

Will these changes affect my benefit reduction?

Some of the changes listed may not affect your benefit reduction but it is important you inform us of any changes.

If you do not tell us about a change in your circumstances you may receive too much benefit and we will expect you to pay it back.

How do I inform you?

You will need to contact your local Council's Benefits Service either by:-

- Making an appointment to see a member of staff; or
- Writing to them directly; or
- Telephoning the office. They may also request that you put the change in writing.
- By email. Our leaflet (No 1) "How to Claim" shows your local Council's email address

In some cases, you may be issued with a change of circumstances application form.

Other leaflets available:

- ▶ 1 How to claim
- ▶ 2 Non-dependant deductions
- ▶ 3 Overpayments
- ▶ 4 Extended payments
- ▶ 5 Understanding our Decision and Making an Appeal
- ▶ 6 Benefits and Reductions on two homes
- ▶ 7 Benefits and Reductions when you are away from home
- ▶ 8 Will you qualify?
- ▶ 9 Persons from abroad
- ▶ 10 When will your benefit reduction start?
- ▶ 11 Students
- ▶ 12 Discretionary Housing Payments
- ▶ 13 Changes in circumstances
- ▶ 14 Backdated Benefit or Reduction
- ▶ 15 Second Adult Reduction
- ▶ 16 Housing Benefit Fraud
- ▶ 17 Self-employed
- ▶ 18 Benefit and Reduction for people who work
- ▶ 19 Council Tax Reduction Fraud
- ▶ 20 Universal Credit & Housing Benefit
- ▶ 21 Universal & Council Tax Reduction

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13

Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction



Change in circumstances

Leaflet also available in large print

Introduction

This guide is one of a number produced with the aim of helping customers understand Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

It is intended as a general guide. People have different circumstances so for more detailed individual advice please contact your local Council's Benefits Service.

Your entitlement to benefit or reduction

Your entitlement to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction is based on the information you put on your application form.

If you or other members of your household have a change in circumstances it is important you tell us immediately. Any change could affect your entitlement and either mean you being overpaid or missing out on extra benefit or reduction which is due.



The changes you need to tell us about

Examples of the changes that we need to know about are listed below. You must tell us about changes in:-

- Wages
- Tax Credits
- Maintenance received
- Benefits i.e. Income Support / Jobseeker's Allowance / Employment and Support Allowance etc
- Savings i.e. bank accounts, stocks & shares etc
- Any other income
- When somebody moves in, or out of your home
- Your rent.

Or if you:-

- Move out of the property
- Are admitted to hospital
- Go to prison
- Become a student or stop being a student

If you are unsure whether or not we need to know about a change in your circumstances please contact us for advice.

When do I have to tell you about any changes?

You must tell us immediately about a change in your circumstances. If you don't you could lose benefit/reduction or an overpayment could occur.

If the change means you could get more benefit/reduction and you tell us within one month of the change happening we will usually work out your benefit or reduction from the Monday following the date the change happened.

If you tell us after one month and the change means you could get more benefit we can only work out your benefit or reduction from the Monday after you tell us. This means you may lose benefit or reduction.

If a change happens which means you would get less benefit you should tell us immediately. If you delay in telling us we will still work out your benefit by going back to the Monday after the date the change happened. This means you could be overpaid money which you would have to pay back.

If it is felt that you have deliberately delayed or not reported a change in circumstances we may consider going to court and you may be prosecuted. It is an offence to not report a change which may affect your benefit or reduction.

Penalties can be charged by the Council where changes in circumstances are notified late with no good reason.