

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Evidence Requirements – Checking your claim

Introduction

It is important that the correct benefit entitlement is paid to our customers and that fraud and error are detected and prevented as early as possible. This relies on

- us collecting appropriate information and evidence in support of benefit claims; and
- you advising us immediately if your circumstances change. If you don't tell us about these changes you may lose money you are entitled to or you may get too much benefit which you will have to pay back.

Evidence requirements

If you are applying for benefit in order to ensure that your claim is valid and that the correct amount of benefit is being paid we will ask to see **original** documentation as proof of your income and savings and evidence of your identity and National Insurance Number.

If you have a partner we will also need to see evidence of their income, savings and National Insurance Number.

If you have anyone else living with you who is over 18 such as a grown up son or daughter we will need to see proof of their income and interest from savings. This is because in most cases we are required to reduce your benefit by a fixed amount. This is called a non-dependant deduction and is intended to reflect the person's assumed contribution to the household.

Please see our leaflet ['Other adults living with you'](#) for more information.

If you are a private tenant we will also need to see

- Proof of rent payment (e.g. a rent book or rent statement)
- Your current tenancy agreement (all pages)

If you do not have a formal tenancy agreement or proof of rent paid, your landlord can complete a proof of rent and tenancy form. This can be obtained from our one of our customer centres or One Stop Shops.

If you are making an online claim we can accept information by e-mail. If you have a smartphone or tablet, take clear photographs of your documents and e-mail them directly to us.

If you are attending a new claim interview you should bring this proof with you when you attend your interview. This is usually carried out at any Customer Centre or One Stop Shop (located in Cwmbran, Pontypool, Blaenavon, Chepstow, Caldicot, Monmouth or Abergavenny) or in your own home.

Proof of income or capital

We can only accept **original** documents not photocopies. Do not send valuable items such as bank We can only accept original documents not photocopies. Bring them to one of our Customer Centres (in Cwmbran, Pontypool or Blaenavon) or One Stop Shops (in Chepstow, Caldicot, Monmouth or Abergavenny). We will only use the information we need and give the documents back to you, please ensure that you ask for a receipt. Alternatively we can accept information by e-mail. If you have a

smartphone or tablet capture the images required to support your claim and e-mail them directly to us.

Changes in your Circumstances

If you have any changes in your circumstances you must tell us about changes as soon as they happen. See page 3 for our contact details.

It is important that you provide details of the change, the date that the change occurred and proof where appropriate.

The fastest, most convenient way to report a change in circumstances is on the council's website or smartphone app. You can download the app for free from your phone's app store or visit www.torfaen.gov.uk. You'll also get access to a range of other useful services and information.

Checks we make whilst you are in receipt of Benefit?

Once benefit is in payment the Council will carry out a check on your claim to make sure you are still receiving the correct benefit. The checks may take the form of a visit, telephone call, interview or alternatively we may send you a postal review form to complete.

1. Home visits

Home visits are routine and a Visiting Officer from the Benefits Section will call on most customers during the lifetime of their claim. They may call on you to help you make a new claim for benefit or alternatively if you already in receipt of benefit they may call on you to check you are receiving the correct entitlement. The visit will give you an opportunity to ask the Visiting Officer any questions you may have regarding your claim.

We will usually contact you by telephone or in writing to you to advise you of the date and approximate time of the visit. We will also tell you what documents we will need to see sitting Officer as proof of your income and savings.

If you are a private tenant we will also need to see proof that you have paid your rent, for example a rent book.

If the appointment is inconvenient you should contact the Benefits Visiting Team to arrange a convenient alternative appointment.

All Visiting Officers will carry identification. They will be polite helpful and professional.

What will happen if I am not in when the Visiting Officer calls?

If you are not in when our Visiting Officer calls a card will be left asking you to contact us within 14 days. It is important that you do this. If you fail to do so your benefit may be suspended and eventually terminated.

2. Postal reviews

The Council may send you a postal review form to complete. This form asks you a series of questions to confirm whether your circumstances have changed since you made an application for benefit. You should complete this form within 14 days and return it to the Benefits Section with proof of your income or capital.

We will then check the details on the form and if your circumstances have changed your benefit entitlement may be adjusted.

It is important that you return the postal review form. Failure to do so may result in the suspension or termination of your benefit entitlement.

3. Telephone checks

The Benefit Section may contact you by telephone to check that the benefit you are receiving is correct. The Officer will give you their name, telephone number and explain the reason for the telephone call; they will then ask you a series of questions regarding your household, income and savings.

If it is not convenient for you to speak to the officer at that point we will arrange to ring you back at a convenient time.

Our Contact details

If you need more help, please contact us.

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TORFAEN RESIDENTS should contact TELEPHONE:01495 766430 or 01495 766570 E-MAIL: benefits@torfaen.gov.uk Minicom for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The number is 01495 767871		MONMOUTHSHIRE RESIDENTS should contact TELEPHONE:01633 644650 or 01633 644655 E-MAIL: benefits@monmouthshire.gov.uk	
OUR ADDRESS- Shared Benefit Service Level 3, Civic Centre Pontypool Torfaen NP4 6YB			
IN PERSON at any of our One Stop shops, Community Hubs in Monmouthshire or Customer Centres in Torfaen.			
ABERGAVENNY Abergavenny Market -Cross St, Abergavenny NP7 5HD	CHEPSTOW Chepstow Library- Manor Way, Chepstow, NP16 5HZ	CALDICOT Caldicot Library - Woodstock Way, Caldicot, NP26 5DB	
MONMOUTH Monmouth Library, Rolls Hall, Monmouth, NP25 3BY		Usk Usk Library - 35 Maryport St, NP15 1AE	
PONTYPOOL Level One Civic Centre, Pontypool NP4 6YB	CWMBRAN Cwmbran Library, Gwent House, Gwent Square, Cwmbran, NP44 1XQ	BLAENAVON Blaenavon World Heritage Centre Church Road Blaenavon NP4 9AS	

WELSH TRANSLATION - If you require a copy of this document in Welsh please contact us on the telephone numbers above.

Online services (This service is currently only available for Torfaen residents)

You are now able to access a full range of online services via the Council's website www.torfaen.gov.uk under online services. Using a secure registration process you can now access the following services:

- Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction claim data for your claim
- Council Tax or Business Rate information for your account including the account balance, payment and instalment details.

The service also allows you to claim a discount or exemption or make a payment towards your account. Sign up securely and quickly at www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/CouncilTaxandBenefits

Download app.

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Monmouthshire residents can also use this service to report a change in their circumstances.