

## FAQs for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction

In this section of the website you will be able to find answers to the questions relating to all aspects of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction which are most commonly asked on a daily basis.

### Who can claim?

- you must be resident in the property
- you must occupy the property as your home
- you must be required to pay rent and/or Council Tax for the property

Single full time students or couples who are both students do not qualify unless they or their partner are disabled, or have dependent children. However non-student partners of a student can make a claim. You will not be entitled to Housing Benefit if you live with a close relative in the same household even though you may pay them rent.

### How is my benefit and or reduction assessed?

The amount of benefit or reduction you will receive depends of four things:

1. the amount of money coming into your household
2. the amount of any savings you (and your partner) have
3. your personal circumstances, e.g. your children living in your household, being disabled or anyone else who lives with you
4. the amount of rent and/or Council Tax you are charged

Benefit and reduction are assessed using rules agreed by Central and Scottish Government. The benefit and/or reduction awarded to you is intended to help with the cost of your rent and Council Tax, not living costs such as food and heating. The maximum Housing Benefit that can be awarded is 100% of your **eligible** rent. This may be different from the rent you are being charged by your landlord.

**Benefit Calculator** – You can check your entitlement using the benefit calculator on the Benefits Explained web page. **(Please note this is an estimate only)**

### How to claim?

If you claim Income Support/Jobseekers Allowance/Employment and Support Allowance, you can claim Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction at the same time over the telephone or by filling in the form included inside the claim pack. This will be forwarded to us by your local Jobcentre Plus. If you are claiming Pension Credit then the Pension Service will help you to make your claim.

You can print one of our claim forms and return the completed form to us, or pick one up at one of the Council's Community Hubs. If you are housebound or unable to visit your local office because you are infirm or have a disability we may be able to arrange a home visit if you contact us.

### The following forms can be downloaded and printed from the documents section of the Benefits Explained web page

- **If both you and your partner are working age**  
(the form for working age claimants is 26 pages long - if you do not wish to print this, please contact us and we will send one to you).

- **If either you or your partner is pension age**  
Pension age claimants should read the additional notes which can be viewed on the Benefits Explained document section. You may have to complete supplementary forms depending on your circumstances.
- **Additional notes for pension age claimants**
  - Supplementary form - pensioners who are working
  - Supplementary form - pensioners who are self-employed
  - Supplementary form - pensioners who are private tenants
  - Supplementary form - pensioners with non-dependants
  - Supplementary form - pensioners with children

### **How is it paid?**

Council Tax Reduction is paid directly into your Council Tax account and a bill will be issued advising you of revised payment instalments. If you are a Council tenant, Housing Benefit is paid directly to your rent account. This reduces the amount you have to pay.

If you pay rent to a Housing Association or private landlord then your Housing Benefit may be paid direct to you or to your landlord by cheque or directly into a bank account, unless you fall under Local Housing Allowance rules.

Payment is made four-weekly or monthly in arrears. In certain circumstances e.g. if you are more than eight weeks in arrears with your rent, the Council is required to pay your Housing Benefit direct to your landlord unless it would not be in your interest to do so. This may also be different if you fall under the Local Housing Allowance rules.

### **How long does it take to process a benefit and or council tax reduction application?**

We aim to process your application within 14 days. To help us do this, please read the form carefully and provide us with all of the supporting evidence and documentation that we ask for. If we have to write out for more information, your assessment will be delayed.

### **Are you able to get Housing Benefit in a furnished tenancy?**

Yes, anyone who has a liability to pay rent can apply for Housing Benefit. Call the Revenues and Benefits Team on 0800 901057 for further information and a claim form.

### **Can you explain why my housing benefit does not cover the total cost of my housing rent?**

There could be many reasons for this. For example, because of the level of your income, you don't qualify for maximum Housing Benefit, and are expected to pay some of the rent from your own income. It could be because there is someone else in your household with their own source of income, who is expected to contribute to the rent. For information about your particular claim, contact the Benefit Team on 0800 901057.

### **Do I still have to pay rent if I am a pensioner?**

Yes, unless you qualify for Housing Benefit. To claim Housing Benefit, contact the Revenues and Benefits Team on 0800 901057.

### **Do I still have to pay rent if I am in receipt of full Housing Benefit?**

If you're a Council tenant, you won't have to pay any rent if you're getting maximum Housing Benefit. However, if you have Home Contents Insurance, or have an arrangement to pay off rent arrears, you'll still need to make payments for these.

### **Housing Benefit - How much will I get to cover rent?**

Housing Benefit is a means tested benefit to help you pay your rent. Anyone who pays rent can apply. For further information contact the Revenues and Benefits Team on 0800 901057. For an introduction to Housing Benefits view our Discounts and Reductions web page.

### **Housing Benefit - What is it?**

Housing Benefit is a means tested benefit to help you pay your rent. Anyone who pays rent can apply. For further information contact the Revenues and Benefits Team on 0800 901057. For an introduction to Housing Benefits view our Discounts and Reductions web page.

### **Housing Benefit - What proof do I need to provide?**

The Council's Housing Benefit application form gives details of the information you need to provide. The Revenues and Benefits Team will contact you if they need more information to assess your claim, but this will delay an assessment. For further information contact the Revenues and Benefits Team on 0800 901057. For an introduction to Housing Benefits view our Discounts and Reductions web page.

### **Housing Benefit - When should I claim?**

Housing Benefit is a means tested benefit to help you pay your rent. Anyone who pays rent can apply and should make their application as soon as they have a tenancy or need help to pay costs for the tenancy they have. For further information contact the Revenues and Benefits Team on 0800 901057. For an introduction to Housing Benefits view our Discounts and Reductions web page.

### **Housing Benefit - Where can I apply?**

Housing Benefit is a means tested benefit to help you pay your rent. Anyone who pays rent can apply. For further information contact the Revenues and Benefits Team on 0800 901057. For an introduction to Housing Benefits view our Discounts and Reductions web page.

### **Housing Benefit - Where can I get help filling out the form?**

Housing Benefit is a means tested benefit to help you pay your rent. Anyone who pays rent can apply. For further information contact the Revenues and Benefits Team on 0800 901057. For an introduction to Housing Benefits view our Discounts and Reductions web page.

### **How can I find out about rent rebates?**

Contact the Revenues and Benefits Team using the contact details below.

### **Contact Details**

East Dunbartonshire Council  
Revenues and Benefits Team  
Revenue Services  
William Patrick Library  
2/4 West High Street  
Kirkintilloch  
G66 1AD

Opening times:

Monday-Friday 9am to 5pm

Tel: 0800 901057

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

### **If I have a housing benefit claim submitted, do I still need to pay rent meantime?**

Yes, you should keep paying your rent until you find out if you're entitled to any Housing Benefit, and when your Benefit will start.

### **What benefits am I entitled to?**

If you pay Council Tax, you may be entitled to Council Tax Reduction. If you pay rent - to the Council, a Housing Association or a private landlord - you may be entitled to Housing Benefit. You can get more information from the Revenues and Benefits Team by phoning 0800 901057.

### **When will I receive Benefit?**

We normally pay Housing Benefit 4 weekly or monthly in arrears. You should receive a cheque at the end of every fourth week or end of the month.

Alternatively, if you want your payment paid directly into your bank account, you can email or write direct to the Revenues and Benefits Team, or complete a Change In Circumstances form which you can download on the Change of circumstances - housing benefit and council tax web page with the account details.

### **When will my landlord receive Housing Benefit payments for my rent?**

If the Council is paying your Housing Benefit direct to your landlord, it's normally paid 4-weekly or monthly in arrears. We'll send your landlord a schedule confirming what period each Housing Benefit payment covers.

### **Where is the Revenues and Benefits Team**

The main Revenues and Benefits team is in William Patrick Library, Kirkintilloch. You can also obtain assistance at the Community Hub, based within the William Patrick Library. You can also hand in forms and other documents at any Community Hub.

### **Can I get Housing Benefit if I am a student?**

The Housing Benefit Regulations say that only certain groups of students are entitled to Housing Benefit. These are:

- Part-Time Students. A student is normally considered to be part-time if their class and structured learning time totals less than 16 hours per week.
- Students who qualify for a State Retirement Pension.
- Students who live with a partner that is not a student. Please note that the non-student should make the claim for Housing Benefit, with the student detailed in the form as 'your partner'.
- Students under 21 years of age and not in Higher Education. This covers students in "further education" IF they started their course before they were 19 years of age.
- Students under the age of 20 for whom child benefit is still payable.
- Students with responsibility for a child or young person, including:
  - Lone parents
  - Couples with children where both members of the couple are students
  - Single students with the responsibility for a foster child
  - Disabled Students
- Students receiving Income Support, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or Job Seekers Allowance Income Based
- Intercalating Students. These are students that have ceased to attend their course with the consent of the educational establishment, and who satisfy the qualifying conditions.

Please contact the Revenues and Benefits Team on 0800 901057 to find out more information, or to report a change in your circumstances.

### **Who can disagree with a decision?**

Any person affected can disagree with a decision. These include:

- you (the person making the claim)
- someone authorised to act on your behalf

- your landlord or their agent - but only in matters relating to who we pay benefit to
- anyone, including a landlord, we ask to pay back benefit we have overpaid.

Further details are given in the Housing and Council Tax Benefit Dispute form which you can download from the Benefits Explained web page.