



DIRECTION OF ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS FOR BENEFIT CLAIMS

THE HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT (ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS) (MISCELLANEOUS BENEFITS) ORDER 2006. SI No. 2968

Isle of Wight Council, ('the Authority') in accordance with Part 2 of the Schedule to the Regulations 2006 ('the 2006 Regulations'), hereby makes the following directions–

1. An individual who, in accordance with the 2006 Regulations makes a claim for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit under the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 is authorised to do so by an electronic communication, provided that the individual uses the method approved by the Authority in relation to the claim.
2. The methods and form set out, at the time of, and for the purposes of, the delivery of such a claim are respectively–
 - (a) The methods approved by the Authority for–
 - (i) Authenticating the identity of the individual making the claim;
 - (ii) Submitting any claim, certificate, notice, information or evidence;
 - (iii) Authenticating any claim or notice delivered by means of an electronic communication; and
 - (iv) Electronic communication
 - (b) the form approved by the Authority in which the claim, certificate, notice, information or evidence is to be delivered.
3. The methods acceptable to the Authority are as follows:-

New Claims

By completion of the Authorities approved electronic application form on the Authorities website (either completed by the person making the application or where appropriate by another person on behalf of the applicant such as an officer of the Authority, Registered Social Landlord or Citizens Advice Bureau) subject to

- (i) The person making the application maintains records of any electronic application form.

- (ii) The Authority will acknowledge any electronic application form through the approved methods. Where an acknowledgement is not received then the person that made the application is advised to contact the Authority directly.

Notice of change of circumstances or provision of any other information

By completion of the Authorities approved electronic application form on the Authorities website (either completed by the person making the application or where appropriate by another person on behalf of the applicant such as an officer of the Authority, Registered Social Landlord or Citizens Advice Bureau) subject to

- (i) The person making the application maintains records of any electronic application form.
- (ii) The Authority will acknowledge any electronic application form

Notice of a change of circumstances or the provision of any other information may be sent by e-mail to housing.benefit@iow.gov.uk or the e-mail of any of the Authorities Revenue and Benefits officers subject to:

- (i) In order to ensure the authenticity of the identity of the sender of the email, the e-mail must include the persons full name, address and benefit reference number or national insurance number.
- (ii) The person maintains records of any e-mails including attachments
- (iii) In certain circumstances the Authority may require further information including original documentation
- (iv) The Authority will acknowledge any notice of change of circumstances or any other information received through the approved methods. Where an acknowledgement is not received the person that sent the notice of change of circumstances or other information is advised to contact the Authority directly.

Electronic amendments to claims made via a phone, face to face (with an officer of the Authority or a person acting as its agent) or e-mail will be accepted.

The person making an electronic claim, amendment or change of circumstances may be asked to sign the electronic document produced using a manual or electronic method.

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. Where it has not been verified the Authority may request to see the original where its authenticity cannot be corroborated by other means.

The person must keep a copy of any electronic communication, reference number generated, claim, certificate, notice, information, or evidence so that it

can be produced where the Authority so requires. Failure to produce on reasonable request the evidence requested may be deemed to show that an electronic communication was not successfully made to the Authority.

Electronic Communications received after 5pm Monday to Thursday and after 4.30 on Friday or on a Saturday or Sunday will be treated as though they are received on the following working day. Monday to Friday are deemed to be working days except where they are statutory holidays or the Authority has decided that the offices will be closed to the public.

The Authority's official computer system for the purposes of recording information relating to electronic communications is provided by Northgate Information Systems Limited for Revenues and Benefits. Civica (Comino) is the Authority's integrated document information and workflow system and is also regarded as an official computer system for the purposes of recording information relating to electronic communications.

The Authority may require further information or original supporting evidence before the claim for Housing Benefit and or Council Tax Support can be assessed/revised. The Authority may verify claims, 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.

Any claim, amendment or notification received that does not conform to any of the relevant standards will be invalid or does conform to the above standard but is not accepted by the Authorities official computer system, is not regarded as having been delivered.

3. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure that they keep records of their communications with the Local Authority in either written or electronic form. Failure to do so could weaken their defence in any potential overpayment recovery or prosecution scenario.
4. This direction may be withdrawn or amended at any time by the issue of a further direction.

Signed by



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John Metcalfe
Chief Executive

11 March 2019

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Dated