

Claiming housing benefit

How do I claim housing benefit?

If you think you may be entitled to housing benefit, you should fill in a claim form as soon as possible. This is because benefit can't usually be backdated, so you will only get benefit from the date that you make your claim.

You can get a claim form from any One Stop Shop or library or you can download one from the Council website at www.wirral.gov.uk

Forms are also available at our offices.

Post your completed forms to Director of Finance, P.O. Box 2, Cleveland Street, Birkenhead CH41 6BU or hand it in to any One Stop Shop or WPH office.

How can I find out if I am entitled to housing benefit?

- Our income team for your area will be able to tell you. If you can give them enough details about your income and circumstances, they will give you a rough idea of your entitlement.
- One Stop Shop advisors can also do this.
- You can visit a welfare advice agency and they can tell you (many are listed in our leaflet 'Accessing welfare benefit and debt advice').
- You can use the benefit calculator on the Council website at www.wirral.gov.uk
- Use the on-line calculator for state benefits at www.entitledto.co.uk

How can I avoid my claim being delayed?

You will have to provide proof of your income and personal circumstances. You should provide this information as soon as possible as your claim won't be assessed until the housing benefit service see it.

Don't hold on to your claim form until you have all the supporting information. Send the form in anyway, otherwise your claim will be delayed and you will lose benefit. Send the supporting information as soon as you get it.

Reply quickly to any questions the Council ask about your claim because they can't assess your claim until you provide the information.

What will happen if I don't provide the information on time?

If you don't provide what the housing benefit service asks for on time, they will assess your claim as 'nil entitlement' – this means you will not be entitled to any housing benefit. You will then have to complete a new claim form and re-supply the supporting information. You will not get the benefit you could have had if you had provided the information on time – you will only receive housing benefit from the date of the new claim (but see the section 'Can my housing benefit claim be backdated?').

This is one of the main reasons why our customers get behind with their rent. If you can't give the housing benefit service the information they ask for, you must tell them why straight away.

Who can help me with my claim?

- You can call the Council's housing benefit service on 0151 606 2002.
- You can visit a One Stop Shop and speak to an advisor.
- Our income team can help you. They can talk to the housing benefit service for you or refer you to an independent welfare-benefits advisor.
- You can visit a welfare advice agency.

What should I do while I am waiting for my claim to be processed?

Keep in contact with our income team. In particular, you should tell them if your claim is delayed and why.

If you are not expecting your housing benefit claim to cover all your rent, you must pay the estimated shortfall while you are waiting for your benefit.

How long will my housing benefit claim last?

Your claim will continue for as long as:

- you stay in the home you are claiming benefit for, and
- your circumstances stay the same.

If you move, or your circumstances change, for example someone who can help with the rent moves in, you must tell the housing benefit service.

Reviewing your claim for housing benefit

The housing benefit service will review your claim from time to time. There is no set time before this will happen. They will send you a letter or visit your home, just to confirm your circumstances. It is essential that you give them the information they ask for as quickly as possible, otherwise your claim will be stopped and you will have to make a new claim, which will only be paid from the date you make the new claim. This is another reason why some customers get behind with their rent and fall into serious arrears, especially if they have been getting full housing benefit.

Our income team can help you when your claim is reviewed.

Can my housing benefit claim be backdated?

Yes, in certain circumstances, the housing benefit service can treat your claim as if it were made earlier. For this to happen, you would have to write to them to explain why you sent in your claim form late. The housing benefit service will only backdate a claim if you can give them a good reason for the delay.

Our income team can help you make a backdated claim.

What happens if I am overpaid housing benefit?

You will almost certainly be expected to repay it. If you are still receiving housing benefit, this will come out of your benefit each week until the overpayment is cleared. If you can't afford to have the overpayment taken out at the rate set by the housing benefit service, write to them to ask for a lower repayment rate.

Our income team can help you ask for a lower repayment rate.

Useful contact details

Housing benefit service

Director of Finance
Wirral Council
PO Box No 2
Birkenhead
Wirral CH41 6BU
Tel: 0151 606 2002
Email: housingbenefits@wirral.gov.uk

Contacting us

One Stop Shops

Bebington: The Village, Bebington CH63 7PL

Birkenhead: Conway Centre, Conway Street, Birkenhead CH41 6JD

Bromborough: Port Causeway House, Bromborough CH62 4TG

Eastham: Eastham Library, Mill Park Drive, Eastham CH63 9AL

Heswall: Telegraph Road, Heswall CH60 0AF

Hoylake: Jobcentre Plus, Town Hall Chambers,
1 The Quadrant, Hoylake CH47 2HR

Liscard: Jobcentre Plus, Dominic House, St Albans Road,
Wallasey CH44 5XS

Moreton: Knutsford Road, Moreton CH46 8TN

New Brighton: Community Centre, Hope Street CH45 2LN

Rock Ferry: Old Chester Road, Rock Ferry CH42 3TD

Seacombe: Town Hall, Wallasey CH44 8ED

Upton: Jobcentre Plus, 52 Arrowe Park Road, Upton CH49 0UE

West Kirby: The Concourse, West Kirby CH48 4HZ

Woodchurch Housing Office 0151 666 7001
woodchurchhousing@wphomes.org.uk

Rock Ferry Housing Office 0151 666 7002
rockferryhousing@wphomes.org.uk

North End Housing Office 0151 666 7003
northendhousing@wphomes.org.uk

Response Centre 0808 100 9596
housingrepairs@wphomes.org.uk

Wirral Partnership Homes
6 Europa Boulevard
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 4PE
Switchboard: 0151 606 3000
Fax: 0151 606 3001
www.wphomes.org.uk



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Alternative language

إذا لم تكن اللغة الإنجليزية لغتك الأولى وتحتاج إلى المساعدة في ترجمة هذا المستند أو كنت تطلبه بالتنسيق مختلف، أو بحروف طباعة كبيرة، أو صوتيًا أو بطريقة برايل، فيرجى الاتصال هاتفياً بالرقم 0151 606 3000.

ইংরেজি যদি আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হয় এবং এই ডকুমেন্ট অনুবাদের জন্য আপনার সাহায্য মরুকায় হয় অথবা এটিকে আপনি অন্য কোনো ফরম্যাটে, বড় ফন্টফন্ট ছাপায়, অডিও বা ব্রেইলে পেতে চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 0151 606 3000 নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

如果英語不是您的第一語言，而您需要這份文件翻譯版的協助，或您需要不同的格式，大字體印刷版，錄音版或盲人點字版，請撥電話 0151 606 3000 洽詢。

यदि अंग्रेजी आपकी प्रथम भाषा नहीं है और आपको इस दस्तावेज के भाषांतरण में मदद चाहिए या आपको यह किसी अन्य फॉर्मेट में, बड़े अक्षरों में, श्रव्य रूप में या ब्रेल में चाहिए, तो कृपया इस नंबर पर फोन कीजिए: 0151 606 3000.

Jeśli język angielski nie jest dla Państwa językiem ojczystym i potrzebują Państwo pomocy z przetłumaczeniem tego dokumentu, albo też chcą otrzymać go w innym formacie, większą czcionką, w wersji audio lub napisany językiem Braille'a, prosimy o kontakt pod numerem telefonu 0151 606 3000.

ਜੇ ਇੰਗਲਿਸ਼ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਦਦ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਆਡੀਓ ਜਾਂ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0151 606 3000 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Haddii Ingiriiska uusan ahayn luqaddaada koowaad iyo aad uu baahan tahay in lagugu caawiyo turjubaanka dokumentigaan ama aad ku rabto qaab kale, Daabacad Far Waa-weyn, dhegaysi ama farta indhoolaha Braille fadlan soo wac 0151 606 3000.

اگر انگریزی آپ کی پہلی زبان نہیں ہے اور آپ کو اس دستاویز کے ترجمے میں مدد کی ضرورت ہے یا آپ کو یہ کسی دوسری شکل جیسے چھاپے کے بڑے حروف، آڈیو یا بریل میں چاہیے تو مہربانی فرما کر 0151 606 3000 پر ٹیلیفون کریں۔

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WPH



If you need this leaflet in large print, Braille, audio or a different language call 0151 606 3000