Tax credits examinations

The check
Every year we check thousands of tax credits claims to make sure that we are:
- paying the right amount of tax credits based on customers’ income
- running the tax credits system fairly and efficiently.
If we check your current tax credits claim, it is known as an ‘examination’.

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.
We can also ask employers and childcarers for information.
If we ask you for any original documents, we cannot accept photocopies, we will
send these back to you securely. If we cannot verify that they are genuine or belong
to you we will need to keep them.

If we do not hear from you
You must tell us if you cannot give us the information or explain why there is a delay.
If you do not send us the information by the date on our letter, we can reduce or
stop your tax credits. You may also have to pay a penalty.

Mistakes
We will not charge you a penalty if you:
- tell us about a relevant change in circumstances in time, see opposite
- take reasonable care to give us correct information on your claim. We will not
charge a penalty if you took care with your claim, but still made a mistake.

Asking someone to help you
If you would like independent help, you can ask a friend, 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, please:
- complete form TC689 - Authority for an intermediary to act on your behalf
  — go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/tc689.pdf or
  — phone our helpline on 0345 300 300
- write to us and tell us the
  — name and address of the person, or
  — 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.

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

Relevant changes in circumstances – a brief reminder
You must tell us within one 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
- your childcare costs go down by £10 a week or more
- you stop paying for childcare
- you or your partner leave the UK for more than eight weeks
- your hours drop below 16 a week
- are a couple responsible for a child and your joint hours drop below 24
a week, but one of you must work at least 16 hours
- 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
- 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
  — start to have their training provided under a contract of
employment
  — start paid work (usually for more than 24 hours a week)
  — stop being registered with a careers service, Connexions, Ministry of
Defence or similar within the EU
  — start to claim Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, Jobseeker’s
Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Child Tax
Credit or Working Tax Credit in their own right.
You should also tell us about any other changes which you think might affect
your entitlement.
Child Benefit
If you are claiming Child Benefit, any changes to your family circumstances may affect the amount you receive.

Your rights
You have the right to appeal if we:
• change your award
• ask you to pay a penalty, or
• charge interest on your overpayment.
We will tell you how to appeal in the letter we will send telling you what we have done.
Our leaflet WTC/AP What to do if you think our decision is wrong gives more information about how to appeal. If you want to get a copy online you can go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/wtc_ap.pdf

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.hmrc.gov.uk/charter

Getting advice
You can get advice from a professional adviser or organisation such as Citizens Advice. You can find them in The Phone Book.

Customers with particular needs
We offer a range of facilities for customers with particular needs, including:
• wheelchair access to nearly all Enquiry Centres
• help with filling in forms
• for people with hearing difficulties — Text Relay
— Induction loops.
We can also arrange additional support such as:
• home visits, if you have limited mobility or caring responsibilities and cannot get to one of our Enquiry Centres
• the services of an interpreter
• sign language interpretation
• leaflets in large print, Braille and audio.
For full details please:
• go online at www.hmrc.gov.uk/enq/index.htm or
• contact us. You will find us in The Phone Book under HM Revenue & Customs.

Open Government
The Claimant Compliance Manual contains more details about our work in this area. You can see it online at www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/ccmmanual/index.htm

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

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