

Understanding or disputing a Council Tax Support decision



What to do if you think our decision is wrong

This leaflet tells you what to do if you disagree with the decision we have made about your entitlement to council tax support or you would like us to explain our decision.

This information is for general guidance only. Please contact us to talk about your individual circumstances and we will give you more information.

There is a different dispute process dealing with housing benefit disputes, so if you wish to dispute a housing benefit decision please ask for a leaflet and/or a housing benefit dispute form.

Do you understand your decision?

When we deal with your application for council tax support we will send you a decision letter, which will show the information we have used to work out your entitlement. You should check this letter carefully.

If you believe that this decision is wrong, or would like to query it you should contact us:

- You can write to us at any time to clearly identify a decision you think is wrong and the grounds upon which you are disputing that decision.
- You can only dispute one decision at a time, so it is important that you clearly show which decision you are disputing. For example, tell us the date of the decision you are disputing.

How to dispute a decision

If you disagree with your council tax support decision, you can write to us or ask us for a dispute form. It is best to complete a dispute form as all of the information you need to give to us is on the form, alternatively you may write to us however please make sure that your dispute:

- is in writing
- is signed by you
- clearly shows which decision you are disputing, as well as the date of the decision.
- explains in full why you think the decision is wrong. It will be helpful if you can provide evidence to support your dispute.

Time limits

There is no time limit for an applicant to lodge a dispute against a council tax support decision. However, once a dispute has been lodged, you have a maximum of four months to appeal to the Valuation Tribunal starting from the date the dispute was lodged with Slough Borough Council.

Representation

If you are asking someone to represent you, you must still sign the dispute form or written statement and let us know in writing that you have authorised somebody else to deal with your dispute.

Once we have received your dispute

We will look at the decision again to see if it can be changed and write to you about the outcome:

- If we think the decision is correct we will write to you explaining why.
- If we think the decision is wrong and we change the decision we will write to tell you about the new decision.
- If you are still unhappy with the outcome of our review you can appeal to the Valuation Tribunal within 2 months of the date of our reply to your dispute.
- You can also appeal directly to the Valuation Agency if we have not responded to your dispute within 2 months.

Decisions that cannot be changed by a Valuation Tribunal

As council tax support is a local scheme, the Valuation Tribunal cannot change a decision based on Slough Borough Council's local scheme. This is called 'outside of the Jurisdiction' of The Valuation Tribunal.

If your dispute is 'outside of the Jurisdiction', the Valuation Tribunal will write to you to tell and your appeal may be 'struck out'. This means that the Valuation Tribunal will not be able to deal with an appeal against the decision as they are unable to change it.

Some of the following situations may be classed as outside of the Jurisdiction of the Tribunal:

- You are disputing the decision as it is unfair or you can't afford to pay anything.
- If you haven't lodged the dispute to Slough Borough Council first.
- The dispute involves recovery and/or discretionary issues.
- The dispute involves agreed council tax penalties.

Contacting the Valuation Tribunal

If you still disagree with a council tax support decision after you have disputed the decision with us and we have explained it or changed it, you can lodge an appeal directly to the Valuation Tribunal within 2 months of the date of our letter.

Please ask our staff for an appeal form which you must complete and send to:

The Valuation Tribunal
2nd Floor, Black Lion House
45 Whitechapel Road
London
E1 1DU

You can also send your appeal by email to: appeals@vts.gsi.gov.uk

The Valuation Tribunal's phone number for any queries is: 0300 123 2035

The Valuation Tribunal

When the Valuation Tribunal receive your appeal they will send you an acknowledgment. The Valuation Tribunal will also send you an enquiry form asking for more information from you.

The Valuation Tribunal will contact Slough Borough Council to tell us that you have lodged an appeal and may also ask us to respond to the appeal. A copy of any papers that Slough Borough Council sends to the Tribunal will be sent to you.

If you have asked for an oral hearing, the Tribunal will arrange for a Hearing, the Valuation Tribunal will arrange the venue, the date and time of the hearing and will write to you with details.

If neither you or Slough Borough Council have requested an oral hearing, the appeal may be decided by the Tribunal at a 'paper hearing' based on the evidence that it has received.

An advice centre like the Citizen's Advice Bureau or Shelter can give you free advice.

If you decide to use a solicitor, Slough Borough Council will not cover the cost and you cannot get any money for things like solicitors fees from the Valuation Tribunal either.

The hearing

At the Tribunal Hearing three lay people, who are usually volunteers, will consider your appeal. They will look at the evidence in line with the local council tax reduction scheme in light of the decision you are appealing against.

A presenting officer from the council may also attend the hearing to present the case from the billing authority's point of view. You will be given the opportunity to present your side of the case to the panel.

After the Tribunal has considered all the evidence from an oral or paper hearing, it will reach a decision. You will receive a copy of the decision with a guidance booklet as soon as possible either on the day of the Hearing or after the hearing. The Valuation Tribunal aim to send their decision within one month of the hearing.

How to contact us

Telephone us on: 01753 475111

Write to us at: Slough Borough Council
Benefits Service, PO Box 1032
Slough Berks
SL1 3YT

Visit us at: MyCouncil, Landmark Place
High Street, Slough, SL1 1JL
Cippenham Library
Elmshott Lane, Cippenham SL1 5RB
Britwell Library
Wentworth Avenue, Britwell SL2 2DS
Langley Library
Trelawney Avenue, Langley SL3 7UF

This document can be made available on audio tape, braille or in large print, and is also available on the website where it can easily be viewed in large print.

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If you would like assistance with the translation of the information in this document, please ask an English speaking person to request this by calling 01753 701159.

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज में दी गई जानकारी के अनुवाद किए जाने की सहायता चाहते हैं तो कृपया किसी अंग्रेजी भाषी व्यक्ति से यह अनुरोध करने के लिए 01753 701159 पर बात करके कहें.

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ 01753 701159 ਉੱਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਹੋ।

Aby uzyskać pomoc odnośnie tłumaczenia instrukcji zawartych w niniejszym dokumencie, należy zwrócić się do osoby mówiącej po angielsku, aby zadzwoniła w tej sprawie pod numer 01753 701159 .

Haddii aad doonayso caawinaad ah in lagu turjibaano warbixinta dukumeentigaan ku qoran, fadlan weydiiso in qof ku hadla Inriis uu ku Waco 01753 701159 si uu kugu codsado.

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز میں دی گئی معلومات کے ترجمے کے سلسلے میں مدد چاہئے تو، براہ کرم ایک انگریزی بولنے والے شخص سے 01753 701159 پر کال کر کے اس کی درخواست کرنے کے لئے کہیں۔