

Table 115a Housing benefit caseload and payments by tenure, Northern Ireland

Numbers, percentages and amounts

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Numbers in receipt of housing benefit	158,390	142,870	126,820	115,730	107,820	99,080	93,030	76,167
All social rented tenants	94,630	88,880	81,270	76,290	71,270	66,920	63,260	52,334
Of which:								
NIHE tenants	64,210	59,490	53,570	50,040	46,100	42,830	40,020	33,436
Housing association tenants	30,420	29,390	27,700	26,250	25,170	24,080	23,240	18,898
Private tenants	62,240	52,380	45,550	39,440	34,330	29,570	26,860	20,624
Hostel residents	1,520	–	–	–	2,220	2,590	2,920	3,209
Percentage (%) of all renters in receipt of housing benefit	61	55	49	45	40	37	35	28
Of all social rented tenants	78	75	69	65	61	57	54	45
Of all NIHE tenants	76	71	64	60	55	53	49	49
Of all housing association tenants	84	88	79	80	75	67	64	54
Of all private tenants	45	37	32	28	23	20	18	13
Numbers in receipt of universal credit (UC) housing element	1,330	15,790	35,930	53,370	59,680	66,970	76,370	96,520
All social rented tenants	470	7,060	16,230	23,640	29,200	34,240	40,560	53,990
All private rents	860	8,730	19,700	29,730	30,480	32,730	35,810	42,530
Percentage (%) of all households that rent their home								
in receipt of UC housing element		6	14	21	22	25	29	36
Of all social rented tenants		6	14	20	25	29	35	46
Of all private tenants		6	14	21	20	22	24	28
Average monthly UC housing cost payment (all renters) (£)	310	320	340	350	360	370	390	450
Percentage (%) of all households that rent their home that								
are in receipt of HB or UC housing element	61	62	63	65	63	62	63	65
Of all social rented tenants	78	81	82	85	86	86	88	90
Of all private tenants	45	44	46	49	43	42	42	41

Sources: NIHE Annual Report 2025 (and previous editions), Department for Communities (DfC) Northern Ireland Housing Statistics and Universal Credit statistics, ONS and NISRA Family Resources Survey and Census 2021.

- Notes:
1. This table has been expanded to include households in receipt of UC housing element payment.
 2. All figures are for March of each year. Components may not sum to totals because of rounding.
 3. Other than for NIHE tenants in receipt of HB, percentage figures are derived from the FRS or Census 2021 tenure estimates and typically exclude those defined as living rent free.
 4. FRS based percentages should be interpreted with care due to relatively small sample sizes, especially during the pandemic in 2020/21.
 5. Private renter HB figures for 2018/19 to 2020/21 may include individuals who are hostel residents.
 6. HB figures exclude tenants in receipt of universal credit (UC) support with housing costs included in the award, which largely explains the sharp fall in tenants in receipt of HB from 2019/20.
 7. Of the 142,140 households in receipt of a UC payment in March 2024, 54% were in receipt of a housing support payment.

Table 115b **Social Security help with housing costs in Northern Ireland, 1990/91 to 2024/25**

£ million

	1990/91	1995/96	2000/01	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Total Housing Benefit and Income Support	148	258	298	405	426	438	483	553	595	621	649	658	671	677	671	641	612	564	537	500	473	471	465
Of which:																							
NIHE tenants	107	175	179	195	196	195	199	203	208	214	227	232	239	249	249	225	216	197	186	177	167	168	162
+ Private and housing associations	27	65	104	197	217	230	263	324	361	387	404	410	417	416	411	407	396	367	351	323	307	303	303
= All tenants	134	240	283	392	413	425	462	527	569	601	631	642	656	665	660	632	612	564	537	500	473	471	465
+ Homeowners	14	18	15	13	13	13	21	26	26	20	18	16	15	13	11	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Estimated total universal credit housing benefit payments (all renters)																5	61	147	225	258	297	357	521
Estimated welfare spending on housing cost support																646	673	711	762	758	770	827	986

Sources: Northern Ireland Executive Expenditure Plans and Priorities, NI Housing Statistics, NIHE Annual Report plus data sourced direct from NIHE.

Notes: 1. Income support (IS) and supplementary benefit (SB) figures for help with mortgage costs are from surveys undertaken in May each year, except 1997 which is for November.

2. From 1997/98 figures for help with mortgage costs include help for mortgage holders in receipt of jobseeker's allowance (JSA) and IS. From 2008/09, figures also include mortgage holders in receipt of employment and support allowance (ESA) and pension credit.

3. For years prior to 2014/15 where figures are not available for help with homeowner housing costs, a trend-based estimate has been included.

4. From April 2018 support for mortgage interest (SMIL) was replaced with the offer of an SMI loan. Annual expenditure on homeowner financial support with ongoing housing costs has been below £1 million since 2018/19.

5. Housing benefit expenditure also excludes discretionary housing payments (DHPs). Some 13,325 households benefitted from DHP expenditure of £5.9 million in 2023/24.

6. Universal credit expenditure on housing benefit payments to renters cannot currently be broken down by tenure.