

WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

DIRECTIONS MADE FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT (ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS) ORDER 2006

I, Charles F. Lant, the Chief Executive of Wealden District Council (“the Council”) in accordance with:

- Regulation 83A, 88A and Paragraph 2 of Schedule 11 of the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006;
- Regulation 64A, 69A and Paragraph 2 of Schedule 10 of the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006 (together referred to as the ‘2006 Regulations’);
- Section 101-106A of the Council’s Council Tax Reduction Scheme;

Hereby makes the following directions which take effect on the date hereof:

Authorisation

1. An individual who in accordance with the 2006 Regulations makes a claim for Housing Benefit under the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, or a claim for Council Tax Reduction under the Council’s Council Tax Reduction Scheme is authorised to do so by an electronic communication (as defined by Section 15(1) of the Electronics Communications Act 2000), provided that the individual uses the method approved by the Council, as set out below.
2. An individual who in accordance with the 2006 Regulations and/or the Council’s Council Tax Reduction Scheme reports an amendment or a change in circumstances for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction is authorised to do so by an electronic communication (as defined by Section 15(1) of the Electronics Communications Act 2000), provided that the individual uses the method approved by the Council, as set out below.

Approved Methods and Forms

The methods and forms approved by the Council are as follows:

(a) New applications

Electronic claims for Housing Benefit and/or applications for Council Tax Reduction, provided that they are:

- (i) Made via the Council’s on line application facility at www.wealden.gov.uk or via an appropriate Department for Work and Pensions facility;
- (ii) Either completed by the person making the application or where appropriate by a person authorised by the applicant such as an officer of the Council, Registered Social Landlord or Citizens Advice Bureau;
- (iii) The person making the application maintains records of any electronic application form; and

- (iv) Should the Council not acknowledge the electronic application form within 24 hours the person that made the application is advised to contact the Council directly.

Please note that the Council will acknowledge any electronic application form received through the approved method via an automatic email response.

(b) Electronic amendments to claims

Electronic amendments to claims are changes to claims prior to the initial decision on an award of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction. Electronic communication for amendments to claims will be accepted by the Council provided that they are:

- (i) Made via the Councils report a change of circumstances facility at www.wealden.gov.uk or by email to benefits@wealden.gov.uk ;
- (ii) The person making the application maintains records of any electronic communication; and
- (iii) Should the Council not acknowledge the electronic communication within 24 hours the person that made the application is advised to contact the Council directly.

Please note that the Council will acknowledge any electronic communication received via www.wealden.gov.uk by an automated confirmation message and any email to benefits@wealden.gov.uk by an automatic email response upon receipt of customers email.

(c) Notice of a change of circumstances or provision of any other information

To notifying the Council of a change in circumstances or to provide any other information the Council will accept electronic communication provided that they are:

- (i) Made via the Council's report a change of circumstances facility at www.wealden.gov.uk or by email to benefits@wealden.gov.uk;
- (ii) The person making the application maintains records of any electronic communication; and
- (iii) Should the Council not acknowledge the electronic communication within 24 hours the person that made the application is advised to contact the Council directly.

Please note that the Council will acknowledge any electronic communication received via www.wealden.gov.uk by an automated confirmation message and any email to benefits@wealden.gov.uk by automatic email response upon receipt of customers email.

The following conditions apply to paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) above:

- (i) Any person sending an electronic communication to the Council must state clearly their full name, full postal address and claim reference number where appropriate. Any communication where the Council is unable to authenticate the identity of the sender shall be deemed invalidly made;

- (ii) The electronic communication will be deemed to have been received on a day as determined by the Council;
- (iii) The person making an electronic claim, amendment or reporting a change in circumstances may be asked to sign the electronic document produced using a manual or electronic method;
- (iv) The Authority may accept digital photographic and scanned images of notices, forms, evidence and information provided by a person where it has been verified by an officer of the Authority or its agent. Where it has not been verified, the Authority may request to see the original where its authenticity is in doubt or cannot be corroborated by other means;
- (v) For the purposes of this Direction, the Council's computer systems are: the benefits and Council Tax reduction scheme processing system, the document imaging system, the Council's website and email system;
- (vi) Where deemed necessary by the Council, original documentation may still be required to be submitted to support the claim, amendment or change in circumstance;
- (vii) The Council will not be held responsible for the non-receipt of any application, notice of change of circumstances or any other information.

This Direction may be withdrawn or amended at any time by the issue of a further Direction.

Signed:

Date: 02 April 2015

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Lant', written in a cursive style.

Charles F. Lant,
Chief Executive, Wealden District Council: