Guidance notes on filling in the claim form for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Council Tax Reduction

About this form
- Use this form to claim Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Council Tax Reduction or all of these.
- We have designed this form to make it as easy as possible for you to fill in. It may seem rather long, but we have to ask a lot of questions to make sure that everyone who claims gets the right amount of benefit and reduction.

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.
- It is important that you fill in all parts of the claim form and tick each Yes and No box. If you don’t fill in the form properly, we will have to send it back to you and it will take us longer to work out and pay your benefit.
- If someone else fills in the form for you, there is a special space for them to sign. You must also sign the form if you can.
- If you need help to fill in the form, our staff will be pleased to help you.
- We have access to a translation service if English is not your first language.
- Please ask us if you would like this form in large print.
- If you need a home visit because you cannot leave your home, phone us on 0161 909 6504.

What to do when you have filled in the form
When you have filled in the form, sign it and return the form to us.
You can take your form and supporting documents to Unity House, a Gateway Centre or Broughton Hub. Your documents will be copied and sent with your form to the Benefit Office.
If you are a Salix Homes or City West tenant you can take your form to your local housing office.
Or you can send or take the form to:
Benefit Section
Salford City Council
Unity House
Chorley Road
Swinton
Salford M27 5AW.
Opening hours 8.30am to 4.30pm – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
10am to 4.30pm – Wednesday

Do not send valuable documents such as bank books or passports in the post.
**Proof**

We will need to see proof of some of the things you write about on this form. There is a checklist in **part 20** of the form to help you. If you are not sure if we need to see proof of something, get in touch with us. We will tell you what we need to see. We cannot pay you benefit until we have seen the proof we need.

**Second Adult Reduction**

Second Adult Reduction is for people who have reached the qualifying age for Pension Credit who may not have a partner but who share their home with someone who:

- is 18 or over;
- is on low income; and
- does not pay them rent.

If you are claiming Second Adult Reduction only, you **do not** need to fill in all of the form. You only need to fill in parts 1, 2, 12, 13 and 18 onwards.

**About Local Housing Allowance**

Under Local Housing Allowance rules your Housing Benefit entitlement will be based on a standard allowance based on the size of your household and not the rent you pay. We publish these allowances on our website at [www.salford.gov.uk/lharates](http://www.salford.gov.uk/lharates).

In most cases we must pay your Housing Benefit to you but in certain circumstances we can pay your landlord for example if you feel that you are unable to manage your rent payments. You need to provide details about this in part 18 of the form.

If you do not have a bank account and would like help to open one, please contact us.

You can get a free copy of the Financial Services Authority consumer leaflet ‘No Bank Account? - why it could pay you to have one’ by phoning 0845 6 06 1234.

The Local Housing Allowance rules will not apply to you if:

- you are a council tenant;
- you are a housing association tenant;
- you live in supported accommodation provided by a social landlord, charity or voluntary organisation;
- your rent has been registered as a fair rent; or
- your tenancy started before 1989.

For more information, see the ‘Getting more information’ section at the end of these notes.

**Benefit fraud**

Do you know someone who is claiming Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Council Tax Reduction which they are not entitled to?

**Please ring our benefit fraud hotline on 0808 1001235.**

This is a 24-hour Freephone service.

We will keep the information you give us confidential.
Changes you must tell us about

Tell our Benefits Section straightaway if:
- any of your children leave school or leave home;
- 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;
- If you start or cease to receive Universal Credit;
- your savings or investments 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 gets, changes or leaves a job;
- your rent changes;
- you move home;
- you or your partner are going to be away from home for more than a month;
- you receive any decision about staying in the UK from the Home Office; or
- anything you have told us about changes.

You must tell us about these changes in writing within 21 days if you are getting Council Tax Reduction or 1 month if you are getting Housing Benefit – a phone call is not enough.

If you don’t tell us about these changes you may lose money you are entitled to or you may get too much benefit.

You must make sure that you tell us about these changes. Don’t rely on someone else to pass the message on.

It is an offence not to tell us about any changes of circumstance that affects your benefit. We may take court action against you or apply a penalty. If we pay you too much benefit, you will probably have to pay it back.

How we collect and use information

We will use the information you give in this form, and in any supporting evidence you send us, to process your claim for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Council Tax Reduction or all of these.

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

We may check information you have provided, or information about you that someone else has provided, with other information we hold. We may also get information about you from certain third parties, or give them information to:
- make sure the information is accurate;
- prevent or detect crime; and
- protect public funds.

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

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

We, Salford City Council, are the data controller. That means we are responsible for keeping to the Data Protection Act.

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

Getting more information

You can contact us by e-mail at benefitenquiries@salford.gov.uk.

You can find more information about Housing Benefit, Local Housing Allowance, Council Tax Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and Council Tax on our website at www.salford.gov.uk.

You can get more information on benefits from the Department for Work and Pensions website www.dwp.gov.uk.

You can get more information on bank accounts from the Financial Services Authority at their consumer website at www.fsa.gov.uk/consumer/banking/index.html.
Receipt

If you would like a receipt to confirm that we have received your claim form, please:

- write your name and address in the space below;
- take this letter and your filled-in claim form to our office at Unity House in Swinton, a Gateway Centre or Broughton Hub or, if you are a tenant of Salix Homes or City West, your local housing office; and
- when you hand the form in, ask the person to fill in the bottom section of this letter.

Your name: ......................................................................................................................................
Your address: .................................................................................................................................
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When it is filled in, this receipt confirms that we have received the following documents from you.

A member of staff at any of the above locations must fill in this section.

Please tick the relevant boxes.

Claim form
Proof of income
Proof of savings and investments
Proof of rent (private tenants only)
Proof of income (non-dependants)
Other information

For office use only

Date received

Received by: ..............................................................................................................................