

Electronic collection of data

Direction of the Chief Executive regarding Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Scheme claims

This Directive sets out the Council's legal obligation to publicly state its policy regarding electronic collection of data relating to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction scheme claims. This Directive is effective from 1 April 2013 and replaces the Directive dated 1 April 2013.

Electronic Communications

Direction of Katherine Marriott, Chief Executive of Rushcliffe Borough Council, under the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Electronic Communications) (Miscellaneous Benefits) Order 2006.

Rushcliffe Borough Council ("the Authority") in accordance with paragraph 2 of:

- Schedule 11 to the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006
- Schedule 10 to the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006
- Schedule 1 of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Regulations 2013

Hereby makes the following directions:

1. An individual who, in accordance with the 2006 Regulations makes a claim for Housing Benefit under the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 and/or makes a claim for support under the Authority's current Council Tax Reduction Scheme is authorised to do so by an electronic communication, provided that the individual uses the method approved by the Authority in relation to the claim.

2. The methods and form set out, at the time of, and for the purposes of, the delivery of such a claim as referred to in paragraph 1, are respectively -

- Electronic applications for housing benefit and/or council tax reduction provided they are made via the Authority's official online application form.
- Electronic amendments to claims (i.e. changes to claims prior to the initial decision on an award of benefit) made via a phone or the Authority's official online application form.
- Electronic notification of changes of circumstance made via a phone or the Authority's official online application form.
- Electronic applications for housing benefit and/or council tax reduction may be made by phone via 0115 9819911 from 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday.
- The person making an electronic claim, amendment or change of circumstances may be asked to sign the electronic document produced using a manual or electronic method.
- To ensure the authenticity of the identity of the sender the electronic communication must include the following:
 - **The claimant's name and any two of the following:**
 - **The address of the benefit claim**
 - **The claimant's date of birth**
 - **The claimant's National Insurance number**
 - **The claimant's Benefit reference number**
- The Authority may accept digital photographic and scanned images of notices, forms, evidence, and information provided by a person where it has been verified by an officer of the Authority or its agent. Where it has not been verified the Authority may request to see the original where its authenticity cannot be corroborated by other means.

- The person must keep a copy of any electronic communication, reference number generated, claim, certificate, notice, information, or evidence so that it can be produced where the Authority so requires. Failure to produce the evidence upon reasonable request may be deemed to show that an electronic communication was not successfully made to the Authority.
 - The Authority's 'official computer system' for the purposes of recording information relating to electronic communications is provided by Capita Business Services Ltd for Revenues and Benefits. The Authority's integrated document information and workflow system is provided by Northgate Information Systems Ltd and the electronic benefit and council tax reduction scheme online application form is provided by Team Netsol Ltd. These systems are also regarded as 'official computer systems' for the purposes of recording information relating to electronic communications.
3. The Authority may require further information or original supporting evidence before the claim for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction can be assessed or revised. The Authority may verify claims, certificates, notices, information or evidence by using third party systems and sources of information as well as by direct contact with a person using electronic communications or by some other means.
4. Any claim, amendment or notification received that:
- a. Does not conform to any of the relevant standards will be invalid
 - b. Does conform to the above standard but is not accepted by the Authority's official computer system, is not regarded as having been delivered.
5. This direction may be withdrawn or amended at any time by the issue of a further direction.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. J. Marriott', with a long, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the name.

Signed by: Katherine Marriott
Chief Executive
Dated: 22 August 2019