

Tax credits checks

The check

Every year we check thousands of tax credits awards to make sure that we:

- have awarded the right amount of tax credits based on customers' income and circumstances
- are running the tax credits system fairly and efficiently

If we check your current tax credits award, we call this an 'examination'.

If we check your previous tax credits award, we call this an 'enquiry'.

You can ask an independent tribunal at any time for a direction that we stop our enquiry. If we think we should continue with the check we will ask the tribunal to decide what should happen.

About your check

To help us get a picture of your household, we may ask you for things like bank statements, payslips, household bills and details of your income and circumstances. If we ask you for any original documents then we cannot accept photocopies.

We can also ask your employers and childcare providers for information.

If we cannot confirm that the documents are genuine or belong to you, we will need to keep them for further checks. Once we have confirmed that the documents are genuine, we will return them to you.

What will happen if you do not contact us

It is very important you give us the information we need, or tell us about any difficulties you have providing it. If you do not send us this information we may suspend your tax credits payments. We can also charge you a penalty.

If we suspend your payments and you still do not give us this information, we may stop or reduce your tax credits. You may then have to pay back any tax credits that we have already paid you. It is therefore very important that you contact us.

Mistakes

We will not charge you a penalty if you:

- tell us about a change in circumstances at the time of the change, see opposite
- take reasonable care to give us correct information on your claim
- took care with your claim, but still made a mistake

If you are not sure what to do, we suggest you take independent advice before you decide.

Difficulties supplying information

If you have a good reason for not giving us the information, tell us. We will listen to what you say and, if you cannot provide the information or it does not exist, we will work with you to find alternatives.

A good reason for not providing information might be that:

- your documents have been lost through fire, flood or theft and you cannot replace them in time
- you have a serious illness or other personal circumstances that prevents you from sending the information

What isn't a good reason is that you have been too busy to send us the information.

Help

If you have any questions or you would like more details, please contact the HMRC office in the covering letter.

Changes in circumstances

You must tell us **within 1 month** if:

- you get married, become a civil partner or part of a couple living together as husband and wife or as civil partners
- you stop being part of a married couple, civil partnership or a couple living together as husband and wife or as civil partners
- your childcare costs go down by an average of £10 a week or more
- your childcare costs stop or you stop paying for childcare costs
- you (or your partner)
 - leave the UK permanently
 - go abroad for a temporary absence lasting more than 8 weeks (or more than 12 weeks if you go abroad because you are ill, or because a member of your family is ill or has died)
 - lose your right to reside in the UK
- you start working, either in employment or self-employment
- your working hours drop below 16 a week
- you are a couple responsible for a child and your joint working hours drop below 24 a week, but one of you must work at least 16 hours
- you are working 30 hours or more a week and your hours drop below 30 (joint hours count for couples with children)
- you are laid off or stop work
- you have been on strike for more than 10 days
- a child or young person you are responsible for leaves the family to live with someone else or dies

continued >>>

Asking someone to help you

If you would like independent help, you can ask a friend, a relative, a professional adviser or an organisation like Citizens Advice to help you. You can also ask them to talk to us on your behalf, but we cannot talk to anyone without your permission.

If you do ask someone to help you, either:

- fill in form TC689, 'Authority for an intermediary to act on your behalf', go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/tc689.pdf
- write and tell us the
 - name and address of the person
 - address and contact details of the organisation acting on your behalf

Co-operation

The extent to which you co-operate and give us information is entirely up to you.

If you are not sure whether to give us the information, we suggest you get independent advice before deciding what to do. We may decide to reduce or stop your tax credits payments based on the information we hold.

Child Benefit

If you are claiming Child Benefit, any changes to your family circumstances may affect the amount you receive.

About our decision

You do not have the right to ask us to reconsider our decision to suspend your payments.

However, you do have the right to ask us to reconsider if we:

- change your award
- ask you to pay a penalty
- charge you interest on any overpayment

We call this mandatory reconsideration and we will tell you how to ask us to reconsider our decision in the letter we will send telling you what we have done.

Our leaflet WTC/AP, 'What to do if you think your Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit decision is wrong' gives more information about how to ask for a reconsideration. If you want to get a copy, go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/wtc_ap.pdf

Should you remain unhappy after the reconsideration, you can appeal to an independent tribunal. Our Mandatory Reconsideration Notice will tell you how to do this.

Your rights and obligations

'Your Charter' explains what you can expect from us and what we expect from you. For more information, go to www.gov.uk/hmrc/your-charter

These notes describe in general terms what is likely to happen. If you would like more details, please contact the HMRC office in the covering letter.

Change in circumstances continued

- a child or young person you are responsible for stops qualifying for support, for example, they
 - leave full-time non-advanced education or approved training before the age of 20
 - start to have their training provided under a contract of employment
 - start paid work for 24 hours or more a week and they are not in full-time, non-advanced education
 - stop being registered with a careers service, Connexions, local authority support service, Ministry of Defence or similar organisation within the EU
 - start to claim Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit in their own right

You should also tell us about any other changes which you think might affect your entitlement.

Open government

The Claimant Compliance Manual contains more details about our work in this area. Go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/ccmmanual

Yr Iaith Gymraeg

Ffoniwch **0300 200 1900** i dderbyn fersiynau Cymraeg o ffurflenni a chanllawiau.

We have a range of services for disabled people.

These include guidance in Braille, audio and large print. Most of our forms are also available in large print. Please contact our helplines for more information.

These notes are for guidance only and reflect the position at the time of writing. They do not affect any right of appeal.

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