

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



Benefits Advice and Review Team

Emma Poucher – Supervisor
Lynn Sheehan – Visiting Officer
Carole Davies – Visiting Officer
Joede Buckler – Visiting Officer

Contact us on 0800 731 2253 or
revenuesvisitingteam@west-norfolk.gov.uk

What we do?



We are a service that sits within Revenues and Benefits at The Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. We complete home visits for those that are not able to complete forms for themselves and have nobody who is able to support them. The Benefits forms that we help to complete are:

- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Support
- Discretionary Housing Payment
- Council Tax discounts and exemptions

We also advise people and help them to apply for:

- Attendance Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Disability Living Allowance for Children
- Carers Allowance and Pension Credit when one of the above disability benefits is awarded.

Housing Benefit



Housing Benefit is available to meet the costs of rental accommodation. It can potentially pay up to 100% of the rental liability but doesn't generally meet service charges.

Housing Benefit is a means tested benefit, which means they will need to know about all household income and capital in order to see if you are entitled. If you have over £16,000 savings you will not be entitled, unless you receive the guarantee element of Pension Credit.

Council Tax Support



Council Tax Support is available to meet the cost of the person who is liable for Council Tax.

Council Tax Support is a means tested, which means they will need to know about all house hold income and capital to see if you are entitled.

If you are Pension Age and have over £16,000 savings you will not be entitled to any help, unless you receive the guarantee element of Pension Credit.

If you are Working Age and have over £6,000 savings you will not be entitled to any help unless you are in one of the following Protected Groups

- You have at least one child under the age of 5 in your household
- You receive the Disability Premium or Child Disability Premium when we calculate your weekly income allowance
- You receive the Support Component of Employment Support Allowance
- You receive or have underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance

If you are Working Age and in one of the Protected Groups and have over £16,000 savings you will not be entitled to any help.

Discretionary Housing Benefit (DHP'S)



DHP's are paid from a fund which each Local Authority has allocated to it by the Department of Works and Pensions to use at its discretion, over the course of a financial year to help people who are in receipt of HB but do not get help with all of their rent liability.

A DHP is to help out for a short term period until you are able to sort out your financial situation. You should not need to apply for DHP as soon as taking on a tenancy because it would be deemed that the tenancy is unaffordable.

It looks at the whole household income and expenditure. If your allowable expenses are higher than the income we would look into a possible award for DHP. If your expenses are extreme or unusual it would be advisable to provide proof to support the application. Not all expenses are allowable.

The shortfall has to solely be for your housing costs and there are a number of areas when an award cannot be made:

- Ineligible service charges. These include charges for water, sewerage, environmental services and where the rent due has been increased due to arrears.
- Where a Second Adult Rebate is in payment
- Where IS or JSA has been reduced due to failure to comply with an order form from the Child Support Agency, or for non-attendance at a work focused interview, or where they have left employment voluntarily.

Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions



There are many discounts and exemptions for Council Tax but below are the main one's we advise on due to disabilities or carers duties:

Disabled Band Reduction – the Council Tax bill will be reduced there is a disabled person living in the household and either:

- A room other than a bathroom, kitchen or toilet is used by the disabled person due to a need of their disability
- An additional bathroom or kitchen for the use of the disabled person
- The use of a wheel chair inside the property

Carers 1 – Are employed for at least 24 hours a week by the Crown, Local Authority or a charity. Are resident where the care is provided and are paid less than £44 per week.

Carers 2 –Resides with and provide care for at least 35 hours per week to a person (not their partner, spouse or a child under 18) who receives Higher rate Attendance Allowance or Daily Living Allowance of PIP, Increased rate of Disablement Pension or increased constant Attendance Allowance.

Severely Mentally Impaired – Has an severe impairment of intelligence and social functioning which appears to be permanent and is in receipt of Attendance Allowance or the Daily Living Component for PIP.

Attendance Allowance



This is a non-means tested benefit for people aged 65 and over and the following applies:

- you have a physical disability (including sensory disability, eg blindness), a mental disability (including learning difficulties), or both
- your disability is severe enough for you to need help caring for yourself or someone to supervise you, for your own or someone else's safety
- and
- live in Great Britain when claiming
- have been in Great Britain for at least 2 of the last 3 years
- be habitually resident in the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man or the Channel Islands
- not be subject to immigration control
- There are two rates of AA. Low rate (£55.10) is for people who struggle with their personal care needs throughout the day and high rate (£82.30) is for people who struggle with their personal care needs throughout the day and night.

Personal Independence Payments



This is a non-means tested benefit for people aged 16 to 64 and the following applies:

- you have a long health condition or disability which is physical, mental or both
- your disability is severe enough to cause difficulties with activities related to 'daily living' and or mobility
- and
- live in Great Britain when claiming
- have been in Great Britain for at least 2 of the last 3 years
- be habitually resident in the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man or the Channel Islands
- not be subject to immigration control

PIP is split into two components which are the Daily Living Component and the Mobility Component. Daily Living Component has a standard rate (£55.10) and enhanced rate (£82.30). Mobility Component has a standard rate (£21.80) and enhanced rate (£57.45).

Points are gained for how people answer the questions on the application form and the level of points awarded determines the award.

Disability Living Allowance for Children



This is a non-means tested benefit for children whose parents are caring for them:

- Aged 16 and under
- Has difficulties walking or needs more looking after than a child of the same age who doesn't have a disability
- and
- live in Great Britain when claiming
- have been in Great Britain for at least 2 of the last 3 years
- be habitually resident in the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man or the Channel Islands
- not be subject to immigration control

There are two separate components for DLA which are a Care Component and a Mobility Component. Care has three rates that are low (£21.80), medium (£55.10) and high (£82.30). Mobility has two rates that are low (£21.80)* and high (£57.45)**.

*Low rate mobility can be awarded from a child's 5th birthday

**High rate mobility can be awarded from a child's 3rd birthday

Following the case through from start to finish



Once we have established what benefits someone is entitled to we will help complete the forms that we can and signpost people to the relevant services for the benefits that we do not deal with.

With cases that we get involved with we see the application through from start to finish. For example: we help somebody with dementia to apply for AA. We get the customer or their representative to sign a form to say that we can act on their behalf with regards to their benefits and advise the AA unit of this. This means that the AA unit will advise us as well as the customer of the outcome of the AA application. If it is awarded we then re-assess their benefits to see if it increases an entitlement to a means tested benefit like Council Tax Support, Housing Benefit or Pension Credit or whether it opens the doors to people who have not applied before. We would also then complete any CTAX discounts or exemptions that they may be entitled to.

How to refer to us?



We have an 0800 advice line which is 0800 731 2253

We are happy to receive calls from yourselves or direct from the customer. What we would like to know is:

- Name
- Address
- DOB
- NINO (not essential but helpful)
- What they would like help with?
- If a means tested benefit all income and capital details
- If a disability benefit details of illness or disability and an explanation of what they are struggling with personal care or mobility wise?
- Anything you feel we may need to be made aware of? Please remember we visit these people alone in their own homes.