

Change of circumstances



3

Number 3 in a series of benefit information leaflets.

Change of circumstances

When you made a claim for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit (or both), you signed a declaration that said you would let us know in writing about any change of circumstance for you or anyone living with you that could affect your claim. This leaflet explains what you should do if you think there has been a change of circumstance in your home.

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

We need to know...

...about any change of circumstance, for example:

- if you move home;
- if someone moves in or out;
- if your income changes;
- if your rent changes;
- if you qualify for another benefit;
- if you stop getting Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance;
- if anyone living in your home has a change of circumstance.

This is not a full list. If you are not sure whether to tell us something, just ask us.

Why you need to tell us immediately

Any delay in telling us could seriously affect your benefit.

Changes that could reduce your benefit

You may have to repay any overpaid benefits if you delay or fail to tell us about a change in circumstance.

Changes that could increase your benefit

Normally any change in circumstance that may increase your benefit will start from the date you tell us, not the date it happened.

How to tell us

Fill in the attached form, completing all questions, and send it to the address on the back of this leaflet.

We will need proof of any changes

For example

- a letter from your landlord telling you of a change in your rent or a new tenancy agreement;
- your latest payslips or pension slips to show the new amount you get as wages, pension or pension credit;
- a letter from the Department of Works and Pensions or Inland Revenue showing changes in your allowances or tax credits;
- a letter from the Benefits Agency showing changes in your benefits.

We also need the same sort of proof of changes for other people who live with you.

If you cannot get proof immediately, send the form and any documents you do have now and send any other proofs as soon as you can.

When sending us proof...

We need original documents, not copies. Either deliver the documents and form by hand, or send them to us. We will return any valuable documents to you by recorded delivery.

Why you need to complete and return the change of circumstances form

The law says you must tell us about any change of circumstance immediately. Please fill in this form and send it back to us with any proofs that you may have.

Change of circumstances form

YOUR FULL NAME

YOUR PRESENT ADDRESS

YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER

Day

Evening

Date of change in circumstance

Details of the change (continue over the page if you need to)

(For example, new address, rent change, income change)

Please sign and date the form over the page...

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.

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

Fax: 01923 727181

Website: 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