Information NOW
Information for people in Newcastle upon Tyne

How to challenge a benefit decision

What can you do if you are unhappy with a benefit decision?

If you are unhappy with a decision about your benefits or Tax Credits, first, you normally have to ask the department to reconsider their decision, called a mandatory reconsideration. If unhappy with that decision, you can appeal to an independent tribunal. You can go straight to appeal for **Housing Benefit.**

The process

1. You receive a written decision about your benefits from the DWP or HMRC.
2. If you are unhappy with this decision you can ask for a 'mandatory reconsideration'. You should do this within one month but this can be extended to 13 months. It is best to do this in writing. Supply as much supporting evidence as you can. You can request a reconsideration outside these time limits if for example, the decision was due to an 'official error' or the decision was made in ignorance of the facts. Called an 'any time revision.'
3. The DWP looks at their decision again.
4. They may also telephone you to explain and discuss their decision.
5. You should receive a detailed mandatory reconsideration notice letter, including how to appeal.
6. If you are still unhappy with this decision, you can submit an appeal. You can find out how to do that here. The one month time limit can be extended for 12 months with special reasons.
7. If the appeal contains further evidence the DWP will be asked to reconsider its decision.
8. The tribunal service will write to you and you must reply.
9. You can attend a hearing if one is needed. You can attend in person, by telephone or by video link.

If your mandatory reconsideration or appeal is made outside the allowed time, it may be accepted if there are reasonable circumstances.

If you want to make a complaint about delays and other administrative aspects of your benefit, there is a procedure and **form**.

Where can I get advice on making an appeal?

There are a range of benefit advice services available across Newcastle. Read the '**Where to get benefit advice**' booklet.

- **Citizens Advice Newcastle (CAN)** provide advice to anyone in Newcastle. Citizens Advice also have information on **Challenging a decision** or **Appeals**.
- **Newcastle Welfare Rights Service** provide advice to people in priority groups including those over 65. They have **self help material** on their website.
- **Newcastle Student Law Office at Northumbria University** offers a free legal service to people with a range of legal issues including benefits appeals.
- **Disability North** give disability related benefit advice, help with appeals and representation at tribunals

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Where to get benefits advice

You can get benefits advice from a local independent service. They can help guide you through the application process and explain how some benefits may impact upon another. Services in Newcastle include:

- **Citizens Advice Newcastle (CAN)**.
- **Newcastle Welfare Rights Service** have **self help material** on their website
- **Search Newcastle** give benefits advice to older people in the West of Newcastle
- **Disability North** give disability related benefit advice, help with appeals and representation at tribunals

Search for Benefits advice organisations

Location:
Postcode:
Search

Other Useful Information

For more information on the appeals process visit:

- **www.disabilityrightsuk.org**

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Useful Organisations

Citizens Advice Newcastle (CAN)

Email: citycab@newcastlecab.org.uk

Website: http://citizensadvice-newcastle.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 223 1133

Address: 4th Floor, City Library, NE1 8AX

Newcastle Welfare Rights Service

Email: welfare.rights@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfarerights

Telephone: 0191 277 2627

Address: **POSTAL ADDRESS ONLY - No face-to-face advice is given here, NE7 7LX

Northumbria University Student Law Office

Email: la.studentlawoffice@northumbria.ac.uk

Website: https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/academic-departments/northumbria-law-school/study/student-law-office/

Telephone: 0191 227 3909

Address: Northumbria University, NE1 8ST

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Website: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions

Disability North

Email: reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk

Website: www.disabilitynorth.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 2840480

Address: The Dene Centre, NE3 1PH

North East Law Centre

Email: reception@nelawcentre.co.uk

Website: www.nelawcentre.co.uk

Telephone: 0191 230 4777

Address: 2nd Floor, 10 - 13 Saville Row, NE1 8JE

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