

# 14 FACT SHEET



## A guide to the information required to support your housing benefit claim

### What is housing benefit?

Housing benefit is intended to help people with low incomes and low savings pay for rented accommodation. You do not have to be receiving any other benefits and you may get it if you are in or out of work. Housing benefit is paid by your local council and you can make a claim at your local office.

### How do I claim housing benefit?

It can be done through the Job Centre, if you are claiming another benefit like Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance but is advisable to get a form from your local Housing Benefit office as well.

### What information would I need to provide, to support my claim?

**Important - only original documents can be accepted as proof, photocopies will not be accepted. This is only a guide, you should check with your local authority as evidence needed may vary.**

### Evidence of identity - at least two types

Evidence of identity can include:

- UK passport (current and valid)
- UK residence permit
- Birth certificate
- Divorce or annulment papers
- Medical card
- Driving licence
- EC identity card
- Marriage certificate
- National Insurance number card
- Recent household bill.

### Evidence of your address

A recent household bill in your name, such as:

- A gas or electricity bill
- Or TV licence.

### Evidence of your National Insurance Number

Such as:

- A National Insurance number card
- Pay slips
- Or letters from the social security or the tax office

## Evidence of capital, savings and investments

This includes all your bank, building society or post office books, full bank statements (showing all transactions), or certificates for premium bonds, National Savings Certificates, ISAs, stocks, shares and unit trusts. Including evidence of any interest or dividends you get on investments and savings.

This includes evidence for children in your household as well.

The evidence must show details for at least the last two months.

## Evidence of earnings

This includes information for any other adults living in your home.

- if you are paid every week, you will need to provide your last 5 pay slips
- if you are paid every 2 weeks, you will need to provide your last 3 pay slips
- if you are paid monthly you will need to provide your last 2 pay slips.

If you (or your partner, if you have one) are self-employed, you will need to provide your accounts for the last financial year or, if you have been trading for less than 6 months, a summary of your trading records so far.

## Evidence of other income

This includes:

- pension slips from former employers
- or a letter from court showing how much maintenance you are getting.

If someone, other than a member of your family, pays you for board and lodgings, you will need to provide evidence of this.

## Evidence of benefits, allowances or pensions

This includes information for any other adults living in your home, such as:

- current award notices
- or letters from social security or inland revenue confirming how much you get. If you do not have evidence, let the housing benefit office know straight away.

**Important - please do not send order books through the post.**

## Evidence of tenancy

You will need to supply a copy of your tenancy agreement with us. Please ensure you keep your tenancy agreement in a safe place. We can also provide a letter confirming details of your tenancy.

## Evidence of other money paid out

Such as:

- letters about student grants
- maintenance agreements
- or receipts from registered child carers.

**It is important that you contact the housing benefit office if you need more time to supply your proofs and you should always ask for a receipt for any forms or information supplied.**

## Can I have my housing benefit paid directly to Longhurst?

Yes, this can be paid directly to Longhurst. There is a section on the form to fill in or you can write to your Housing Benefit Department requesting payment to Longhurst.

## What do I do when I have filled in my application form and provided Housing Benefit with all the information they need?

You will need to check on the progress of your claim on a weekly basis, as it is your responsibility to make sure Housing Benefit have all the information they need to process your claim.

## Do I need to pay anything whilst my housing benefit is being processed?

You are still responsible for your rent payments, however if you contact the Income Team on freephone 0800 345 7580, we can do a trial calculation. For this we would need your accurate income and household details. We will then be able to advise what payments to make whilst your housing benefit is being processed.

## What can I do if the council take a long time to make a decision?

If you have made a claim and provided all the information the council have asked for, they must make a decision within 14 days. If they cannot, they must make an interim payment of what they estimate your entitlement to be, until they can make a final decision. If they have had your claim for 2 weeks and not made a decision you should make sure they do this.

## Should I tell Housing Benefit and Council Tax about any changes?

Yes, you need to let them know if your circumstances change, so they can pay you the right amount of benefit. Tell them for example if:

- the money you have coming in changes
- you come off Income Support or Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- your grown up son or daughter moves out
- your rent changes
- you are going to be away from home for a while
- you start work.

## Why has my Housing Benefit and Council Tax stopped?

Housing Benefit might think that you should no longer get benefit or they have been paying you too much. Remember that their decision letters must show all the information they have used to make the decision - you should check they have used the right information.

If you feel you are still entitled to Housing Benefit then you must complete a new claim form or appeal against their decision if you think it is wrong. If it has been suspended and they ask for more information, give them the details they need within one calendar month of the date of their letter. If they decide to stop your benefit, they should write to you to explain why.

## What do I do about a gap in my claim?

If there is a gap in your claim and you have a good reason for claiming late, you can ask for your benefit to be backdated. There is a limit how far back housing benefit can go.

## What can I do about money if my benefits are stopped?

- **Claim again:** You can make a new claim as long as you are entitled to benefit now.
- **Crisis Loan:** You can apply to the Social Fund for a crisis loan if you have no money. You must be able to pay it back. Get a SF401 claim form at the Benefits Agency.
- **Hardship Payment:** If your Job Seekers Allowance is stopped or delayed, you might be able to get a Hardship Payment. It depends on your circumstances and the reason you are not getting benefit. Get a JSA10 claim form from the Job Centre or Benefits Agency.

Longhurst & Havelok Homes is committed to equality and diversity and recognises diversity in all areas of our work. We seek to treat people with respect and deliver services that meet individual need.

This leaflet is also available in:



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