

Electronic collection of data

Direction of the Chief Executive regarding Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Scheme claims

This Directive sets out the Council's legal obligation to publicly state its policy with regard to electronic collection of data relating to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support scheme claims.

Direction of Anna Graves, Chief Executive of South Holland District Council, under the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Electronic Communications) (Miscellaneous Benefits) Order 2006.

South Holland District Council ("the Authority"), in accordance with paragraph 2 of:

- Schedule 11 to the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 ("the 2006 Regulations")
- Schedule 10 to the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006
- Schedule 1 of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Regulations 2012

Hereby makes the following directions:

1. An individual, or their representative, who, in accordance with the 2006 Regulations makes a claim for Housing Benefit under the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 and/or makes a claim for support under the Authority's current Council Tax Support scheme is authorised to do so by electronic communication, providing that the individual uses the method approved by the Authority in relation to the claim.
2. The approved methods for using electronic communication are as follows:-
 - New applications. Electronic applications for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support provided they are
 - Made on the Authority's on-line claim form on its website www.sholland.gov.uk.
 - OR**
 - Made on the Authority's PDF version of their own claim form and submitted by email to benefits@sholland.gov.uk.
 - OR**
 - Made through a telephone assisted claims process, accessed through the Authority's Benefit Team on 01775 761161, where the claim will be input by the administrator through the on-line claim form, on the Authority's website www.sholland.gov.uk.
 - Reporting a change in circumstances for an existing claim via phone to the Housing Benefit team on 01775 761161 or by email to benefits@sholland.gov.uk.
 - The person making an electronic claim, or reporting an amendment or change in circumstances may be asked to sign the electronic document or a statement using a manual or electronic method.
 - To ensure the authenticity of the identity of the sender the electronic communication must include the following: -
 - The claimant's name and any two of the following:-

- The address of the benefit claim
 - The claimants date of birth
 - The claimants national insurance number
 - The claimants Benefit reference number
- The Authority may accept digital photographic and scanned images of notices, forms, evidence and information by a person where it has been verified by an officer of the Authority or its agent. Where it has not been verified or cannot be corroborated by other means the Authority will request to see the original.
 - The person making the claim or reporting a change in circumstances must keep a copy of any electronic communication, reference number generated, claim, certificate, notice, information or evidence so that it can be produced where the Authority so requires. Failure to produce the evidence upon reasonable request may be deemed to show that an electronic communication was not successfully made to the Authority.
 - The Authority may accept digital photographic and scanned images of notices, forms, evidence and information by a person where it has been verified by an officer of the Authority or its agent. Where it has not been verified or cannot be corroborated by other means the Authority will request to see the original.
 - The person making the claim or reporting a change in circumstances must keep a copy of any electronic communication, reference number generated, claim, certificate, notice, information or evidence so that it can be produced where the Authority so requires. Failure to produce the evidence upon reasonable request may be deemed to show that an electronic communication was not successfully made to the Authority
3. The Authority may require further information or original supporting evidence before the claim for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support can be assessed or reviewed. The Authority may verify claims, certificates, notices, information or evidence using third party systems and sources of information as well as by direct contact with a person using electronic communications or by some other means.
 4. Any claim, amendment or notification received that:
 - a) Does not conform to any of the relevant standards will be invalid.
 - b) Does conform to the above standard but is not accepted by the Authority's official computer system, is not regarded as being delivered.
 5. This direction may be withdrawn or amended at any time by the issue of a further direction.

Signed by: A Graves

Chief Executive

Dated: 17/04/20