

## **Direction of Chief Executive regarding Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Claims**

This page sets out the Council's legal obligation to publicly state our policy regarding electronic collection of data in relation to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims.

### **Electronic Claims**

Blackpool Council ("the Authority") in accordance with paragraph 2 of:

- Schedule 11 to the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006
- Schedule 10 to the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006
- Section 1.28 of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme adopted by Blackpool Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013
- Part 4 of Schedule 7 to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012

hereby makes the following directions:

1. An individual who, in accordance with the above regulations makes a claim for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction is authorised to do so by an electronic communication, provided that the individual uses the method approved by the Authority in relation to the claim.

2. The methods and form set out, at the time of, and for the purposes of, the delivery of such a claim as referred to in paragraph 1, are respectively –

a) The methods approved by the Authority for –

- i) authenticating the identity of the individual making the claim;
- ii) submitting the claim;
- iii) authenticating the claim delivered; and
- iv) electronic communication

b) the form approved by the Authority in which the claim is to be delivered.

The methods acceptable to the authority are as follows:

#### New Claims

- By the authority's approved electronic claim form available on the Council website.
- By completion of a claim by a visiting officer of the Council using the authority's approved electronic form.
- By completion of a claim by a Benefit Processor whilst on the phone to a customer. Electronic applications for benefit by phone may be made by telephone using 01253 478847.

Where a claim is made using the claimant's details, the claimant will be responsible for the validity and accuracy of any statement made.

#### Authentication

The Authority will need to authenticate any claim presented by the claimant and this will be achieved by the claimant completing the online registration process for new claims included within the online claim form.

#### Submitting a claim or notification

- It should be noted that although new claims can be made electronically, there may be a requirement to provide additional documentation. For new claims, the Authority will also need to see two forms of identity for both you and your partner (if applicable), one of which should be you or your partner's (if applicable) National Insurance Number.
- The Authority may verify claims, certificates, notices, information or evidence by using third party systems and sources of information as well as by direct contact with a person using electronic communications or by some other means.
- The Authority may accept digital photographic and scanned images of notices, forms, evidence, and information provided by a person where it has been verified by an officer of the Authority or its agent. Where it has not been verified the Authority may request to see the original where its authenticity cannot be corroborated by other means.

- The Authority will not be held responsible for non receipt of any claim. Customers are advised to keep records of any claim submitted in case of query or appeal.
- Any claim, amendment or notification received that:
  - a. Does not conform to any of the relevant standards will be invalid
  - b. Does conform to the above standard but is not accepted by the Authority's official computer systems, is not regarded as having been delivered.

Other

This direction may be withdrawn or amended at any time by the issue of a further direction.

Signed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Neil Jack', written in a cursive style.

Neil Jack

Chief Executive

4<sup>th</sup> April 2013