

Useful Information

Please read the notes below. If you have any queries, please phone 01233 331111, or visit us at

Ashford Gateway Plus, Church Road, Ashford, Kent. TN23 1AS

ABC Customer Services: 9am to 4pm Mon to Fri, 9am to 1pm Sat

General opening times: 9am to 8pm Mon to Thurs, 9am to 6pm Fri and Sat

If you wish to write to us, please use the following address: Benefit Services, Ashford, Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL.

What to do now

You should check the details on the enclosed letter(s) to make sure that everything is correct (some of the terms used are explained below). You must tell us straightaway if you think our decision on your claim is wrong, you must also tell us why you think it is wrong.

What you should do if you think this decision is wrong

If you want to know more about this decision or if you think it is wrong, you should get in touch with us within **one month** of the date of the enclosed letter(s) or we may not be able to consider any dispute.

You can contact us by phone or in writing. Our address and phone number are shown at the top or this page.

You can either:

- ask for an explanation;
- ask us to look again at the decision;
- appeal against the decision – this can only be in writing. If you appeal against the decision an independent tribunal administered by the Appeals Service will hear your appeal.

What if your circumstances change?

If your circumstances change it may affect the amount of benefit you get. You must tell us about any changes straightaway. Failure to do so may result in loss of benefit. **You** are responsible for telling us about changes to your circumstances. Please use the form overleaf.

What you need to pay

Council Tax:

The weekly benefit shown will be converted to an annual figure. We will work out how much benefit you will get and take this amount from your Council Tax bill. You are responsible for paying the difference. Council Tax is rounded to the nearest whole penny to calculate weekly benefit.

Rent:

You are responsible for paying the difference between the benefit awarded and the rent charged. If you are a private tenant, you will receive a payment by cheque, or your landlord will be paid directly. If you are Council tenant, your benefit will be paid directly to your rent account.

Help us to help you

Benefit Services are committed to ensuring that everyone who is entitled to receive benefit can do so. It is also important to ensure that people do not receive benefit if they are not entitled to it. Therefore if you know of anyone who is claiming benefit that they are not entitled to please contact us on the **Free 24 hour Fraud Hotline 08000 262 456**. All calls are treated in the strictest confidence.

Extra Help

It may be possible to give you additional help in the form of a Discretionary Housing Payment if your benefit is restricted. You can request we consider awarding you a payment from this scheme in writing; you will also need to provide a detailed breakdown of your income and committed expenditure.