



Housing and Council Tax Reduction Factsheet

Introduction

This fact sheet is about complaints about housing benefit and council tax reduction (sometimes called council tax support). It should be read together with our [‘How to Complain’](#) webpage, available on the ‘Making A Complaint’ tab.

The Council is responsible for the administration of housing benefit and council tax reduction in its local area in accordance with the relevant law, regulations and government guidance. If you think that the Council has not done this, the Ombudsman may be able to help you with your complaint.

What the Ombudsman can do

He can:

- Look at complaints that the Council failed to advise you properly of a decision or your right of appeal against a decision
- Check that the Council has taken action to recover an over-payment from you fairly and by following the rules
- Consider issues like unreasonable delay, failing to recognise your appeal, failing to keep proper records, poor communication or making payment mistakes.

What the Ombudsman cannot do

He cannot:

- help you to make your claim
- tell the Council to increase the amount you receive
- tell the Council to reduce the amount that you owe
- interfere in the Council’s decision to take legal action against you for fraud

- normally look at a complaint where there is or was a right of appeal against a decision to a statutory tribunal

Issues to bear in mind

If you think that the Council's decision is wrong, you should write to the Council in the first instance. If the matter is still unresolved, you may have a right of appeal against the Council's decision to a statutory tribunal.

If you are claiming universal credit or any other state benefits e.g. employment support allowance or personal independence payments, and you are unhappy with the service you have received, you should contact the office you have been dealing with in the first instance. Thereafter you may be able to complain to the **Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman**. You can contact them by telephone on **0345 015 4033**.

More information can be obtained at www.Ombudsman.org.uk

Further information

You can find more detailed information about housing benefit and council tax reduction at www.gov.uk

You can find information about appealing against a council's housing benefit decision at www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/sscs

You can find information about appealing against a council's council tax reduction decision at www.Valuations-Tribunal-Wales.org.uk

You can also get free, independent advice about your welfare rights from your local **Citizens Advice**, details of which can be obtained at www.citizensadvice.org.uk

The Ombudsman is independent and impartial; he cannot order public bodies to do what he recommends – but, in practice, they almost always do. Examples of cases that the Ombudsman has looked at can be found on our website, under the 'Publications' tab on the '[Our Findings](#)' & '[The Ombudsman's Casebook](#)' pages.

Contact us

If you are unsure whether the Ombudsman would be able to look into your complaint, please [contact us](#) on 0300 790 0203 or ask@ombudsman.wales

Also available in Welsh.

Easy Read

Housing and Council Tax Reduction

 [Download](#)

This document is available in Welsh and English. You can write to us in Welsh and we will reply in Welsh. This will not lead to a delay in responding.

ask@ombudsman.wales

0300 790 0203 Our phone line is open 10am-12:30pm and 1:30pm-4pm Monday – Friday