

Housing benefit appeals



Information about what to do if you think the decision about your Housing Benefit is wrong.

How to appeal against our decision

Housing Benefit is there to help you pay your rent. We want to be sure that you are getting all the benefit you are entitled to.

You may have extra information that we did not take into account when we worked out your benefit or we may have made a mistake. We want to know and make sure your benefit is correct.

How is benefit worked out?

The rules are complicated and cannot be explained here but you are entitled to a detailed explanation, in writing, of how we worked out your benefit. This is called a "written statement of reasons" and must be requested within **one month** of the date on the decision letter.

Even if you do not qualify for any benefit, you can still ask for a detailed explanation of why not.

Not happy?

- Do you disagree with the information we have used?
- Do you think that we were wrong to say that you did not qualify for benefit?
- Do you think that we should not have restricted your rent?
- Do you disagree with the amount of non-dependant deductions?
- Do you think that we should back-date your claim?
(should we give you benefit from an earlier date?)
- Do you believe that we should not ask you to pay back an "overpayment" of benefit?
(an overpayment is an amount you have received, but one which we now say you were not entitled to)

You can ask us to look at our decision again giving your reasons as fully as possible. You must write

within **one month** of getting our decision, unless you have a good reason for being late (such as being in hospital).

We will check the decision then write to you again.

Still unhappy?

Whether we decide to change our original decision or not, you can appeal further if you think it is still wrong, but you must do that within **one month** of our latest decision letter.

We will send any further appeal with an explanation of the law and facts used to make the decision to the Tribunals Service - an independent tribunal made up of people who are not from the council. They will decide your appeal at a tribunal hearing.

It is your right!

Benefit is a legal right. If you think we have got it wrong, do not be afraid to challenge our decision. The appeal process will not cost you anything.

In brief

- You can ask for a written statement of how any benefit decision affecting you was made.
- If you are unhappy with any benefit decision affecting you, you have the right to ask for it to be looked at again.
- If you think it is wrong, you have the right to be heard by an independent tribunal.

Appeal to

All correspondence should be sent to:

Benefits Department
Copeland Borough Council
The Copeland Centre
Catherine Street
Whitehaven CA28 7SJ

Where to get advice

You can contact us by:

E-mail: benefits@copeland.gov.uk [1]

Tel: 01946 598 300

Fax: 01946 598 308

Or by visiting one of our offices:

- [The Copeland Centre](#) [2]
- [Millom](#) [3]
- [Cleator Moor Area Offices](#) [4]

Independent advice

If you want independent advice about your benefit and/or need help to appeal you can contact the Citizens Advice in Whitehaven on (01946) 693021 or in Millom on (01229) 772395

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- [1] <mailto:benefits@copeland.gov.uk>
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- [3] <https://www.copeland.gov.uk/location/millom-council-office>
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