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# Landlord information

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## Contacting us

The quickest way to contact us is by email at [benefits@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@blackpool.gov.uk).

It will help us to respond to you more quickly if you include the reason for your email in the email subject. See the examples below:

- Arrears
- Change of address
- Change in circumstances
- Change of bank details
- New claim
- Overpayment enquiry
- Discretionary Housing Payment
- Appeal
- Electronic payment schedules
- Landlord self service portal

Please provide your name, the name of your tenant and their reference number in the email if possible and an explanation of what your query is about.

If urgent we will endeavour to reply to an email with 10 working days. Unfortunately in busy periods this is not always possible.

Please note the Benefit Service is unable to respond to emails chasing the progress of claims.

## Update on Universal Credit

The full service rollout was moved back from September 2018 to December 2018.

There have been no new claims to Universal Credit in live service areas with effect from 31 December 2017. This means that customers will continue to claim Housing Benefit until December 2018.

## Local Housing Allowance

Find out more about [Local Housing Allowance](#), including who is affected, how it will be paid and what the current rates are.

## Tenant's in rent arrears

If your tenant receives benefit payments direct and falls into arrears with their rent please email us as soon as you are aware there is a problem.

Please use 'arrears' as the email subject when you make your enquiry. In some circumstances we may decide to make future payments of benefit directly to you.

We will require evidence of the rent arrears from you but until a decision is made by us we will try to ensure no further payments are

made payable directly to the tenant. Evidence of arrears should be a rent account or rent book showing clearly the date rent due, amount received and accumulative arrears outstanding.

If the proof of arrears you supply is unsatisfactory we will advise you in writing.

To speed up the process please supply satisfactory proof of arrears when you first contact us.

## First payments

Once we have received the evidence and information needed we will process the Housing Benefit claim for your tenant. We aim to do this as quickly as possible.

An application for Housing Benefit does not guarantee that an award will be made, or that any award will cover the full rental liability. You will need to contact your tenant regarding any queries about their application or their award.

In the case of a new claim for Housing Benefit, and where payment is being made to the tenant, if the initial payment amount is over two weeks Housing Benefit it will be sent as a cheque in your name to your tenants address. This is known as a first payment or special payment.

After the first payment has been made, future payments will then be made in your tenant's name and sent direct to your tenant unless you notify us that your tenant is in arrears with their rent (see "Tenant's in rent arrears")

A first payment will not be made where the tenant has provided proof to us that they are up to date with their rent.

## Change in tenant's circumstances

It is the duty of the landlord, as well as the tenant, to notify the council as soon as you are aware of a change in your tenant's circumstances.

You must tell us as soon as your tenant leaves the property.

It is important that you also tell us about any other changes as soon as possible so that we do not pay you or your tenant too much benefit. If you do get overpaid we will ask you to pay the money back.

Below are examples of changes you should tell us about if you become aware of them.

- If your tenant starts work or changes/loses their job
- If there is a change to your tenant's household, for example if they have a baby or a partner moves out
- If your tenant moves, this includes into a different flat within the same building
- If your tenant goes into a rest home or hospital
- [If your tenant is temporarily absent from their home.](#)

Once you have notified us of the change we will contact your tenant for more detailed information, such as the date the change occurred. In some cases a new application may be required and we will advise your tenant if this is necessary.

We may need to suspend a benefit claim due to a change in circumstance. As long as we have the tenants authorisation to share information with their landlord we will inform you in writing when their case has been suspended.

### Report Your Tenant's Change In Circumstances

## What are you able to tell me about my tenant's housing benefit claim?

If your tenant has signed the section of the Housing Benefit application form 'Sharing Information with your landlord' we will be able to discuss the progress of your tenant's claim with you. If the tenant gives us permission we will be able to tell you, for example, whether:

- They have claimed Housing Benefit
- We have made a decision on their claim
- We have made a payment to the tenant
- We need more information for their claim and what that information is.

We will however not be able to tell you anything about your tenants:

- Personal household circumstances or
- Financial circumstances

Please be aware that a tenant can withdraw their permission for us to share information with you at any time during their claim. If a tenant would like to give us permission to share information with their landlord after their claim has been processed they can complete a sharing information with your landlord form which they must sign and return to us.

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