



## Benefits Service

# HELP WITH GETTING BACK TO WORK

- Extended payments of Housing and Council Tax Benefit
- Help towards childcare costs
- How we can help if your new job doesn't work out

**This document can be made available in large print, Braille, tape format or in other languages upon request**

### Extended Payments of Housing and Council Tax Benefit

With an Extended Payment, you do not have to worry about paying rent or Council Tax until you get your first pay cheque.

To qualify you or your partner must meet the following:

- You or your partner's Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, income based Jobseekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance (we call these 'qualifying benefits') has ended because either you or your partner has started work or increased hours at work; and
- You or your partner have been getting the qualifying benefit for at least 26 weeks before your circumstances changed; and
- You expect the new job or increased hours to last for at least 5 weeks; and
- You were getting Housing or Council Tax Benefit immediately before your circumstances changed; and
- You claim an Extended Payment within 4 weeks of your circumstances changing; and
- You continue to have a liability for rent or Council Tax during the extended payment period.

An Extended Payment means you will get the same rate of Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit as you did when you were getting the qualifying benefit for 4 weeks after you start work. If you change address, you may get a different rate.

You can claim an Extended Payment at Job-Centre Plus, when you sign-off as unemployed, or at the Benefits Service at West Somerset Council, either in writing or by telephone.

### Getting extra help while in work

If you are on a low income while working you may still get some help towards your rent and/or Council Tax.

If you get an Extended Payment you must complete a new claim for Benefit. You should put in a new claim immediately.

**However, this will not apply after 6th October 2008. If you are claiming after this date, simply follow the instructions below.**

If you do not get an Extended Payment, you will not have to fill in a new form. Simply write to us and tell us:

- The date you started work.
- The name and address of your new employer.
- Your new job title and a description of your duties.
- Your rate of pay and the number of hours

You will also need to provide proof of your new earnings, such as a letter from your new employer telling us how much you are likely to get paid or your first pay slip (if you have one already).

When you start work, you should consider claiming Working Tax Credit. To find out if you could get a Tax Credit, contact the Inland Revenue helpline on 0845 300 3900. If entitled you will need to provide your award letter and other supporting evidence that may be required

### Help towards childcare

You could get extra Housing and/or Council Tax Benefit if:

- You work more than 16 hours a week; or
- You and your partner (if you have one) both work more than 16 hours a week; or
- You are a member of a couple and one of you works more than 16 hours a week and the other is disabled; and
- You pay for childcare to a registered childminder or an out-of-school-hours club run by the school or County Council.

We will offset what you pay in childcare costs against the earned income we use to work out your Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. The maximum we can offset is £175 a week for one child or £300 a week for two or more children.

If you claim Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit while working, make sure you tell us about any childcare costs you have.

### If your job doesn't work out

Many people worry that if they get a job and it doesn't work out, they will have to reclaim all their benefits. If you stop getting:

- Income Support;
- Employment and Support Allowance;
- Jobseekers Allowance;
- Housing Benefit or
- Council Tax Benefit

because of a new job and you give up work within 12 weeks, you only have to complete one short form to get all these benefits again.

This is called 'Rapid Reclaim'. When you go to sign on again at JobCentre Plus, they will give you a 'Rapid Reclaim' pack. Fill in the form called 'HBRR1' and send it to us.

We will award you the same rate of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit you got when you were previously unemployed if:

- Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance is paid to you again; and
- You reclaim these benefits within 12 weeks of your last entitlement to Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseekers Allowance; and
- There has been no other change in your circumstances.

## How to Contact Us



**Phone** us on 01643 703704  
Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5pm



**Write** to us at:  
Benefits, West Somerset Council,  
West Somerset House,  
Killick Way, Williton,  
Taunton, Somerset, TA4 4QA



**Email** us at  
[benefits@westsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@westsomerset.gov.uk)



**In Person**  
at the Minehead Customer Centre,  
1-3 Summerland Road between 9am and  
5pm Monday to Friday,

or the Council Offices at Williton between  
8.30am and 5pm Monday to Thursday, and  
8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday

**Download** forms, leaflets and information  
from our website at  
[www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk](http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk)