

**Please read these important notes before you fill in this form.**

## **When we start paying your benefit**

Benefit usually starts from the Monday after the date that you contacted us to make a claim. You will need to send the form back to us within one month of the date that we issued the form to you.

## **Housing Benefit**

Housing Benefit helps you pay your rent if you are on low income.

If you are a tenant of Wigan and Leigh Homes, we take your Housing Benefit off the rent you owe.

If you are a tenant of a housing association, you can choose how your benefit is paid, see section 17 of the claim form.

If you rent your home from a private landlord and are making a new claim for benefit, we will work out your benefit under the Local Housing Allowance.

Usually you will have your benefit paid directly to you and you would pay your rent to your landlord.

There will be circumstances where we may pay the landlord, see sections 16 and 17 of the claim form.

## **Council Tax Benefit**

Council Tax Benefit helps you pay your Council Tax if you are on a low income.

We take your Council Tax Benefit off your Council Tax bill.

## **Second Adult Rebate**

Second Adult Rebate helps you pay your Council Tax if you do not live with a partner and any other adults living in your home are on low incomes.

We take Second Adult Rebate off your Council Tax bill.

If you want to claim Second Adult Rebate and you do not want to claim any other benefits, make sure your name and address are on this form and fill in sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 20. However, if you fill in all of the form, we can tell you about any other benefits you may be able to get.

## **Free school meals**

Free school meals are provided for children whose parents get:

- Income Support;
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- the guaranteed part of Pension Credit;
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act; or
- Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit, and whose income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) is £16,040 or less a year.

We will tell your child's school that they should be getting free school meals.

If you want to claim free school meals and you do not want to claim any other benefits, or you are already getting another benefit from us, fill in sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11 and 20.

**Remember** that we need to know the name of your child's school.

**We will work out your benefit as quickly as we can, but cannot work it out until we have all the information we need.**

**If you do not provide all of the proof that we need within one month we may not be able to pay benefit.**

## How we collect and use information

We will use the information you give in this form, and in any supporting evidence you send us, to process your claim for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Second Adult Rebate and free school meals.

We may pass the information to other agencies or organisations such as the Department for Work and Pensions and the Inland Revenue, as allowed by law.

We may check information you have provided, or information about you that someone else has provided, with other information we hold.

We may get information about you from certain third parties, or give them information to:

- make sure the information is accurate;
- prevent or detect crime; and
- protect public funds.

We will not give information about you to anyone else, or use information about you for other purposes, unless the law allows us to.

We are the 'data controller' for the purposes of the Data Protection Act. If you want to know more about what information we have about you, or the way we use that information, please ask us.

## Contacting us

If you have any questions or need help filling in this form contact us.

Our address is:

**The Council Tax Offices**  
**PO Box 100**  
**Moore Street East**  
**Whelley**  
**Wigan**  
**WN1 3DS.**

<b>Phone:</b>	<b>01942 828644</b>
<b>Fax:</b>	<b>01942 828613</b>
<b>E-mail:</b>	<b>benefits@wigan.gov.uk</b>
<b>Website:</b>	<b>www.wigan.gov.uk</b>
<b>Textphone (for people who are hard of hearing):</b>	<b>01942 828725</b>

The enquiry office is open from 8.45am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Our phone lines are open from 8.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday and 8.00am to 12.30pm on Saturdays.

## Our office has the following facilities

- Access for people in wheelchairs.
- An induction loop to help if you are hard of hearing, and staff who can use sign language if you are deaf. We can arrange other support services and equipment to help you if you are disabled. We use Typetalk and you can contact us this way.
- We can arrange an interpreter to speak to you in your own language if English is not your first language.
- Phone lines to other council departments.
- If you find it difficult to leave your home, we can send someone to visit you to help you fill in forms or give you help and advice.

## Useful information

### Your local office of Wigan and Leigh Housing

Staff at your local office can help you fill in and check your claim. They can also check the documents you are providing as proof so that you do not have to post them to us. You will need to fill in the 'Benefit consent form' on page 45 of the claim form.

### Your local council office

Staff at the following council offices can help you fill in and check your claim. They can also check the documents you are providing as proof so that you do not have to post them to us.

Leigh Town Hall  
Market Street  
Leigh  
WN7 1DY

Wigan Civic Centre  
Millgate  
Wigan  
WN1 1YD

### Your landlord

If you are a tenant of one of the following landlords, they can help you fill in and check your claim. They can also check the documents you are providing as proof so that you do not have to post them to us. You will need to fill in the 'Benefit consent form' on page 45 of the claim form.

- Wigan and Leigh Housing
- Arena Housing
- Adactus Housing
- English Churches Housing

### Your library

Staff at the following libraries can help you fill in and check your claim. They can also check the documents you are providing as proof so that you do not have to post them to us.

- Ashton
- Aspull
- Atherton
- Golborne
- Ince
- Orrell
- Platt Bridge
- Standish

### Local agencies

The following agencies can help you fill in and check your claim. They can also check the documents you are providing as proof so that you do not have to post them to us.

- Wigan Independent Advice Centre 01942 324851
- Age Concern (for those aged 50 or over) Wigan 01942 241972  
Leigh 01942 607337

The following agency can give advice about your claim and about debt and money matters.

- Citizens Advice 0844 826 9713

## **Changes you must tell us about**

**After you have filled this form in and sent it back to us you must tell us about any changes in your circumstances, as this may affect the amount of benefit you are entitled to.**

**Tell us about any changes straight away.**

**If you do not tell us about changes in your circumstances, you may lose money you are entitled to or we may pay you too much benefit, which you will have to pay back.**

You must tell us if any of the following apply to you or your partner.

- You start to get Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit or Pension Credit.
- Someone moves into or out of your home.
- Your wage goes up or down.
- Your state benefits change.
- Your Income Support stops.
- Your Jobseeker's Allowance stops.
- Your Employment and Support Allowance stops.
- Your rent goes up or down.
- You start working or change jobs.
- One of your children leaves or starts school, or moves to a different school.
- You move home.
- Your Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit or Pension Credit changes.
- Your private pension goes up.
- Your savings go up or down.
- The income of the other adults in your home changes.
- Anyone starts to get Carer's Allowance for looking after you.

**Please tell us about these or any other changes which may affect your benefit.**

**Please tell us about any change, in writing (a phone call is not enough) and send us proof of the new details. You need to tell us even if you have told the Department for Work and Pensions.**

**Any proof you send us must be original documents. We cannot accept copies.**

**You must make sure that you tell us about changes. Do not rely on someone else to pass the message on.**

**It is an offence not to tell us about any change of circumstances that affects your benefit. We may take court action against you if we pay you too much benefit and you will probably have to pay it back.**