

Change of Circumstances

Housing and Council Tax Benefit



Do you need help with this leaflet?

Maybe English is not your first language, you have difficulty reading it because the print is too small, or you are not sure what it means.

Please phone **01395 517446**.

Change of circumstances

When you made a claim for Housing Benefit or Council Tax benefit (or both), you signed a declaration saying that you would let us know in writing about any change of circumstance for you or anyone living with you that could affect your claim. This leaflet explains what you should do if you think there has been a change of circumstance in your home.

We need to know about

Any change of circumstance, such as:

- if you move home;
- if someone moves in or out;
- if you or your partner have any changes in income;
- if your rent changes;
- if you or your partner qualify for another benefit;
- if you or your partner stop getting Income Support or Job Seeker's Allowance;
- if anyone in your home has a change of circumstance.

This is not a full list. If you are not sure whether to tell us something, just ask us. You can find our contact details on the back page of this booklet.

Why you need to tell us immediately

Any delay in telling us could seriously affect your benefit.

Changes that could reduce your benefit

If you do not tell us promptly, and we find out later that we have paid you too much benefit, you will normally have to pay it back to the Council. The reduction will go back to the date of the actual change, not to the date we found out about it. So, to avoid a large bill later, please tell us about any changes in circumstances as soon as they happen.

Changes that could increase your benefit

An example of a change that could increase your benefit is if your income goes down. To make sure that any increase in your benefit entitlement is paid from the date that the change happened, you must let us know about it within **one calendar month**. Otherwise, unless there is a good reason for not telling us within that time limit, we may only increase your benefit from the Monday following the date that you did let us know about it.

Proof of changes

We will need proof of any changes. Here are some examples of the sort of proof we will need:

- a letter from your landlord telling you of a change in your rent or a new tenancy agreement;
- your latest payslips or pension slips to show the new amount you get as wages, pension or pension credit;
- a letter from the Department of Works and Pensions or Inland Revenue showing changes in your allowances or tax credits;
- a letter from the Benefits Agency showing changes in your benefits.

We also need the same sort of proof for the people who live with you.

If you cannot get proof immediately, please send us the form at the end of this booklet now, together with the documents you do have, then send any other proofs as soon as you can.

When you send us proof

We need **original documents**, not copies. You can either deliver the documents and form by hand, or send them to us. We will make a copy to keep on our files and then return the original documents to you as quickly as possible (normally on the day we receive them). If you send us photocopies by mistake, we will have to write to you and ask you either to send or bring in the original documents. We will return any valuable documents to you by recorded delivery.

How to tell us

The law says you must tell us about any change of circumstance immediately in writing. You can use the form in this booklet to do this. Please make sure you sign it

Contact us



Phone:

Our Benefits and Council Tax Helpline
01395 517446 between 8.30am and 5.00pm



Visit us at:

- **The Council Offices, Knowle, Sidmouth** daily between 8.30am and 5.00pm
- **Exmouth Town Hall** daily except Wednesday from 9.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 4.30pm
- **One of our regular surgeries** in Axminster, Seaton or Honiton (phone **01395 517446** for dates and times)



Write to us:

Housing Benefits
East Devon District Council
Knowle, Sidmouth EX10 8HL



Email us:

benefits@eastdevon.gov.uk

Visit our website:

www.eastdevon.gov.uk