

**Direction of Tracey Lee, Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council under the Housing Benefit (Electronic Communications) (Miscellaneous Benefits) Order 2006 and Schedule 7 to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012**

Plymouth City Council, ('the Authority'), in accordance with:

- Schedule 11 to the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006;
- Schedule 10 to the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for State Pension Credit) Regulations 2006;
- Paragraph 102.3 of the Plymouth City Council – Council Tax Support Scheme 2013;
- Schedule 7 to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements)(England) Regulations 2012

Plymouth City Council (the Authority) hereby makes the following directions:

1. An individual who, in accordance with the above Regulations, makes or withdraws a claim for, applies to amend or notifies a change of circumstance in respect of, the following:-

- Housing benefit or
- Council tax support

is authorised to do so by electronic communication, provided that the individual uses the methods approved by Plymouth City Council in relation to the claim.

2. The methods and forms approved by Plymouth City Council for using electronic communication are as follows:-

2.1 A new housing benefit or council tax support claim can be made by completing the on-line application form which can be found on the Authority's website ([www.plymouth.gov.uk](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk));

2.2 For submitting an amendment to, or notification of a change in circumstances in respect of, an existing claim by:

- completing the on-line change of circumstances form which can be found on the Authority's website ([www.plymouth.gov.uk](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk)); or
- by telephone by calling 01752 668000

2.3 For submitting evidence in support of a claim, amendment to or notification of a change in circumstances in respect of, a new or existing claim by:

- Completing the HB and CTS Evidence form which can be found on the Authority's website ([www.plymouth.gov.uk](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk))

Such use being strictly subject to the following conditions:-

2.4 Any person sending an electronic communication to the Authority must clearly state their name, full postal address and housing benefit or council tax support claim reference where appropriate. Any communication where the Authority is unable to authenticate the identity of the sender shall be deemed invalidly made;

2.5 The use and acceptance of the on-line claim form or change in circumstance form is subject to it being completed in accordance with the instructions set out on the website. Any claim, amendment to or notification of a change in circumstances not made in accordance with the instructions will be considered invalid;

- 2.6 Email communication will only be accepted by the Authority subject to the inclusion of at least two pieces of the following prescribed information as a means to confirm identity; date of birth, national insurance number, housing benefit or council tax support claim reference where appropriate;
  - 2.7 If, for whatever reason, the claim or notification is not accepted by the Authority's computer system it is regarded as not having been delivered;
  - 2.8 The Authority may require further information or supporting evidence, including original supporting evidence, before the claim or change of circumstances for housing benefit or council tax support can be assessed or revised;
  - 2.9 The Authority will not be held responsible for the non-receipt of any claim or notification of change of circumstances;
  - 2.10 The person making an on-line claim to housing benefit or council tax support is advised to keep a record of the reference number generated so that it can be produced when the Authority so require. Where a person fails to produce such a reference number when requested, the Authority may deem that the on-line claim was not submitted to the Authority.
  - 2.11 The person submitting an electronic communication is advised to keep records in case of query or appeal.
3. This direction may be withdrawn or amended at any time by the issue of a further direction.

Signed by:



Tracey Lee  
Chief Executive  
Plymouth City Council  
Date: 12 March 2019