

Appendix C



Direction of Chief Executive regarding Housing Benefit claims and Council Tax Reduction Applications

Direction of Robert Moran, Chief Executive of Elmbridge Borough Council under the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Electronic Communications) Order 2006 and Part 4, Paragraph 11 of Schedule 7 to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012.

The page sets out the Council's legal obligation to publicly state our policy regarding electronic collection of data relating to Housing Benefit claims and Council Tax Reduction applications.

The Borough of Elmbridge (the Authority) in accordance with:

For Housing Benefit:

Paragraph 2 of Schedule 11 to the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006
Paragraph 2 of Schedule 10 to the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006.

For Council Tax Reduction:

Elmbridge Borough Council's Tax Support Scheme under the Local Government Finance Act 2012.

Hereby makes the following directions:

1. Providing the method approved by the Authority is used, electronic communication may be used in the following circumstances:
 - Making a claim for Housing Benefit and/or an application for a Council Tax Reduction
 - Amending a claim for Housing Benefit and/or an application for a Council Tax Reduction
 - Notifying a change in circumstances for a Housing Benefit claim and/or a Council Tax Reduction application
 - Making or amending a claim for Discretionary Housing Payment
 - Responding via email to a request for information in support of an application to Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and/or Discretionary Housing Payment
 - Notifying a claimant of a decision via email to access the council's web portal of a decision or required action in relation to their claim for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and/or Discretionary Housing Payment

2. The methods approved by the Authority for using electronic communication are as follows:
 - The claim/application form used must be that which is on the Authority's website www.elmbridge.gov.uk
 - The form must be completed in accordance with the instructions set out on the website
 - The change of circumstances form used must be that which is on the Authority's website www.elmbridge.gov.uk
 - Email communication will only be accepted in response to a request to provide information via email by the Authority and must be to the email address the request was issued from or as directed by the Authority.
 - Automated downloads received from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) by the Authority for the purpose of administering Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction. Notifications will be used to award new entitlement or amend existing awards as appropriate to meeting the required standard of information as defined within governing legislation and policy

3. For Council Tax Reduction an electronic communication will not be considered as made until all relevant requested information and proofs are received by the Authority which enable a decision to be made in respect of eligibility to or the amount of support which can be provided by the policy

4. In addition to using a method approved by the Authority any electronic communication must clearly identify the person whose claim the communication is in respect of and must include at least three of the following personal identifiers;
 - Full name
 - Full postal address
 - Date of birth
 - National Insurance Number
 - Housing Benefit / Council Tax Reduction reference number
 - Council Tax Account number

Any communication where the Authority is unable to authenticate the identity of the sender shall be deemed invalidly made

5. The Authority may accept digital photographic and scanned images of notices, forms, evidence and information provided by a person where it has been verified by an officer of the Authority or its agent. The authority reserves the right to see the original documents.

6. The person must keep a copy of an electronic communication, reference number generated, claim/application, certificate, notice, information or evidence so that it can be produced where the Authority so requires. Failure to produce this evidence on reasonable request may be deemed invalid.

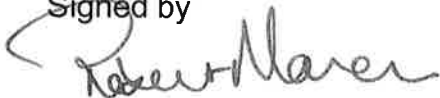
7. The Authority may require further information or original supporting evidence before the claim for Housing Benefit and/or application for a Council Tax Reduction can be assessed/reviced. The Authority may verify claims/applications, certificates, notices, information or evidence by using third party systems and sources of information as well as by direct contact with a person using electronic communications or by some other means.

8. Any claim/application, amendment or notification received that:
 - a. does not conform to any of the relevant standards as published and directed on the Authority's website, electronic form or other correspondence issued 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 having been delivered. The Authority will not be held responsible for non-receipt of any electronic communication

9. This direction may be withdrawn or amended at any time by the issue of a further direction.

Signed by



Robert Moran
Chief Executive

Date: 10.12.2019

