

**DIRECTION OF PAUL NAJSAREK, ACTING HEAD OF PAID SERVICES OF HARROW COUNCIL, UNDER THE HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT (ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS) (MISCELLANEOUS BENEFITS) ORDER 2006, COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEMES (PRESCRIBED REQUIREMENTS) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2012 AND PART 4 OF SCHEDULE 1 TO HARROW'S COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

Harrow Council, ("the Authority") in accordance with:

- Paragraph 2 of 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
- Council Tax Support Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012
- Paragraph 13 of Part 4, Schedule 1 to Harrow Council's Council Tax Support Scheme

hereby makes the following directions:

1. An individual who, in accordance with the 2006 and 2012 Regulations makes a claim for Housing Benefit under the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, or an application for Council Tax Reduction (Support) under the Local Government Finance Act 2012, gives notice of a change of circumstances or a claim amendment, is authorised to do so by an electronic communication, provided that the individual uses the method approved by the Authority in relation to the claim, application, or notification.
  
- 2.1 The methods and form set out, at the time of, and for the purposes of, the delivery of such a claim, application, or notification, as referred to in paragraph 1, are respectively:
  - (a) The claim/change of circumstances/claim amendment form to be used must be that provided on the authority's website;
  - (b) The form must be completed to such an extent as to be deemed acceptable by the authority;
  - (c) The sender of the electronic communication will be authenticated by provision of the following information:
    - (i) the claimant's full name; and
    - (ii) the claimant's full address; and
    - (iii) the claimant's Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support reference number or Council Tax account number;or
    - (iv) submission of electronic communication via the claimant's My Harrow Account
  
- 2.2 The Authority may request hard copies of claim forms change of circumstances or amendment notifications to be signed where it is deemed to be appropriate by the Authority.

3. The claimant must keep evidence of submission of any electronic communication including reference number generated, claim, certificate, notice, information, or evidence so that it can be produced where the Authority so requires. Failure to produce on reasonable request the evidence requested may be deemed to show that an electronic communication was not successfully made to the Authority.
- 4.1 The Authority may require further information or original supporting evidence, including proof of identity, before the claim, change of circumstances or amendment notified in relation to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support can be assessed. The Authority may verify claims, certificates, notices, information or evidence by using third party systems and sources of information as well as by direct contact with a person using electronic communications or by some other means.
- 4.2 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 cannot be corroborated by other means.
- 4.3 The Authority will treat a claim or notification as having been received on the day that all of the above conditions are met.
5. Any claim or notification received that:
  - a. Does not conform to any of the relevant standards will be invalid
  - b. Does conform to the above standard but is not accepted by the Authority's official computer system, is not regarded as having been delivered.
6. This direction may be withdrawn or amended at any time by the issue of a further direction.

Signed by Paul Najsarek, Acting Head of Paid Services

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Date: .....