

Authority to tell someone details of your claim

This leaflet explains what to do if you want to allow us to talk or write to somebody else about your claim.

What is Authority to discuss?

Sometimes you may need the help of a relative, friend or an organisation such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau to make enquiries on your behalf, or to find out what information we need to process your claim.

As your Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claim is private and confidential; we will not discuss your claim with anyone else unless you have given us written permission to do so.

We refer to this as you giving us 'Authority to discuss' your claim.

What are the benefits of giving Authority to discuss my claim?

Giving Authority to discuss your claim simply means that you are allowing us to speak or write to someone other than yourself.

There may be times when you are not able to come into the office, you do not like speaking to council staff on the phone or your understanding of English may not be very good. Giving someone else Authority to discuss your claim means that they can speak to us about your claim and we can give them the appropriate information.

These are just some of the examples where you may want to give Authority to discuss your claim.

What information will you give?

By giving Authority to discuss, you are allowing us to speak or write to that person about any aspect of your claim.

The type of information we will give includes personal information, such as your income and savings, how we have calculated your benefit or which people we have included on your claim.

Here are some examples of what type of information we may give:

- You want to know when the next payment of Housing Benefit is but don't like using the phone, so you ask the person you have named as giving Authority to discuss to contact us. We tell them the amount and date of the next payment that is due.
- We need more details about your income to be able to pay your Council Tax claim and we cannot get hold of you; we will try to speak to the person you have allowed us to contact to let them know that you need to provide another payslip. We will do this as well as writing to you.

However if you have completed the form giving authority to your landlord / agent only the following information can be disclosed:

- if a claim has been made;
- if a decision has been made on the claim;
- if we need more information to make a decision on the claim and the general details of what that information maybe e.g. income, capital etc.
- when the next payment of Housing Benefit is due to be paid.

Am I still responsible for my claim if I give you Authority to discuss?

You remain in charge of your claim and are still responsible for letting us know about any changes in circumstance that may affect your claim, or, for repaying any overpayment of benefit if we ask you to pay this back.

How do I give Authority to discuss?

Please complete the attached 'Authority to discuss' form.

Can there be more than one person?

You can give authority to discuss to two different people or organisations. If you need to add, remove or change the people you have chosen, please contact us as soon as possible.

Can I cancel or change my current Authority to discuss?

To cancel or change the Authority to discuss you can either call into the One Stop Shop at Bolton Town Hall or any other local council office to do this in person or you can contact us by the following methods:

Write to us at:
Housing Benefits
Bolton Council
P.O. Box 4
Bolton
BL1 1RX

Telephone Access Bolton on: 01204 331590

Email us at: housing.benefits@bolton.gov.uk

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Authority to discuss

About you

Title (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms)	
Your surname	
Forename and middle name(s)	
Your address and postcode	
Telephone number	

About the person you want us to discuss your claim with

Person or organisation 1	
Full name and Address of person or organisation	
If an organisation is there a specific person we need to deal with?	
Relationship to you, if any	
Telephone number	

Person or organisation 2	
Full name and Address of person or organisation	
If an organisation is there a specific person we need to deal with?	
Relationship to you, if any	
Telephone number	

Declaration

I authorise Bolton Council officers to discuss my benefit claim with the above person / people / organisation(s).

Your signature:	Date:
Claim reference number:	Council Tax reference: