

# Your guide to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit 2011 -12



## Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit explained

In the current climate of financial insecurity, the more help we can get the better when it comes to making our money go further. The Council wants to hear from anyone who thinks they may be entitled to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit - but who hasn't yet applied.

This is especially relevant if you are on a low income or have been made redundant recently or had your hours cut. If your circumstances have changed, or you've never claimed benefit before - it's time to think again and put in a claim. You may qualify for help even if you are working.

This booklet gives you all the information you need to know about Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

If you have any further questions please contact us and we will be happy to help. Our contact details are given at the end of this booklet.

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### Different formats

If you would like this leaflet in large print, Braille, on audio tape/CD/MP3 or in a different language, please contact our communications department on: 0191 433 3444.

## General information

### **What is Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit?**

It is money towards your rent and/or Council Tax paid by Gateshead Council based on rules set by the Government.

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### **Who can apply for benefit?**

Anyone aged 16 or over on a low income who pays rent and/or Council Tax including people who are

- working full or part-time or are self-employed
  - unemployed; or
  - retired
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### **What should I do if this applies to me?**

You should make a claim as soon as possible - a delay may lose you benefit.

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### **When is benefit paid from?**

Benefit is normally awarded from the Monday after we receive your claim.

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### **Can benefit be backdated?**

The current rules for backdating and how long we can backdate for are:

- Pensioners - If you are aged 60 or over, and not in receipt of income based Job Seekers Allowance or Income Support, your claim will automatically be backdated for a maximum of three months or to your 60th birthday, whichever is earlier.
- We can only backdate your claim if there is a continuous good reason why you did not claim at the right time.
- If you are aged under 60, backdating can be considered for a maximum of six months.
- If you are a working man aged between 60 and 64, backdating can be considered for a maximum of six months.
- If you are in receipt of Pension Credit, your claim will only be backdated up to a maximum of three months. We can do this automatically if we have all the information we need.

An application form to apply for backdated benefit is available on request.

## General information

### When will I not get help?

- If you have savings over £16,000 unless you have Guarantee Pension Credit.
- If you are paying rent or board to a close relative who lives with you, then you will not get help towards your rent. However you may get help with Council Tax depending on your circumstances.

Note: The rules are different for students and people living in residential or nursing homes.



## Important changes to Housing and Council Tax Benefit from April 2011

If you have an adult who does not live with you but who stays over night to provide care, you may get more benefit. Please tell us about this.

If you are already getting benefit and have other people who live with you who are not dependant on you, such as a grown up son or daughter, friend or relative, your benefit may reduce from April 2011.

If you rent from a private landlord, benefit is paid under the Local Housing Allowance scheme. This scheme is changing from April 2011 as well. Please see page 12 for more details.

**For more information about all these changes, please see our website at [www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefits) or ask us for our Fact Sheet.**



**When you are receiving benefit it is YOUR responsibility to tell the Benefit Section about any changes that may affect the amount of benefit you receive.**

**IT'S UP TO YOU TO DO THIS. YOU COULD BE COMMITTING FRAUD IF YOU DON'T.**

# Information for families and people of working age

## How benefit is calculated

If you receive Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based) or Employment and Support Allowance (Income related), you will normally get the maximum benefit, but less money may be paid if other adults live with you.

If you do NOT receive Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based), or Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) the Council will:

- compare your normal weekly income with the amount of money that the Government says you need for day-to-day living (this is known as your Applicable Amount).
  - look at your age and your family together with any special circumstances you might have such as a disability.
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## What income is taken into account?

You must tell us about all the income you receive so we can calculate your benefit. Some forms of income including Attendance Allowance/Disability Living Allowance and Child Benefit are not counted, but you must tell us about all the income you receive even though we might not include this in your calculation.

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## What happens if other adults live in the house?

Benefit may be reduced if other people live with you who are not dependent on you - this includes grown up children, friends and relatives.

If someone does not live with you but stays overnight to care for you, you may get more benefit. Please tell us if this applies to you

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## What about my savings?

We need to know about money you have in the bank or building society, any shares, National Savings Certificates or ISAs/TESSAs etc. and any property (except the one you live in) or land you own. These may be included in the calculation of your benefit. Savings of less than £6,000 are ignored.

# Information for families and people of working age

## What if I have savings of more than £6,000?

We will treat you as having an income of £1 per week for every £250 of savings or part thereof that you have between £6,000 and £16,000. If you have savings of over £16,000 it is likely you will not be entitled to housing and/or council tax benefit.

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## How can my children receive free school meals?

Children are entitled to free school meals if:

- you are on Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based), Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related); or
  - you are in receipt of Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit) and your income is less than £16,190. This amount has reduced this year so some people who get free school meals now, may not be entitled to them. We will tell you if this applies.
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## What changes do I need to tell you about?

**YOU NEED TO TELL US ABOUT ALL CHANGES THAT COULD AFFECT YOUR BENEFIT**

You must tell us as soon as possible if circumstances change for you or other people in your household, as this will affect your benefit.

So if you move house, your rent, capital or income changes in any way, you stop receiving Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based), your children leave school, your household makeup changes or the income or capital of any other adults who live with you changes - let us know.

You must also tell us if you gift money or property to other people as this may be taken into account when we calculate your benefit.



**From November 2009 Child Benefit is no longer taken into account as income when calculating Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.**

## Information for people of retirement age

### How is benefit calculated?

If you receive Guarantee Pension Credit (on its own or together with Savings Pension Credit) you will normally get the maximum benefit, but it may be reduced if you live with other adults.

If you receive Savings Pension Credit only, you could still be entitled to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit, as the rules are now more generous. However, if you have savings over £16,000 you will probably not qualify for help towards your rent and/or Council Tax.

If you don't get Pension Credit, you could still be entitled to receive benefit.

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### What income is taken into account?

If you receive Guarantee Credit (with or without Savings Pension Credit), this is the only income we take account of. If you have savings, these are ignored for the purpose of calculating Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit.

If you receive Savings Credit only, we will work your benefit out based on the Assessed Income figure provided by the Pension Service and other forms of income that you have.

You must tell us about all of the income that you receive so that we can calculate your benefit.

Some forms of income including Attendance Allowance/Disability Living Allowance are not counted, but you must tell us about all your income even though we might not include this in your calculation.



**You must report any changes in circumstances. Please see the page opposite. You can use the coupon at the back of this booklet to report any changes.**

## Information for people of retirement age

### What happens if other adults live in the house?

Benefit may be reduced if other people live with you who are not dependent on you - this includes grown up children, friends and relatives.

If someone does not live with you but stays overnight to care for you, you may get more benefit. Please tell us if this applies to you.

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### What about my savings?

We will ignore some savings when working out your benefit, these are:

- the first £10,000 of your savings.
- all of your savings if you receive Guarantee Pension Credit.
- any gross lump sum payment of deferred state pension.

If you do not receive Guarantee Pension Credit and have savings or capital between £10,000 and £16,000 we will assume an extra weekly income of £1 for every £500 or part thereof of savings over £10,000.

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### What changes do I need to tell the Council about?

If you receive Guarantee Pension Credit:

- changes to your tenancy.
- changes to the people who live with you and are not dependent on you - this includes grown up children, friends and relatives.
- if you are absent from your home for more than 13 weeks (for example on holiday).
- if you are looking after children as they may be entitled to free school meals.

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### If you receive Savings Pension Credit:

All of the changes listed above, and

- if you start to receive child tax credit, or have any changes to the child tax credit you receive.
- any changes to your capital if it increases to over £16,000. If your capital reduces so that you have less than £16,000, contact us to see if you could now get housing and council tax benefit
- any changes to the income and capital of any partner not included in your pension credit claim.

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### If you do not receive Pension Credit:

All changes to your circumstances, including changes to income and savings.

## How to claim Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit

You must tell us you want to apply and we will send you the forms you need or visit you to complete your claim. To tell us you want to apply you can:

- go on-line at [www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefits/calculator](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefits/calculator) using our on-line claim form. You can also check your entitlement using our online calculator.
- Email us at [benefitenquiries@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:benefitenquiries@gateshead.gov.uk)
- ring Benefits Customer Services Helpline number: 0191 433 4646
- call in person at any of our offices. More details are given at the back of this booklet
- use the form at the end of this booklet
- ask the Pension Service when you apply for Pension Credit; or
- ask Jobcentreplus when you apply for Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance.

Benefit Application Forms are also available from most social landlords when you sign for a new tenancy.

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### What do we need from you?

On the application form you will be asked about your income and savings and those of other people who live with you. You will need to prove that the information given is correct. This will mean providing proof of all income and capital if we ask for it. Examples of which are given below:

- benefit payment books and/or payslips
- a driving licence, passport or original birth certificate
- savings account books; or
- bank statements for all your bank accounts (for at least the preceding two full months).

We must see original documents - photocopies are not acceptable. If you don't have all the documents you need, you should still send in your form and then send the additional documents later.

When we are looking at your claim we may write to you asking for more information. If we do this please send the information quickly as a delay may affect your benefit.

## How to claim Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit

### **Our Fast Track Service Guarantee - it's as easy as 1, 2, 3**

If you make your application for benefit and provide ALL of the information that we need to process your claim, either at the time of applying or within three days from when we requested it, we guarantee that we will fast track your claim and process it within three working days.

This service only applies to claims where the information that we need has been provided at the time that you applied or within the three days of our requesting information from you.

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## Second Adult Rebate/Benefit

Second Adult Rebate is a benefit to help you with your Council Tax. It is most often awarded if you are single, but have another adult who lives with you, such as an adult son or daughter. It is not based on the income or savings of the person claiming, but on the income of any other adults in the property. In some cases it can be awarded to a couple.

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## Your Benefit notification letter

### **How will I know how much benefit I will receive?**

You will receive a benefit notification letter that will give you the following information.

- The amount of benefit you will receive
- When it will be paid from
- How it will be paid
- How much money the Government states that you need for your day-to-day needs. This is based on the people in your household.

### **Information used in your benefit calculation**

- Weekly income
- Weekly housing costs
- Deductions from your benefit - for example because other adults who are not dependent on you live with you.



**You should check all the information given on your notification letter and if anything is incorrect you must tell us immediately.**

### **What you must tell us**

- If any of the figures or information used in the calculation are wrong.
- If there are any changes in your circumstances that will affect your benefit.

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### **Would you like your notification in a different format?**

Please call us on 0191 433 4724 if you would like a copy of your benefit notification letter (or council tax bill) in a different format such as Braille, Large Print, CD or Audio Cassette..

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## **How you can appeal against a decision**

### **What do I do if I think my benefit is wrong?**

You must write and tell us immediately or no later than one month from the date on your benefit notification letter.

We will look at your claim again and will write to you again with our decision. If you are still unhappy, you can appeal. We will send you information on how to do this. Please see our leaflet called 'What to do if you think the decision about your benefit is wrong'. A copy is available on our website.

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## **Local Housing Allowance (LHA)**

Local Housing Allowance is a flat rate amount paid to tenants in private rented accommodation. It is not based on the rent you pay, but on the make up of your household and the number of bedrooms you are entitled to for your family size.

There are strict rules to determine the number of bedrooms you are entitled to as follows:

One bedroom for each of the following:

- every adult couple (whether married or unmarried)
- any other adult aged 16 or over
- any two children of the same sex aged under 16
- any two children regardless of sex aged under 10
- any other child

## Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

### Changes to local housing allowance rates from April 2011

Depending on the number of bedrooms you are entitled to, you are given a bedroom rate, which is used to work out your benefit.

From April 2011, the Government has changed the way LHA rates are set. This means that the rates will generally be a lot lower and you may get less help towards your rent.

If you are already getting housing benefit, you will go onto the new rate straight away if you move address, or your family size changes and this alters the rate you get.

Otherwise, you will go onto the new rate nine months after the anniversary of your claim.

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### Additional payments

At present, if your rent is lower than your LHA rate, you get an additional payment of up to £15 more than your housing benefit which you can keep.

From April 2011, this is no longer payable. If you are already receiving this, payments will stop from the anniversary of your claim.

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### Local Housing Allowance rates for 'larger properties'

At present, the LHA rate is capped at a maximum five bedroom rate. From April 2011, the LHA rate will be capped at a maximum four bedroom rate. If your family is such that you would be classed as needing more than four bedrooms, you will still only get the four bedroom rate.

If you are already getting benefit at the five bedroom rate, this will stop if you move or your family size changes.

Otherwise, it will stop nine months after the anniversary of your claim.

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### How will I know when the anniversary of my claim is?

It is the most recent of:

- the date you made your claim
- the date you last moved address, or
- the date your LHA rate last changed

We will write to you in advance of your anniversary.

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### Where can I get more information about these changes and find out how much LHA I will get?

The LHA rates are published on the Council's website and updated monthly. They are also on display at all local offices or on request from the Benefit Section. There is more information about the changes to LHA on our website, or you can contact us and ask for our Fact Sheet.

## Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)

If you are not entitled to the full amount of rent, or your benefit reduces, and you are struggling financially, there is other help you can get.

We have a discretionary cash limited fund to provide help in exceptional circumstances called Discretionary Housing Payments. They are not payments of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit. Discretionary Housing Payments are payments made in addition to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit.

You must already receive Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit and your circumstances must be such that you need extra help with your Housing costs. If you only get Housing Benefit, we can only pay you Discretionary Housing Payments towards the cost of your rent. If you only get Council Tax Benefit we can only pay you Discretionary Housing Payments towards the cost of your Council Tax.

The maximum payment we can make is the difference between your eligible rent or Council Tax and the amount of benefit you receive. (Your eligible rent is your rent after deductions for services such as heating and lighting).

Each application will be considered on its own merits. The period of time that an individual award of Discretionary Housing Payment is made for will vary depending on your circumstances, but payments are usually for a limited time only.

You can download a claim form from our website [www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefits) or we can post an application form out to you. For further information on this scheme telephone (0191) 433 3661.

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## Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

From 27 October 2008 Employment and Support Allowance replaced Incapacity Benefit and Income Support paid on incapacity grounds for some customers.

If you receive income related ESA you will receive maximum housing and council tax benefit. If you receive contributions based ESA, this will be counted as income and your claim will be assessed on this basis. This means we may need proof of other income or capital belonging to you or your partner.

# Preventing benefit fraud

## People who commit fraud are stealing your money

### What does the Council do to prevent fraud?

We:

- carry out a detailed range of checks to prevent and detect fraud
- compare information that claimants provide with details held in other parts of the National Benefits system
- make regular visits to people's homes to check information; and act on information received from members of the public.

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### What action is taken against people who commit fraud?

Action includes penalties, cautions, sanctions (which could be a reduction in ongoing benefit) and prosecution through the courts. In the last three years, we have prosecuted 81 people in the courts who had committed benefit fraud and imposed sanctions on a further 272

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### Fraud Hotline

If you suspect anyone of committing benefit fraud, help us to protect your money by ringing the fraud hotline

- 0191 433 3748 or 0191 433 3653 (during office hours)
- 0191 433 3657 (out of office hours)
- By e-mail: [fraudinvestigations@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:fraudinvestigations@gateshead.gov.uk)
- Online: [www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefitfraud](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefitfraud)

All calls, letters or information will be treated in confidence. You can remain anonymous if you are worried about telling us.



**All cases prosecuted at court are reported in the local press**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **If I don't qualify for Council Tax Benefit, what other reductions could I get?**

You can get a 25% reduction in the cost of your Council Tax if:

- you live alone
- all but one of the people living in your home are disregarded for Council Tax purposes
- you have another adult such as a grown up child, friend or relative living with you - you may still qualify for a reduction of up to 25% based on the circumstances of any other adults. This is known as Second Adult Rebate.

If you are receiving a discount you must tell us of any change that may affect your entitlement to that discount.

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### **Is the full amount of rent I pay used to calculate my Housing Benefit?**

The amount of Housing Benefit you get is based on what type of tenant you are and when your claim started.

For claimants in a Gateshead Housing Company (formerly council) property, one owned by a registered social landlord (housing association) or those in private rented accommodation not currently in receipt of Local Housing Allowance, it is based on the rent you pay, less any amount included for the following:

- fuel
- lighting
- cooking
- meals
- cleaning
- hot water
- water rates
- counselling or care services

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **When will my housing benefit be based on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates?**

If you rent from a private landlord and make a new claim for benefit, your claim will be based on Local Housing Allowance rates.

If you are already on benefit but it is not based on the LHA rate, and you are renting from a private landlord, you will change to LHA if you move or have a break in your claim and then reapply. For example, if you start working and your benefit stops, but your wages then reduce and you make a new claim, the new claim you make will be based on the LHA rate.

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### **Can I get help to fill in my form?**

Please see our contact details on page 18, or on your benefit notification letter. We also offer a home visiting service in certain circumstances.

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### **How does the Council know that benefit is being paid correctly?**

Calculations are monitored and checked on a weekly basis.

Government Auditors carry out regular checks of what we do.

We publish information that states how accurate our payments are.

However, it is your legal duty to tell us of any changes that might alter your benefit.

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### **How will my benefit be paid?**

Council Tax Benefit will be paid directly to your Council Tax account and you will be sent a bill telling you what you still need to pay.

Housing Benefit is paid in different ways depending on the type of your tenancy. Please see the chart on the following page which gives details



## Frequently Asked Questions

|   | TGHC* Council Tenants | RSL** Tenants | Private Tenants | LHA (Private) |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| To your rent account                                      | YES                   | NO            | NO              | NO            |
| By BACS to your bank                                      | NO                    | YES           | YES             | YES           |
| To your landlord  | YES                   | YES           | YES             | SOMETIMES***  |
| By cheque to you<br>(except in exceptional circumstances) | NO                    | NO            | NO              | NO            |

\* The Gateshead Housing Company

\*\* Registered Social Landlord

\*\*\* Please see Local Housing Allowance section below

### Local Housing Allowance

In some cases, benefit can be paid directly to your landlord. This applies if you are 8 weeks or more in arrears with your rent, you have trouble managing your affairs, or your landlord has agreed that your rent should not be more than the LHA rate.

### How often is my benefit reviewed?

We will review your claim from time to time to confirm that you are receiving the correct amount of benefit during the year. To do this, you may:

- be sent a review form
- be contacted by telephone to confirm the details in your claim; or
- one of our mobile officers may arrange to visit you in your home
- if you receive LHA, your claim will be reviewed on your anniversary date.

**Something  
to tell us?**

**If at any time during the year your circumstances change you must remember to let us know as soon as the change happens.**



## How to get help with benefits

### You can:

**Phone:** 0191 433 4646

**Email:** [benefitenquiries@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:benefitenquiries@gateshead.gov.uk)

**Log on:** [www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefits) or [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) • *The official Government website for citizens*

**Visit us at** Gateshead Civic Centre. We are open: 8.45am to 5pm  
Mon - Thurs and 8.45am to 4.30pm Fri.

### **IMPORTANT:**

We also provide a service at our area offices in Gateshead.

Details are shown online at:  
[www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefits) as well as on your benefit notification letter.

You can also obtain leaflets containing general information about housing and council tax benefit in a number of different languages from: [www.benefit-leaflets.org/leaflets.asp](http://www.benefit-leaflets.org/leaflets.asp)

The Council also offers a debt advice service. If you would like to use this service telephone: 0191 433 3994.



## Help us help you

### Suggestions

We value the views, suggestions and experiences of all of our customers and we want to use these in order to provide the best possible service for you. We want you, as customers, to help us to develop our service so that we know that we are responding to your needs and expectations.

If you think we should be providing our service in a different way, or if you think that we should be doing something new that we haven't done before, please let us know. Please see your benefit notification letter for further details.

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### You can make your suggestions in a number of different ways:

**By phone:** 0191 433 3627 (24 hrs)

**By email:** [benefitsuggestions@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:benefitsuggestions@gateshead.gov.uk)

**Online:** [www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk)  
(select the link for Benefits and Suggestions)

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### Benefit Service Standards

Gateshead Council's Benefit Service is committed to providing you with the best possible service. Please see our service standards booklet, which tells you what you can expect from us and what you can do to help us improve our service to you.

This is available on our website: [www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/benefits), or you can pick one up at the Civic Centre or local area offices. If you would like us to send you a copy you can:

**Phone:** 0191 433 4646

**Email:** [benefitenquiries@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:benefitenquiries@gateshead.gov.uk)



## Useful numbers

### **The Gateshead Housing Company**

Helps tenants to access help and advice with debt, rent arrears or other housing related issues.

**Phone:** 0191 433 5353

**Email:** [enquiries@gatesheadhousing.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@gatesheadhousing.co.uk)

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### **Age Concern Gateshead**

If you are aged 50+ and live in Gateshead, Age Concern Gateshead can offer information, advice and services on a wide range of issues including Disability Benefits, Pension Credit, debt counselling, help with fuel & utilities, housing, benefit claims, going into care and much more.

**Phone:** 0191 477 3559

**Email:** [admin@ageconcerngateshead.org.uk](mailto:admin@ageconcerngateshead.org.uk)

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### **JobCentrePlus**

Benefits are available for people of working age, and for families and children, and for people who are unable to work.

You can ring them to make a benefit claim.

**Phone:** 0800 0 55 66 88

**Textphone:** 0800 0 23 48 88

if you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech difficulties.

Calls are free from a landline. Charges may apply when calling from a mobile phone, but they will arrange to call you back if you ask.

Phone lines are open from 8am-6pm, Monday to Friday.

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### **Pension Service**

Provide benefits for pensioners and for disabled people and their carers.

**Phone:** 0800 991 234



## Useful numbers

### Shelter

Shelter is a charity that works to alleviate the distress caused by homelessness and bad housing. They do this by giving advice, information and advocacy to people in housing need.

**Phone:** 0844 515 1601

**website:** [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk)

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### Tax Credits

Get more information on Tax Credits online at [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk). or to order a Tax Credit claim pack contact the helpline.

**Helpline number:** 0845 300 3900.

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### Gateshead Community Legal Advice Centre @ Gateshead CAB Advice for Life

Are you struggling to pay your bills?

Do you have debt or money worries?

Getting Advice can be the first step to solving your problems. The Gateshead Community Legal Advice Centre offers advice and information on debt, housing, welfare benefits, family law, employment and community care. Also offered is general advice on a wide range of everyday problems.

**Phone:** 0191 478 5100

**Email:** [gateshead@communitylegaladvice.org.uk](mailto:gateshead@communitylegaladvice.org.uk)

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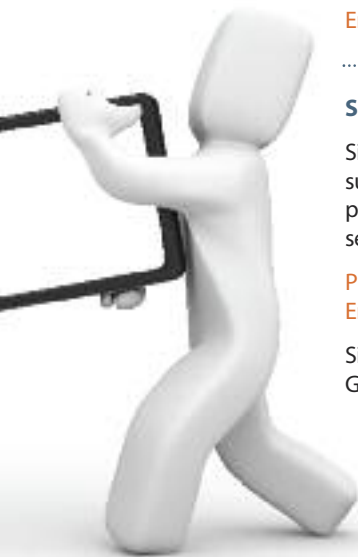
### Sight Service Gateshead

Sight Service Gateshead provides the advice, information and support to help improve the quality of life of visually impaired people. You do not have to be registered blind to receive this service.

**Phone:** 0191 478 5959

**Email:** [contactus@sightservice.co.uk](mailto:contactus@sightservice.co.uk)

Sight Service Gateshead, The Bradbury Centre, Bensham Hospital, Gateshead NE8 4YL (Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4.30pm)



**Politics affects almost every area of your life, from the food you eat to what you can watch on television, and, from how you get from A to B, to how safe you feel on the streets.**

So, if you don't do politics, there's not much you do do.

How politics affects...

## **Where you live**

- it ensures that rubbish gets collected and how much of it then gets recycled
- it keeps the streets clean and free of graffiti
- it maintains the roads and pavements in your area
- it decides if you can park your car in your street and how much it will cost you
- it affects the times and frequency of buses and trains, and creates bike lanes and paths
- it decides whether the pub next door stays open until 11pm or 3am.

## **Make your vote count!**

[www.gateshead.gov.uk/voting](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/voting)

Tel: 0191 433 2166



## Application form request coupon

I would like to apply for benefit, please send me an application form 

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Telephone no .....

Please return to:

Gateshead Council, Benefits Service, Civic Centre, Regent Street,  
Gateshead. NE8 1HH

## Change in circumstance coupon

I'd like to report a change in my circumstances 

Name .....

Address.....

.....

Telephone no .....

Details of the change.....

Please return to:

Gateshead Council, Benefits Service, Civic Centre, Regent  
Street, Gateshead. NE8 1HH

