

Look out for other information leaflets in this series:-

- HB1 'How to claim help with your Rent'
- HB2 'How to claim help with your Council Tax'
- HB3 'Council Tax Benefit - Second Adult Rebate'
- HB4 'How to get your Benefit Backdated'
- HB5 'How to Appeal'
- HB6 'Non Dependants'
- HB7 'Stop Benefit Fraud'
- HB8 'The role of the Rent Service'
- HB9 'How to claim benefit on two homes'
- HB10 'Discretionary Housing Payments'
- HB11 'Single and under 25'
- HB12 'Housing Benefit guide for landlords.'
- HB13 'Suggestions and Compliments'
- HB14 'Complaint form'
- HB15 'Local Housing Allowance - A Guide for Landlords'
- HB16 'Local Housing Allowance - A Guide for Tenants'
- HB17 'Money Advice - A Guide for Tenants'
- HB18 'Basic Bank Accounts - A Guide'
- HB19 'Overpayment of Benefits'
- HB20 'Self Employed'

For more information or advice please visit

Housing Benefit Office
 Middlesbrough House
 50 Corporation Road.
 Middlesbrough TS1 2YQ

Our opening times are:

Monday to Thursday: 8.30am – 5.00pm
 Friday: 8.30am – 4.30pm

You can telephone us on: **01642 726005** between 8.30am and 5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am and 4.30pm on a Friday or email - housbens@servicemiddlesbrough.org

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

You can also get information from our website – www.middlesbrough.gov.uk

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Amended Dec 08



Overpayment of Benefits

This leaflet is intended as a general guide. People have different circumstances so for more detailed individual advice please contact us.



What is an overpayment?

An overpayment of benefit happens when you are paid benefit to which you are not entitled.

How will I know if I have got an overpayment?

We will write to you. In the letter you receive from us, we will give you full details of the overpayment. We will tell you:

- What caused the overpayment
- The dates and the amount of the overpayment.
- How much the overpayment is.
- What to do if you disagree with the overpayment.

What if I do not understand the overpayment?

There are several reasons why you may have received an overpayment of benefit.

- You may have forgotten to tell us that your income has increased, for example, Working Tax Credit, wages, work pensions or state benefits.
- Somebody may have moved into or out of your home. This would mean we would need to work out your claim again.

- If you have other adults living with you, their circumstances may have changed.
- You may have moved out of your home and not told us.
- You may have started work or changed jobs.

It is your responsibility to tell the Benefit Section about any changes, do not rely on the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or your landlord.

If your overpayment is found to have been your fault, we will recover any benefit paid to you that you were not entitled to.

How is the overpayment recovered?

- If you are still getting Housing Benefit, we may reduce this each week by the amount shown on your letter.
- If you feel that the amount we are reducing your Housing Benefit by is causing you hardship, you can write and ask us to lower it. Please note, we may ask for more details regarding your income and outgoings.
- If you stop getting Housing Benefit, we will send you an invoice. You can pay this by calling into our office at Middlesbrough House or your Local Area Housing Office (excluding Hemlington), with your invoice and payment. Alternatively you can make a payment over the telephone by calling 01642 726726 or online by visiting www.middlesbrough.gov.uk - just have your invoice number and credit or debit card details ready.
- If your landlord was paid your benefit, we may ask the landlord to repay us in certain circumstances.
- If you have been overpaid Council Tax Benefit we

will send you a new Council Tax bill, which will include any money that you have been overpaid.

What if I do not agree with the overpayment?

The first thing to do when you receive your overpayment letter is read it carefully. It will explain what the overpayment is for and the dates you have been overpaid.

If you still disagree with the overpayment, after reading the explanation you can do the following:

- If you do not understand the explanation you can contact us by phone, email, in writing or by calling into our office in person.
- You can appeal against the overpayment. You must do this in writing, within one calendar month of the date on the letter. Please see our leaflet 'HB5 – How to Appeal'.