

Can I get advice on how much Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit I can get if I start work?

Yes, just contact us with details of your expected earnings and other income details and we should be able to give you an estimate of how much Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit (or both) you could get. You can also calculate your own estimate by using the on-line calculator on our website.

Is there any extra financial help available to help me back into work?

Yes, there is extra financial help available. If you go back to work and your Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance ends, Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related), you should be entitled to an extended payment of your Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit (or both) for up to four weeks.

You must have been receiving Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance for 26 weeks before starting work, and the work should be expected to last for at least five weeks.

Make a claim for it at the Department for Work & Pensions or Jobcentre Plus, and don't forget to tell us at the same time.

What should I do if anything changes when I'm getting benefit?

You should tell The Benefits Section at Winchester City Council straightaway if your circumstances change. It might affect how much you get, and if you don't tell us you may lose benefit.

If you don't tell The Benefits Section at Winchester City Council about a change and we pay you too much benefit, you may have to pay it back.

Pick up our leaflets called *Notifying change of circumstances when in receipt of benefit* and *A guide to benefit overpayments*.

What can I do if I don't agree with your decision?

If you don't agree with our decision, you can ask us to look at it again. Our letters tell you what your rights are.

You could also pick up our leaflet called *What you can do if you think the decision about your benefit is wrong* which gives you more detailed information.

Where can I get help?

You can always phone us for help and advice.

- **Tel:** 01962 848 539
E-mail: benefits@winchester.gov.uk
Website: www.winchester.gov.uk

telephone calls may be recorded

Winchester City Council
Colebrook Street
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 9LJ

- Or, you could contact your local **Citizens Advice Bureau** as detailed below.

Winchester Citizens Advice Bureau
The Winchester Centre
68 St Georges Street
Winchester
Hants SO23 8AH
Tel: 01962 848 000

Bishops Waltham Citizens Advice Bureau
Well House
2 Brook Street
Hants SO32 1AX
Tel: 01489 896 376

Department for Work and Pensions **Website:** www.dwp.gov.uk



Housing & council tax benefit for those who work



What are Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit?

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit are benefits which help people on a low income.

- Housing Benefit is paid to people with a low income who pay rent.
- Council Tax Benefit is paid to people with a low income who pay Council Tax.

There are two types of Council Tax Benefit.

- Main Council Tax Benefit
- Second Adult Rebate

You can pick up our leaflet called *A Guide to Housing & Council Tax Benefits* for more detailed information.

Can I claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit even though I work?

Yes you can, but the more you earn, the less benefit you are likely to get. You should apply to find out if you are entitled. Just contact us for an application form – how to contact us is at the back of this leaflet.

I'm self-employed—can I claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit?

Yes you can. You need to give us proof of your self-employed earnings and you can contact us for more information about what we need.

How do I claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit?

You should contact us and ask us to send you an application form, or you can call into one of our offices and pick one up. You can also download an application form from our website. Our contact details are on the back of this leaflet.

If you don't have all the proof of income and investments we need, don't delay sending in your form as you may lose benefit. We can always ask for any more information once we have received your application.

What proof will you need to see of my earned income?

We will need to see:

- five payslips if you are paid every week;
- two payslips if you are paid every month; or
- three payslips if you are paid every two weeks.

Your payslips must be the most recent ones when you make your claim.

What if I've just started work and I'm not sure what my wages will be?

In this case you can ask your employer to tell us what you are likely to earn. Then, when you get your payslips, you can send them to us so we can reassess your earnings.

Do you ignore any of my earnings?

Yes, we ignore a set amount of your earnings every week. The amount we ignore depends on your circumstances.

We count the money you earn from work after money has been taken out for:

- Tax and National Insurance contributions; and
- half of any money you pay into a pension fund.

We also do not count the first:

- £5 of the money you earn each week, if you are a single person;
- £10 of the money you earn each week, if you are a couple;

- £20 of the money you earn each week, if you are disabled; or
- £25 of the money you earn each week, if you are a single parent.

An additional earned income disregard may also be applicable if you meet certain criteria, please contact The Benefits Section for further information.

What other proof will I need to provide apart from earnings?

We need to see proof of any other income that you or your partner receive, for example Child Benefit, as well as any savings or capital you have.

We also need proof of your and your partner's National Insurance Number, and we may also ask you to provide proof of identity for both of you.

Our form usually tells you what you need to provide, but if you're not sure you can always contact us for help – details are on the back of this leaflet.

I work and have a child. Do you take account of the childcare costs I have to pay?

Yes we do. We can ignore an amount for childcare costs from your earnings if the following applies;

- you are a lone parent and you work over 16 hours a week
- you are in a couple and you both work over 16 hours a week
- you are in a couple and one member works over 16 hours a week and the other is incapacitated
- the childcare must be with an approved childcare provider

Please contact us for more information.