

## Our Mission

**Our Mission is 'To Pay the Right Benefit at the Right Time'**

**Our service objectives are:**

- to provide an effective and efficient benefits service
- to meet all benefits performance standards
- to improve access to our Services
- to improve customer satisfaction
- to ensure a fully trained workforce

## Contact Details

We have 2 offices where you are able to see a Customer Services Advisor.

Appointments are available between 8.30am - 9.30am.  
Drop-in sessions are available 10.00am - 4.30pm

To make an appointment please call Customer Services on 0845 9072244.

To speak to someone on the telephone, please call 0115 9071010.

Our e-mail address is [benefits@erewash.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@erewash.gov.uk)

## We need your help!

We are seeking to involve users and non-users of the service to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to take an active part in the development of a high quality service and have a part in the decision-making processes.

We are therefore asking for contact details of those who wish to help us by taking part in surveys and forums, and commenting on leaflets and forms.

Your help will be much appreciated.

**So now you know about our service and what we can do for you.....?**



**Rent**  
Allowance



**Second**  
Adult Rebate



**Council**  
Tax Benefit



# Benefit Service

## Who we are and what we do ...





## **Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)**

DHP is a special fund allocated to help people who have difficulty meeting their housing costs where Housing and/or Council Tax Benefit has been awarded but there is still some rent or Council Tax left to pay. You cannot get help with the cost of service charges such as water rates.

The fund is limited and carefully monitored.

To apply you will need to complete a form and provide details and evidence of your weekly income and expenditure. Don't delay, claim today!

## **Benefit Fraud**

Benefit fraud is a crime and is dealt with in the appropriate way. Anyone found committing benefit fraud will have to pay back the money to which they had no entitlement and additional action will be taken against them. We are committed to the prevention and detection of fraud. In the past 2 years we have prosecuted customers and issued other sanctions to customers who have committed benefit fraud.

If you know, or suspect, a person is claiming Housing or Council Tax Benefit they are not entitled to, please call the Benefits Enquiry Unit on 0115 907 1042. You do not have to give your name. We will investigate the matter and take the appropriate action.

## **Examples of Benefit Fraud:**

- Claiming Housing Benefit for a property and live elsewhere;
- Working whilst claiming Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance;
- Failing to declare ALL of your income;
- Failing to declare some of your savings or investments (including any property of your own)
- Someone living with them

## **Who We Are and What We Do...**

Welcome to the Benefits Service at Erewash Borough Council where our responsibility is to provide you with a cost effective, high quality and professional service.

The Benefits Service is part of the Finance Department within the Resources Directorate, and responsible for awarding Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

The Benefit schemes are administered by us under Legislation and Regulations issued by Central Government. They were put in place to assist residents on a low income to meet the costs of their Rent and Council Tax. The Benefits service is run in accordance with strict regulations and performance standards. It is subject to an inspection by Internal Audit or the Audit Commission at any time as we pay out millions of pounds of public money. We must therefore ensure safeguards are in place to protect it.

## **Within the Benefit scheme there are the following types of Benefit:**

- Rent Allowance - This is paid to eligible residents living in Privately Rented accommodation. (Including Lodgers, Boarders, Sub-tenants and residents of Mobile Homes).
- Council Tax Benefit - This is paid to eligible residents who are liable to pay Council Tax on their property.
- Second Adult Rebate (SAR) - This is a type of Council Tax Benefit (sometimes referred to as 'Alternative maximum Council Tax') for residents who have a second adult (or adults) in the property on a low income. The benefit is based on the Second Adult(s) income and the general idea is that it substitutes any discount the liable person has lost due to the second adult being in the property.

At present approximately 10,400 households claim these Benefits from us. However, it is thought many more households are eligible to claim but don't. Last year we made Housing Benefit payments of approximately £20,500,000 and Council Tax Benefit payments of £7,000,000 per year.

### **How are we doing...?**

Our target is to assess benefit claims within 14 days of all necessary information being provided, however Performance Indicators measure the average speed for which we assess new claims and changes in circumstances from the date of receipt to the date of assessment.

We have set ourselves a target of under 12 days to deal with both new claims and changes in circumstances on average.

### **The Claims Process**

To claim Housing and Council Tax Benefit an application form must be completed and submitted to us. You can obtain an application form by telephoning 0115 9071010 where you will be given the option to complete an application over the phone at a time convenient to you, or you can pick one up from our offices. Once completed, either return it to the address on the front of the application form, or you can take it to one of the offices listed below.

- Ilkeston - Town Hall, Wharncliffe Road, Ilkeston, Derbyshire
- Long Eaton - Civic Centre, Derby Road, Long Eaton

We require original proof of all income, capital & tenancy/residency. These proofs can be sent by post direct to the Benefits section or copied at one of our offices either with your completed form, or as soon as they become available to you. If you are a Three Valleys or Nottingham Community Housing tenant you are able to take completed forms to their offices, and have any evidence verified as originals and photocopied by their specially

trained members of staff. Always return your claim form even if you haven't all the evidence to go with it. You have one calendar month to supply anything that is missing. The quicker you supply the completed claim form and all the evidence, the quicker your claim will be processed.

In order to speed up the processing of claims, we have introduced a '2 Day New Claims' process. If you are submitting a New Claim and return your completed form and provide proof of ALL your Income, Capital and Rent details to a Customer Services Advisor we will aim to process your claim within 2 working days. If you require any assistance with completing your claim form or providing your evidence please contact 0115 9071010 and we may be able to arrange a Visiting Officer to visit you in your home. Once your benefit claim has been assessed we will send you a letter telling you how we worked out your Housing/Council Tax Benefit. Please check the information in this letter very carefully, if there is anything you think is wrong, you must tell us straight away. If incorrect information has been used on your claim this may result in a benefit overpayment. If you have never claimed before we will send a Visiting Officer with your letter so they can explain your entitlement and you can ask any questions you may have.

### **If you disagree with our decision**

- You can request a written Statement of Reasons why the decision was made, you must request this in writing within one calendar month of the date on your letter; or
- You can request the decision be looked at again and a reconsideration made. Again you must request this in writing within one calendar month of the date on your letter; or
- You can appeal against the decision and have your case sent to The Tribunals Service. Again you must request this in writing within one calendar month of the date of the letter.