

# Help with mortgage interest payments

**This factsheet looks at the support available to homeowners struggling to pay their mortgages.**

You can get help to pay the interest on your mortgage or on loans for improvements or repairs to your home.

## Qualifying benefits

To qualify for support for mortgage interest (SMI) payments you must live in your home. You or your partner must also receive one of the following benefits:

- income support
- income-based jobseeker's allowance (JSA)
- contributions-based JSA (only in some circumstances)
- income-related employment and support allowance
- pension credit.

## Claiming SMI

To claim SMI, contact either Jobcentre Plus or the Pension Service. Ask for form *MI 12*. Send it to your mortgage lender to fill in. They should forward the completed form to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

You must make sure that your lender returns the form to the DWP.

SMI payments are made direct to your lender.

## Universal credit claimants

If you get universal credit after claiming it through the 'full digital service', you can claim the 'housing costs element for owner-occupiers'. If you qualify, this can pay the interest on your mortgage or on any loan secured on your home. Ring the universal credit helpline on **0345 600 0723**.

## How long before you qualify?

If you receive pension credit, you can get SMI immediately after claiming it.

If you are of working age you will get nothing for 39 weeks (nine months if you are on universal credit) from the date of your claim for SMI. If you had already claimed this support before 1 April 2016 you only have to wait for 13 weeks.

## How much can you claim?

You can only claim help to pay the interest on a mortgage up to the value of:

- £200,000 if you are of working age (£100,000 for some people who first claimed a qualifying benefit before 5 January 2009)
- £100,000 if you receive pension credit.

If you claimed SMI while you were getting a working-age benefit and then claimed pension credit within 12 weeks of that benefit ending, you can still get help on mortgages up to £200,000.

The rate of interest used to calculate your payment is fixed, regardless of the actual interest rate you pay to your lender. The current rate is 3.12%. Check the up-to-date rate on [Gov.uk](http://Gov.uk)

## How long can you get support for?

If you get JSA or universal credit and are required to look for work, you can only get help with mortgage interest for a maximum of two years. If you stop receiving either benefit for longer than 12 weeks and later get it again you can put in a new claim for support. A fresh waiting period will apply.

If you receive universal credit and earn any money at all, your mortgage interest payments will stop. However, working may mean that you will no longer be subject to the benefit cap - which limits the total amount of welfare benefits you can get.

As long as you continue to receive one of the other qualifying benefits listed in this factsheet you can get support for as long as you need it.

## Loan replaces benefit (April 2018)

From 6 April 2018, you can only get a loan to help you pay the interest on your mortgage. If you are an existing claimant the DWP will write to you to explain how it will work and ask you to sign a loan agreement.

## Further advice

You can get further advice from Shelter's free\* housing advice helpline (**0808 800 4444**), a local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice office, or by visiting [shelter.org.uk/advice](http://shelter.org.uk/advice) or [adviceguide.org.uk](http://adviceguide.org.uk)

\*Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.



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**Note**  
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