

# Discussing your benefit claim with other people



14

Number 14 in a series of benefit information leaflets.

# Discussing your benefit claim with other people

**When you make a Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claim we sometimes need to discuss your claim with other people. Your claim includes many personal details and it is important for you to know that we treat any information you give us as confidential. We will not normally discuss it with anyone except you, unless you give us your permission. By following the Data Protection Act 1998 we aim to ensure that we protect your privacy.**

*This leaflet is part of a series (illustrated opposite) produced by a group of local authorities to help make Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit easier to understand.*

- 1 How to claim benefit
- 2 Backdating your benefit claim
- 3 Change of circumstances
- 4 Non-dependants
- 5 Help with child-care costs
- 6 Self-employed benefit claims
- 7 Student benefit claims
- 8 Overpayment of benefit
- 9 Extended benefit payment
- 10 Discretionary housing payment
- 11 Benefit on two homes
- 12 Temporary absence from your home
- 13 Home visits
- 14 Discussing your benefit claim with other people
- 15 How to appeal

## **Sharing information with your landlord**

Sometimes sharing information with your landlord helps us to deal with your claim quickly, so there is less risk of you falling behind with your rent. We will only share information with your landlord if we have your written permission.

### ***If you give us permission, we will be able to tell your landlord:***

- whether or not you have claimed Housing Benefit and, if so, whether we have decided on your claim or not;
- if we need more information to help us decide on your claim, and if so what information this is.

We may need to check other information with your landlord, such as the date your tenancy started, before we can make a decision on your claim. If so, we have to ask your landlord, even if you have not given us permission to discuss your claim with them.

Unless you have given us permission by signing a statement that we may do so, we will not discuss anything else with your landlord.

### ***We will not give your landlord any information about:***

- your personal or household circumstances;
- your financial circumstances.

If you do not give us permission to discuss your claim with your landlord, it will not affect your claim. If you give us permission and then change your mind, we will follow your wishes.

## Appointees

If you are unable to deal with your claim yourself, your claim can be made by an 'appointee'. This is someone who represents you when you cannot represent yourself, for example because of serious illness. The appointee takes over all your rights and responsibilities in relation to the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claim on your behalf.

***Generally we will accept an appointee if they are:***

- a receiver appointed by the court of protection;
- an attorney;
- a person appointed by the Department of Works and Pensions to deal with other benefits on your behalf.

***In some cases we may accept a written request from anyone aged over 18 to be an appointee, for example:***

- a friend;
- a relative;
- a social worker;
- a solicitor.

In these cases we must first consider whether there is any conflict of interests. You should therefore contact us for advice if you wish to choose one of the above as your appointee.

## Discussing your claim with your family or representatives

We can also give information to someone who is acting on your behalf, including family members. However, we need to be sure they are doing so with your knowledge and consent, so we would ask for your written permission in these circumstances.

You should always sign any claim forms yourself unless you have an appointee.

Participating authorities: Broxbourne, Dacorum, Hertsmeire, Ipswich, Lincoln City, North Herts, St Albans, Stevenage, Three Rivers and Welwyn Hatfield.



## Where to get help and advice

### **To get more information you can visit us at:**

Three Rivers District Council  
Three Rivers House  
Northway, Rickmansworth  
Herts WD3 1RL

Offices are open: Mon to Thu 8.30am – 5.30pm  
Fri 8.30am – 5pm

Telephone: 01923 773138 (benefits section)

Email: [benefits@threerivers.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@threerivers.gov.uk)

Fax: 01923 727181

Website: [www.threerivers.gov.uk](http://www.threerivers.gov.uk)

South Oxhey Area Office  
37 Oxhey Drive  
South Oxhey  
Herts WD19 7SD

### *Benefits officer*

available: Mon and Thu 9am – 4.30pm  
Fri 9am – 4pm

### **Other organisations that provide help and advice**

#### *Citizens Advice Bureaux*

Watford 01923 234949

Rickmansworth 01923 720424

Abbots Langley 01923 267949

Oxhey & District 020 8421 0911

### **Other formats**

This leaflet is also available in large print, Braille, on audio cassette and in other languages. Please contact us if you need this leaflet in one of these formats.

*This leaflet gives basic advice and is a general guide. If you have a question that is not answered in this leaflet, or if you want more advice, please contact us.*