

Backdating the benefit start date

Housing and Council Tax Benefit may be backdated for a maximum of up to 6 months prior to the date the claim for backdated benefit is received. A request for backdating must be made in writing. Backdating can only be allowed if the local Council is satisfied that continuous "good cause" has been shown for having failed to claim earlier.

Each case is looked at on its own merit and this means you should provide all the relevant information in support of your request. You must tell us as soon as possible if you want to request backdating.

You can make a backdating request by letter, on the benefit application form under the heading "Other Information", or contact your local Council's Benefits Service to see if they can send you a backdating request form to complete.

If you are aged 60 years or over

If you or your partner are aged 60 or over your claim may cover any period in the 3 months before the day your claim was received.

You do not need to apply for backdating as your local Council's Benefits Service will automatically check whether you qualify.

Other leaflets available:

- ▶ 1 How to claim
- ▶ 2 Non-dependant deductions
- ▶ 3 Overpayments
- ▶ 4 Extended payments
- ▶ 5 Understanding our Decision and Making an Appeal
- ▶ 6 Benefit on two homes
- ▶ 7 Benefit when you are away from home
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- ▶ 11 Students
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Housing & Council Tax Benefit



When will your benefit start?

Leaflet also available in large print

Introduction

This guide is one of a number produced with the aim of helping customers understand Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

It is intended as a general guide. People have different circumstances so for more detailed individual advice please contact your local Council's Benefits Service.

Benefit start dates

The date of claim for Housing and Council Tax Benefit is usually the date the benefit application form is received by the local Council or the date you first told us you wished to make a claim.

If you are claiming Income Support, income based Jobseeker's Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance or Guaranteed Pension Credit and your claim for Housing/Council Tax benefit is received at either the Jobcentre Plus, the Pension Service or your local Council within one month of making a claim for these other benefits, then the date of claim is the day your entitlement to either Income Support, income based Jobseeker's Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance or Guaranteed Pension Credit began.

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Entitlement to Housing/Council Tax benefit will normally commence from the Monday following the date you tell us you are going to make a claim, providing we receive your application form within one month of that date, for example:

Date form requested: Wed 4 Feb 09
Date form received by local Council: Wed 18 Feb 09
Benefit start date: Mon 9 Feb 09

However there are exceptions to this rule where the claim is in respect of a new tenancy or where someone has become liable to make payments for their home for the first time.

Housing Benefit

If you move into a new home and your claim for Housing Benefit is treated as made in the same week that you move in and your rent liability starts, entitlement to Housing Benefit may start from a day in that week.

Your first weeks entitlement will be awarded for the number of days that you were both in occupation and had a rent liability, for example:

You move in: Wed 4 Mar 09
Your rent liability starts: Wed 4 Mar 09
You make your claim on: Fri 6 Mar 09
Benefit start date: Wed 4 Mar 09



Council Tax Benefit

If you move into a new home and claim Council Tax Benefit in the same week as you move in and become liable for Council Tax, entitlement to Council Tax Benefit may commence from a day in that week.

However, the exact day of the start of entitlement depends on the date your liability for Council Tax starts.

You move in: Thu 5 Feb 09
Date of claim: Thu 5 Feb 09
Council Tax liability starts: Thu 5 Feb 09
Benefit start date: Thu 5 Feb 09

This could also apply if you become liable for Council Tax for the first time because the previous liable person has died or because an exemption has ended.