

Notes about Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

This booklet explains how to reclaim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit using form HBRR1

- How to use form HBRR1
- About Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit
- Second Adult Rebate
- Filling in the form
- If you need help to fill in the form
- What happens next
- How your local council collects and uses information
- Changes you must tell your local council about

How to use form HBRR1

We have provided you with the enclosed HBRR1 Rapid Reclaim form for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit on behalf of your local Council. The form and these notes are produced nationally, which means we cannot provide contact details for your particular council. You can find their phone number and address in the phone book under **Council**, or at **mycouncil.direct.gov.uk**

Use form HBRR1 to claim one or both of these benefits for you and your partner, if you have one. We use partner to mean a person you are married to or live with as if you are married to them or a civil partner or a person you live with as if you are civil partners.

Complete form HBRR1 only if you have received Income Support, Incapacity Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance in the last 26 weeks, or Employment and Support Allowance in the last 12 weeks.

If you are reclaiming Income Support or Incapacity Benefit do not use form HBRR1 if:

- you have changed your address since your last claim, **or**
- you have separated from your partner, **or**
- you have a new or a different partner.

If you cannot use form HBRR1 for any of these reasons, ask us for a HCTB1 form instead.

If you are reclaiming Jobseeker's Allowance do not use form HBRR1 if:

- you have changed your address since your last claim, **or**
- you are making a joint claim for Jobseeker's Allowance, **and**
 - you did not have a partner when you claimed before, **or**
 - you had a different partner when you claimed before, **or**
 - you or your partner did not have to meet some of the joint claim conditions when you claimed before.

If you cannot use form HBRR1 for any of these reasons, ask us for a HCTB1 form instead.

About Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

Housing Benefit can pay all or part of your rent. It may also give you some extra money towards things you have to pay for, like cleaning shared areas. Council Tax Benefit can pay all or part of your Council Tax. It cannot help with water charges or, if you live in Scotland, the Scottish Water Authority water and sewerage charges.

Second Adult Rebate

Second Adult Rebate is Council Tax Benefit for people who may not have a partner but who share their home with someone who:

- is 18 or over
- is on a low income, **and**
- does not pay them rent.

Filling in the form

Use black ink to fill in the form. Do not use pencil. If you make a mistake, just cross it out and put the right answer next to it. Do not use correction fluid or tape.

Answer **No** or **Yes** questions by putting a **tick** in the relevant box. If you are picking an answer from a list of answers, **tick** the box which applies to you. Do not put a cross in any boxes. If you answer a question with a cross, your local council may have to send the form back, and this will delay the claim.

If you need help to fill in the form

If you need any help, contact your local council. You can find their phone number and address in the business numbers section of your local phone book.

Or you can get in touch with an organisation like your local Citizens Advice Bureau. You can also find their phone number and address in the business numbers section of your local phone book.

What happens next

When you have filled in the form, sign it and send it to your local council with the proof they need to see.

Your local council will check if you are entitled to Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance. If you have not heard from your local council within 14 days of sending them form HBRR1 you should contact them.

How your local council collects and uses information

Your local council will use the information you give in this form, and in any supporting proof you send, to process your claim for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

They may pass the information to other agencies or organisations such as the Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue & Customs, as allowed by the law.

They may check information you have provided, or information about you that someone else has provided, with other information they hold. They may also get information about you from certain third parties, or give information to them to:

- make sure the information is accurate
- prevent or detect crime, **and**
- protect public funds.

These third parties include government departments, other local authorities and private-sector organisations such as banks and organisations that may lend you money.

They will not give information about you to anyone else, or use information about you for other purposes, unless the law allows this.

Your local council is the data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act.

If you want to know more about what information they have about you, or the way they use that information, please ask them.

Changes you must tell your local council about

For example:

- any of your children or qualifying young persons leave school or leave home
 - We use *child* to mean a person aged under 16 who you are getting Child Benefit for.
 - We use *qualifying young person* to mean a person aged 16, 17, 18 or 19 who you are getting Child Benefit for.
- anyone moves into or out of your home, including lodgers and subtenants
- your income or the income of anyone living with you, including benefits, changes
- your capital or savings change
- you or anyone living with you becomes a student, goes on a youth training scheme, goes into hospital or a nursing home, goes into prison, or changes or leaves a job
- your rent changes
- you move
- you or your partner are going to be away from home for more than a month
- you or anyone living with you starts work
- you receive any decision from the Home Office, **or**
- anything you have told us about changes.

This is not a full list. If you are not sure, ask your council for advice. You must tell them about any changes in writing – a phone call is not enough.

If you do not tell them about any changes, you may lose money you are entitled to or you may get too much benefit. You must make sure that you tell them about any changes. Do not rely on someone else to pass the message on.

It is an offence not to tell your council about any changes that may affect your benefit. They may take court action against you, and if they pay you too much benefit, you will probably have to pay it back.