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Housing Benefit Team  
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## The Housing Benefit you receive is changing.

Dear customer

In April 2011 the Government changed the way Housing Benefit is calculated for tenants renting from private landlords.

The change may mean that the amount of Housing Benefit you get may go down. I appreciate that this change may be unsettling and you will have questions.

To understand how you may be affected, we've included an information leaflet with this letter. This shows details of the changes and where you can get more information.

Because you are already getting Housing Benefit, you may have more time before your rate changes. If your circumstances don't change, you will have nine months at your current Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate after we next assess your Housing Benefit. For example if you first made your claim for Housing Benefit on 10 August 2010, your yearly review date will be 10 August 2011 – you then have nine months at your current LHA rate before changes apply.

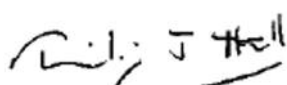
But it is important for you to know if you are getting more in Housing Benefit than you pay in rent then this will end immediately when we next assess your entitlement.

It's important that you contact our Housing Benefit team if you change your living arrangements, for example if you start a new tenancy agreement, extend an existing arrangement, or move house. Our contact details are at the top of this letter. Information is also available on our website at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/housingbenefit](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/housingbenefit).

If you want to know what your Local Housing Allowance rate is now, visit the LHA Direct website at <http://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk>. This will help you plan for the changes next year. These rates change every month, so keep checking.

You can compare the current rates against what the new rates are likely to be for where you live, on the following website [www.voa.gov.uk/lhadirect/LHA\\_percentile\\_rates.htm](http://www.voa.gov.uk/lhadirect/LHA_percentile_rates.htm)

Yours faithfully



**Phill Hall** Director of Finance and Resources

