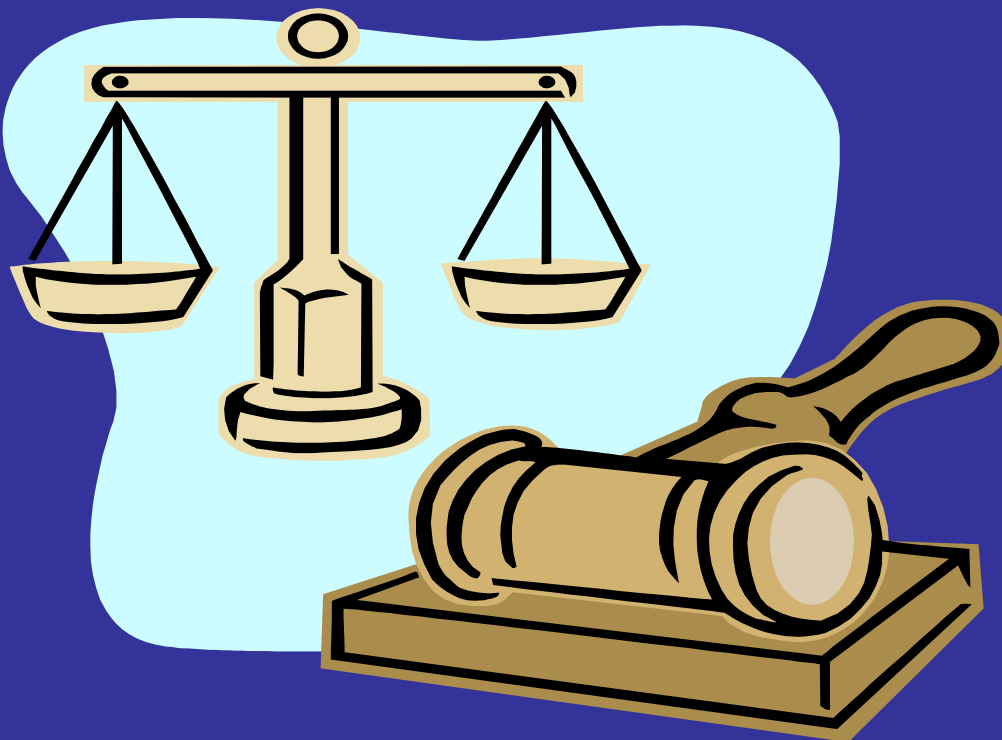


**ADVICE FOR PRISONERS
AND EX-OFFENDERS ON
HOUSING BENEFIT &
COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT**



This leaflet gives basic advice on Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support if you or a member of your family go into or come out of prison.

If you are in prison, you cannot normally get Housing Benefit and / or Council Tax Support for yourself.

If you are coming out of prison and you need financial help for yourself and your family, you may be able to get Housing Benefit and / or Council Tax Support when you are released.

You will not normally be entitled to most benefits / support while you are in prison. However, you **may** still be able to receive certain benefits / support if you:

- *are in police custody or on remand awaiting trial or sentence; or*
- *have been moved to a hospital from court or prison because of a mental disorder.*

If you are not already getting Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support but have recently been remanded into custody, you may be entitled to claim. Please contact us for further details.

Housing Benefit

You

- *You cannot normally get Housing Benefit while you are in prison.*
- *However, if you are on remand and you expect to be away from your normal home for less than 52 weeks, you may be entitled to Housing Benefit to help with your rent on this home.*

If you are being held on remand or have been committed into custody but not yet sentenced and you had been in receipt of benefit immediately prior to being remanded/committed - a HCTB6 form should be completed and returned to the Benefit Service by the prison staff as soon as it is known that you wish to continue claiming.

- *You **may** be able to get Housing Benefit for up to 52 weeks if you are on bail.*
- *We classify sentencing as a change in circumstances. If your prison sentence is less than 13 weeks, you may be able to continue with your claim. If your prison sentence is more than 13 weeks, your claim will be cancelled from the date you are sentenced.*

If you have been sentenced, a HCTB7 form should be completed by the prison staff if a HCTB6 form had previously been submitted and you were subsequently sentenced to a term of imprisonment. This form should be returned to the Benefit Service within 14 days of sentencing being received.

Your family

- *If your family are still living in your normal home while you are in prison, they may be able to get Housing Benefit while you are away. They should claim straight away.*
- *If your family already gets Housing Benefit, it is important that they notify us of the change in circumstances as soon as you go into prison.*
- *If a member of your family is going into prison, it is important that you tell us straight away.*

Council Tax Support

You

- *You cannot normally get Council Tax Support while you are in prison.*
- *If your home is unoccupied while you are away, you can apply for it to be exempt from Council Tax.*

Your family

- *If your family is still living in your normal home while you are in prison, they may be able to get Council Tax Support to help with their Council Tax. They should claim straight away.*
- *If your family already gets Council Tax Support, it is important that they tell us as soon as you go into prison.*
- *If a member of your family is going into prison, it is important that you tell us straightaway.*

Serving a sentence

You

- *You cannot usually get benefits / support while you are serving a sentence in prison.*

Your family

- *If a member of your family is serving a sentence in prison, you should contact us straight away to find out which benefits / support you may be able to get while they are away.*

Finishing a sentence

You

A form HCTB8 will usually be sent to the Local Authority on your behalf by your resettlement officer. In some instances the prison staff will issue this form to you with clear instructions of your responsibility to inform the Local Authority of your discharge from custody. You should keep this form safe.

Your family

When a member of your family is released, you should notify us straight away. It may affect your benefit / support.

Council Tax

If there are two people living in your home and one can no longer be counted because of imprisonment, you may be entitled to a discount.

You can also qualify for a reduction if you are:

- *Detained in a prison, a hospital or any other place by a court.*
- *Detained under the deportation provisions of the Immigration Act 1971*
- *Detained under the Mental Health Act 1983.*
- *Imprisoned or in custody under the Armed Forces Act 1976 or detained for more than 48 hours under the Army, Air Force or Naval Act or detained awaiting deportation.*

Where there are two people living in a household and one has been detained in prison, we may grant a discount on receipt of confirmation of the date admission to prison.

In all cases, you must notify the Council Tax Department.

Please note: If you are in prison for non-payment of Fines or Council Tax, we will not give you a reduction/exemption for Council Tax purposes.

For further information or advice, please contact:

The Benefit Service

**The Benefit Service
PO Box 8267
Birmingham
B4 7XF**

Or

Council Tax

**Revenues Department
PO Box 5
Birmingham
B4 7AB**

Website: <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/council-tax-benefits>