

## Help and advice

If you need more help or advice, please get in touch with us at the address shown on the back page.

For independent advice please contact our Money Advice Team on 0141 577 8420 or East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau on 0141 881 2032 or any law centre.

## Our other leaflets about housing benefit and council tax reduction are:

- 1 How we work out your housing benefit and council tax reduction
  - 2 The rent we use to work out your housing benefit
  - 3 What to do if you think your housing benefit/council tax reduction decision is wrong
  - 5 Non-dependants
- Local Housing Allowance - A guide for tenants  
Local Housing Allowance - A guide for landlords

## Here are the ways you can get in touch with us

### Opening hours:

We are open from Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm.

### By letter:

Benefits Section, Corporate and Community Services Department, Barrhead Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire G78 1SY.

### By phone or fax:

Phone: 0141 577 3002

Fax: 0141 577 3255

### In person:

Visit Customer Service Officers at Barrhead Council Offices, Main Street, Barrhead and at Council Headquarters, Eastwood Park, Rouken Glen Road, Giffnock, G46 6UG (no appointment necessary).

### E-mail:

benefits@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

(For general enquiries only.)

### Income Maximisation:

Income Maximisation staff can carry out a free benefits health check to ensure you are receiving the correct benefits. Staff will assist you with completing forms.

Phone: 0141 577 3071

Email: benefithealthcheck@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

and quote benefits health check.

### Money advice:

The Money Advice Team offers free, confidential, professional and practical advice on money matters. You can visit them at the Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead

or call free on 0800 052 1023

or email money@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

or text "money and your name" to Freetext 80800

This leaflet can be provided in other languages and is available in alternative formats such as large print or Braille.

Please contact Customer First on 0141 577 3001.

इस सूचना-पत्र में उल्लेखित सूचना यदि आप हिन्दी अनुवाद में चाहे तो कृपया सम्पर्क करें।

如果您想得到该资料所含信息的译文，请联系：

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਲੀਫਲੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਇਥੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ اس لیفلیٹ میں درج معلومات کا ترجمہ اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو ہم سے رابطہ کریں

# Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction



# 4

## Backdating housing benefit or council tax reduction



7th edition valid from April 2015

[www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/benefits)

## **I am of pensionable age\* when will housing benefit and/or council tax reduction be awarded from?**

If you, or your partner, are of pensionable age\* and qualify for housing benefit and/or council tax reduction, we can **backdate your benefit/reduction up to 3 months** before the date you made your claim (as long as you were entitled to benefit/reduction for that period). If you are of pensionable age\* and you are entitled to benefit/reduction from a date before you claimed, we will award your benefit/reduction automatically. We do not need to know why you did not claim sooner to backdate your housing benefit and/or council tax reduction.

For us to work out how much benefit/reduction you will be entitled to, you will need to give us proof of all your income, capital and savings for the period you want to claim. For housing benefit we will also need to see your current lease for housing association and private landlord tenants, council tenants do not need to provide a lease. Please contact us if you think your claim should start from an earlier date.

## **I am of working age\* when will housing benefit and/or council tax reduction be awarded from?**

If you, or your partner are of working age\* and qualify for housing benefit and/or council tax reduction, we will normally award your benefit/reduction on the Monday after the date you claim.

When you make a claim for housing benefit and/or council tax reduction over the phone through Jobcentre Plus, we will treat the date of your claim as the same date you contacted them.

If you get Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance (income based), Employment Support Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance (contribution based), all benefits will have the same claim date.

\* From 6 April 2010, pensionable age for women changed in line with the equalisation of State Pension and is dependent on the year you were born. For more information on pension and retirement planning go to: [www.gov.uk/retirement-age](http://www.gov.uk/retirement-age)

## **Backdating housing benefit/council tax reduction**

Sometimes we can pay benefit/reduction for a period before the date you made your claim for housing benefit and/or council tax reduction. This is called backdating. The law says we can backdate your benefit/reduction for up to 6 months. However, you must have a good reason why your claim is late. This is known as 'good cause'.

### **What is a good cause?**

We will look at each case individually. 'Good cause' is a reason that prevented you from claiming housing benefit and/or council tax reduction earlier. Good causes may include the following, depending on the circumstances.

- You were ill and no-one else could claim for you.
- You were waiting for a decision about another benefit.
- You were given the wrong advice by an official organisation who said you were not entitled to housing benefit and/or council tax reduction.
- You were not able to manage your own affairs and had no-one to help you.

These examples are only a guide to help you. They are not a full list of all possible reasons. If you forgot to claim, or did not know you could claim, this would not be a good reason on its own. To qualify for backdated housing benefit and/or council tax reduction, you must be able to prove you had 'good cause' as to why you did not claim earlier.

## **How do I claim backdated housing benefit and/or council tax reduction?**

If you think you have good cause for making a late claim, you should tell us in writing straight away. You can ask us for a form or just write to us. You must tell us the period you want your benefit reduction backdated for and tell us why your claim is late. We will need to see proof of your income, capital and savings for the period you want your benefit backdated for and any proof to support your reasons (for example, medical certificates or hospital letters). For housing benefit we will also need to see your lease for the period you have asked for benefit to be backdated for Housing Association and Private Landlord tenants. Council tenants do not need to provide a lease.

### **What happens then?**

We will decide if we can backdate your housing benefit and/or council tax reduction based on the information you give us. We will write to you and tell you our decision. If we decide not to backdate your benefit/reduction, we will tell you why.

### **What happens if my housing benefit and/or council tax reduction is not backdated?**

You can appeal any decision not to backdate your claim; you should do so within one calendar month of the date of our letter advising of our decision. The decision will be reviewed by a senior member of staff, if we decide our original decision is correct then your appeal for housing benefit only will be sent to the Tribunal service.

For council tax reviews, your claim can be reviewed by an independent body – the council tax review panel.

For more details see our leaflet 3 – What to do if you think your benefit decision is wrong.