

Benefits Bulletin

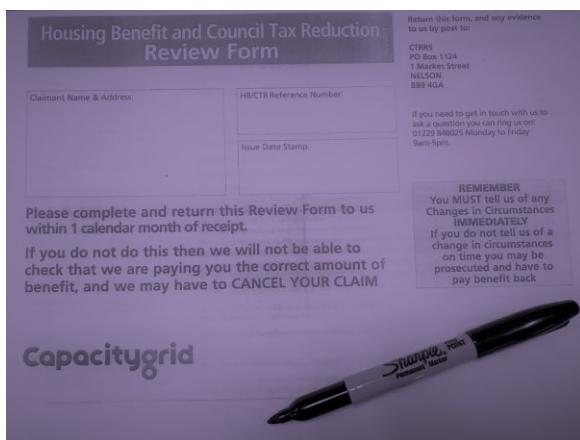
HB/CTR Reviews...

3rd July 2017

Issue 7

The Review Form

The City of Wolverhampton Council (through a third-party company called CapacityGRID) is reviewing people's awards of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction in order to ensure that the correct amount of benefit is being awarded. The council is aware that some people fail to report changes in their financial and personal circumstances, resulting in overpayments and underpayments of benefit.



It is important that when a person gets a 'Review Form' they complete and return it within one month. As the form confirms, failure to do so will result in their claim being cancelled. This will result in them falling into rent and/or council tax arrears.

The form must be completed and returned even if someone believes that there have been no changes in their circumstance since their most recent claim.

Evidence...

The form asks for up-to-date information on:

- anyone who normally lives with the claimant
- the benefits and/or other income the claimant and/or their partner receives
- any employment being undertaken by the claimant and/or their partner and earnings from that employment
- any savings or capital (e.g. shares, investments and land) the claimant and/or their partner has.

Evidence is required to verify the particulars contained in the form, although original documents do not need to be sent. Evidence of identity can include a copy of a birth or marriage certificate, passport, driving license or medical card. Evidence of benefit income (e.g. Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Pension Credit) could be a copy of a current award letter confirming what benefit is being paid and how much.

Copies of bank, building society or credit union statements may be used to verify the level of a person's/couple's savings.

If evidence of key information is not provided, then a person's Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction awards will stop.

Further info...

Once the Review Form is returned, if more information is needed then the person will be contacted about this. In some situations, a query may be able to be dealt with over the phone. See Helpline opposite.

Stamp Needed?

When the Review Form is sent, a return envelope is not provided. It is up to the claimant to return the form and pay for the postage. Whilst a second-class stamp should suffice when returning the Review Form, if bulky or weighty documentary evidence is being sent then it is important that people make sure that the correct level of postage is paid.

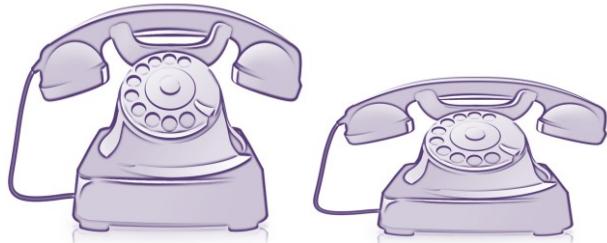


The Review Form should not be returned to the Council. The correct return postal address for the Review Forms is:

CTRRS
PO Box 1124
1 Market Street
Nelson
BB9 4GA

Helpline

If anyone has any queries connected to the completion and return of the Review Form then they can ring the CapacityGRID Helpline on **01229 848025** (9.00 am to 5.00 pm - Monday to Friday). Staff on the Helpline are able to provide advice on completing the form. If someone is unable to complete the Review Form due to poor reading and writing skills, then the Helpline will normally ask them to contact their local advice centre for help or sign-post them to friend or relatives for help. In exceptional cases (e.g. where the claimant is particularly vulnerable) the Helpline can ask for a Visiting Officer from the Council to visit them and help them to complete the Review Form. The Helpline can also arrange for evidence to be provided by email using smartphone photos of relevant documents. The Helpline may also be used to respond to requests for follow-up information.



Council Tax - Single Person Discount

You should know that the Council is also in the process of undertaking a similar exercise, using another third-party company (Datatank Ltd), in relation to people who do not get any Council Tax Reduction but get the 25% 'Single Person Discount' (SPD) because they have been assessed as living alone. In these cases, people will be asked to provide details of any adults (people aged 18 or over) now living with them. They can do this in writing (using the form that will be sent to them) or on-line. Failure to respond within **14 DAYS** will result in any award of the SPD being removed.

Welfare Rights Service
Specialist Support Team
City of Wolverhampton Council
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