

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction (Electronic Communications) (City of Bristol) Direction 2022

The Chief Executive of Bristol City Council in accordance with –

The Housing Benefit Regulations 2006, including:

- Regulation 83A 'Electronic claims for benefit'
- Regulation 87 'Amendment and withdrawal of claim'
- Regulation 88A 'Notice of changes of circumstances given electronically'
- Schedule 11 'Electronic communication'

The Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006, including:

- Regulation 64A 'Electronic claims for benefit'
- Regulation 68 'Amendment and withdrawal of claim'
- Regulation 69A 'Notice of changes of circumstances given electronically'
- Schedule 10 'Electronic communication'

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012, as incorporated into the relevant sections of the Council Tax Reduction scheme, including:

- Schedule 7 Part 1 'Applications'
- Schedule 7 Part 3 'Discretionary reductions'
- Schedule 7 Part 4 'Electronic Communication'
- Schedule 8 Part 2(8), 'Amendment and withdrawal of application'
- Schedule 8 Part 2(9) 'Duty to notify changes of circumstances'

Hereby makes the following directions-

An individual, who, in accordance with the regulations and scheme cited above, makes a claim for Housing Benefit (HB) or an application for Council Tax Reduction (CTR) or reports a change of circumstances in accordance with those regulations or scheme, is authorised to do so electronically, provided that the individual uses a method approved by the authority in relation to that action.

The methods acceptable to the authority are as follows:

New claims and applications (HB and CTR)

- a) By the authority's approved electronic form, or methods set out on the authority's website at the time;
- b) By sending a completed application to the published or a prescribed email address for receiving new claims and applications
- c) By the action of making a claim for Universal Credit and indicating that they "intend to claim CTR from their Local Authority" on that claim form. That action will generate an electronic notification to the authority from the Department for Work and Pensions, and that notification will constitute the application for CTR. The application date will correspond with the date upon which the Universal Credit claim is made. This is referenced in part 76 of Bristol's CTR scheme.

Amendment and withdrawal of claim or application (HB and CTR)

- a) By the authority's approved electronic form, or methods set out on the authority's website at the time;
- b) By sending an email with details of the amendment or instruction to withdraw the claim or application to the published or a prescribed email address

Changes in circumstances (HB and CTR)

- a) By the authority's approved electronic form, or methods set out on the authority's website at the time;
- b) By sending an email with all details required by the authority to the published or a prescribed email address for reporting such changes
- c) By informing the Department for Work and Pensions of a change affecting a claim for Universal Credit in accordance with their requirements. That notification will generate an electronic notification to the authority that will be used to determine ongoing entitlement in accordance with Bristol's CTR scheme.

Discretionary reductions (CTR only)

- a) By the authority's approved electronic form, or methods set out on the authority's website at the time;
- b) By sending an email with details of the amendment or instruction to withdraw the claim or application to the published or a prescribed email address

Prescribed e-mail addresses

The prescribed e-mail addresses for all the above purposes are:

- benefits@bristol.gov.uk
- benefits.enquiry@bristol.gov.uk
- benefits.evidence@bristol.gov.uk
- benefits.policy@bristol.gov.uk
- benefits.EA.team@bristol.gov.uk

General

Notwithstanding the authority's intention to make the claiming of benefit and notification of changes more efficient and accessible using electronic means, the authority reserves the right to request further evidence in an individual case or class of cases.

Without prejudice to section 233 of the Local Government Act 1972, Service Of Notices By Local Authorities, in accordance with regulation 2 of The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 this authority will serve notices by electronic means when asked to do so for the purposes of Council Tax or when asked to do so by virtue of an electronic application for Council Tax Reduction.

Revocations and amendments

The Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction (Electronic Communications) (City of Bristol) Direction 2019 is revoked.

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

Signed:



Date: 18th May 2022

Mike Jackson
Chief Executive – Bristol City Council.