



# Information booklet for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Free School Meals and School Clothing Allowance Application Form

The information in this booklet is to help you to fill in the form and includes information about:

- The form
- Contact details for the Benefits Service, and where to go for help and advice
- The benefits that you can claim with this form
- What to do when you have filled in the form
- What happens next
- Payments of benefit
- What proof you need to provide
- What changes of circumstances you need to tell us about

**Bradford District Council**

[www.bradford.gov.uk](http://www.bradford.gov.uk)

## About the form

We have tried to design the claim form so that it is easy to fill in. It may look long, but there have to be enough questions to make sure everyone who claims gets the right amount of benefit. You may not have to fill in all parts of the form, (for example, if you do not have children you only need to answer the first question in that section), but you must fill in any part that is relevant to you. Most of the sections start with a question to help you decide if you need to fill in that part.

## Filling in the form

- Please read all the notes carefully before you fill in the claim form.
- Please use black ink and BLOCK CAPITALS to fill in the form.
- Make sure you answer all the questions that apply to you. You must tick the 'No' box if a question does not apply to you.
- You must let us have the proof we need to support your claim.
- You must make sure that you read the declaration at section 21 and that you sign and date the form.
- Do not delay sending this form back to us. Your benefit is likely to start from the Monday after we receive your claim form. If you delay sending in your form you could lose benefit. If you don't have some proof that we are asking for then send it later. Don't delay sending in your form, but write and tell us that you are going to send the proof later.

## Help and Advice

You can get help and advice from the Council or if you prefer you can get independent advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau or any welfare agency. For details of independent agencies see the Yellow Pages.

## Equal Opportunities

Your race, ethnic origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or any disability will not affect the service you receive.

## About the benefits you can claim with this form

### Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit is a government scheme which is administered by the council to help people on low incomes with their rent and Council Tax bills.

If you are not on a low income but have someone who is on a low income living with you, you may be able to claim Second Adult Rebate.

### Second Adult Rebate

You can apply for Second Adult Rebate if you have adults living with you (but not your partner or someone who pays rent to you) who is on a low income. If you only want to claim Second Adult Rebate, you need to read and fill in **Parts 1, 2, 6, 7 and 17 onwards**.

### Free School Meals and School Clothing Allowance

You could get Free School Meals and School Clothing Allowance if you have children who attend a council nursery or school full time and you get one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment & Support Allowance (Income-related)
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
- Child Tax Credit (but **not** Working Tax Credit) and your annual income is less than the threshold set by the government each April.

Even if you do not qualify for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit you can still claim.



## What to do when you have filled in the form

When you have filled in the form, **sign it** and return it to us with the proof we need to see. We **do not** recommend that you send valuable items such as benefit order books, passports or bank books through the post, as we **cannot** accept responsibility for them if they are lost. We recommend that you take them to one of our offices, we will get the information we need and give them back to you. If you cannot get the proof we need straight away, do not worry. Return the form to us with the proof you have and let us know that you will be sending some proof later. If you want any documents returning you need to request them.

**If you do not return the form straight away, you might lose money. If you have not moved in yet return the application form and proofs straight away, then return the NO1 (included in the claim pack) when you have moved in.**

## What happens next?

We will look at your form to make sure that it is properly completed, and check that you have provided all the documents that we need. If we need more information we will contact you. Once we have all the information that we need we will work out your entitlement and send you a notification. This will tell you how much you will get, when it will start, and how you can appeal, or find out about how we have worked out your benefit.

We usually award benefit from the Monday after the day we get your claim. Sometimes we can pay benefit from an earlier date. Your claim can only be backdated if you can show that you have had a good reason for not applying until now. Use Part 17 of the form to tell us the date and give details of your reason.

## Payments of benefit

If you are entitled to Council Tax Benefit we will pay this into your Council Tax account and send you a new bill.

If you live in the following we can pay Housing Benefit direct to your landlord:

- incommunities
- Supported Housing
- Housing association
- Caravan / Houseboat / Hostel
- Your tenancy stated before 15 Jan 1989
- Board & lodgings

Please be assured that only information relating to the amount, frequency and issue date of benefit payments will be given to your landlord/agent. Personal information will not be disclosed.

For all other tenants, payment of Housing Benefit must be made to your bank or building society account by BACS. We can not pay in to Post Office Accounts.

Bradford Council recognises that some tenants may struggle with the responsibility of budgeting for and paying their rent, and as such safeguards are in place.

Please note that all Housing Benefits payments are made in arrears. If your rent arrears are equivalent to 8 weeks rent or more, your Housing Benefits will be paid directly to your landlord.

## What proof you need to provide

We need to see proof of some of the things you write about on the form. If you have a partner we will need to see proofs for them. If you are not sure if we need to see proof of something, get in touch with us. If you do not provide all the proof we need, we might not be able to pay any benefit. **We must see original documents**, not copies.

### Proof of identity

- UK passport, other country passport
- UK residence permit
- Driving Licence (if this is a photo-card licence we must also see the paper counter part)
- Medical card
- Birth certificate, civil partnership certificate
- Divorce, annulment or separation papers
- Recent pay slips
- Life assurance or insurance policies
- Bus pass, railcard, travel card, season ticket
- Utility bill (paid in your name for the last quarter)
- Bank or building society statements or pass books

### Non-UK Citizens

- Passport
- National Identity card
- Immigration and Nationality Directorate travel documents
- Home Office Documents which show immigration status

## Proof of unearned income

### Proof of State benefits, Tax Credits, Pension Credit

If you or any member of your household gets any state benefits, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit or Pension Credit we will need to see all the pages of the latest award notification for these.

### Proof of earned income

If you or any member of your household is employed we will need to see proof.

Paid weekly –	last 5 payslips
Paid fortnightly –	last 3 payslips
Paid monthly or four weekly –	last 2 payslips

The payslips must include the following:

- The employee's name
- The name and address of the employer
- The number of hours worked and period covered
- The income before deductions for the pay period and in the year to date
- The income tax deducted for the pay period and the year to date
- National Insurance contributions for the pay period and the year to date
- Any payments made for superannuation, occupational pensions or personal pensions
- Details of and Statutory Sick Pay, Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Paternity Pay or Adoption Pay.

If you don't provide this we may write to your employer.

### Self-employed

We will need to see the most recent audited accounts. If you can not provide these or you have only just recently become self-employed please tell us.

## Proof of capital, savings and investments

We must see proof of all bank, building society and post office accounts, both current accounts and savings accounts, including any that are overdrawn or not currently in use. This includes ISAs, TESSAS and PEPs. We also need to see proof of all Premium Bonds, Income Bonds, Unit Trusts, stocks and shares.

We will need to see:

- Bank and building society statements for all accounts that cover the last two months, showing all transactions and the current balance
- Statements showing all savings and investments and how they are invested
- National Savings certificates
- Documents showing proof of ownership for shares, bonds, unit trusts, stocks etc. This must include the number that you own, the name of the company (you must tell us if this has changed e.g. CGNU plc is now called Aviva plc).

## Proof of rent

If you rent your home we will need to see proof.

The evidence you provide must include the following:

- Your name
- The address of the property being rented
- The name and address of the landlord and/or agent
- The date the tenancy started
- The amount you pay including benefit payments
- A breakdown of what is included in the rent for example meals, gas, electricity
- How often you pay for example, weekly, fortnightly, 4 weekly or calendar monthly
- How long the tenancy will last
- The amount of any outstanding arrears.

Some documents that might provide for this are:

- Rent account
- Current tenancy agreement (signed and dated)
- Signed and dated letter from landlord/agent
- Rent book

