. communal establishments such as hostels and boarding houses.
9. In the FRS tenure type is recorded at household level. Social renters include all households where a housing association or the local authority is the landlord, except where accommodation is part of job.

## Results

10. Table 1 below gives a breakdown of the estimated number of spare bedrooms in the social rented sector, according to HB size criteria, by country (England, Scotland, and Wales), where the head of the household's age is under 65.

**Table 1: Estimated total number of spare bedrooms, according to the Housing Benefit size criteria, in working age households in the social rented sector in Great Britain in 2010-11**

|                      | <b>Number of spare bedrooms</b> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>England</b>       | 1,200,000                       |
| <b>Wales</b>         | 100,000                         |
| <b>Scotland</b>      | 200,000                         |
| <b>Great Britain</b> | 1,500,000                       |

Source: Estimates are derived from the Family Resources Survey 2010-11.

### Notes

1. The estimates for the number of spare bedrooms are based on survey data and are therefore subject to a degree of uncertainty. The figures have been rounded to the nearest 100,000 bedrooms.
2. Working age households are defined here as those where the head of the household's age is under 65.
3. This analysis does not account for bedrooms allowed for non-resident overnight carers, or the rules that apply in relation to foster carers, armed services personnel and disabled children who cannot share a bedroom.

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