



Tax credits checks

Every year we check thousands of tax credits awards to make sure that we:

- pay the right amount of tax credits based on your income and circumstances
- run the tax credits system fairly and efficiently

If we check your current tax credits award, we call this an 'examination'.

If we check your previous tax credits award, we call this an 'enquiry'.

About your check

To help us get a picture of your household, we may ask you for things like bank statements, payslips, household bills and details of your income and circumstances.

We may also ask your employers and childcare providers for information.

You can ask an independent tribunal at any time for a direction that we stop our enquiry. If we think we should continue with the check we'll ask the tribunal to decide what should happen.

If we do not hear from you

It's important you give us the information we need or explain why there's a delay.

If you do not send us the information by the date on our letter, we may suspend your tax credits payments. We can also ask an independent tribunal to charge you a penalty of up to £300.

If we suspend your payments and you still do not give us the information, we may stop or reduce your tax credits. You may then have to pay back any tax credits that we've already paid you.

If you feel your payments should not be suspended, you can ask us if they can be reinstated.

Mistakes

We'll not charge you a penalty if you:

- tell us about a change in circumstances in time, see opposite
- take reasonable care to give us correct information on your claim

Problems giving us the information

If you have a good reason for not giving us the information, or if it does not exist, let us know. We'll work with you to find alternatives.


A good reason for not providing information might be that you've:

- lost your documents through fire, flood or theft and cannot replace them in time
- a serious illness or other personal circumstances that stop you from sending the information

Being too busy to send us the information is not a good reason.

Asking someone to help you

You can ask a friend, a professional adviser or a voluntary organisation like Citizens Advice.

 Go to GOV.UK and search for 'Voluntary and community sector organisations who can give you extra support'.

You can ask them to talk to us on your behalf, but we cannot talk to anyone without your permission.

Help

If you have any questions or would like more details, contact the HMRC office shown on the letter you got with this form.


Change of circumstances

You must tell us within one month if you:

- get married, become a civil partner or part of a couple living together as if you're married or in a civil partnership
 - stop being part of a married couple, civil partnership or a couple living together as if you're married or in a civil partnership
 - or your partner (if you have one)
 - leave the UK permanently
 - go abroad for more than 8 weeks (or more than 12 weeks if you go abroad because you're ill, or because a member of your family is ill or has died)
 - lose your right to reside in the UK
 - start working, either in employment or self-employment
 - are a couple responsible for a child and your joint working hours drop below 24 a week (to qualify one of you must work at least 16 hours)
 - are part of a couple responsible for a child and you work at least 16 hours but your partner is no longer
 - incapacitated
 - an inpatient in hospital
 - in prison or custody awaiting trial or sentence
 - entitled to Carer's Allowance
 - are working 30 hours or more a week and your hours drop below 30 (joint hours count for couples with children)
 - are laid off or stop work
 - have been on strike for more than 10 days
- You must also tell us within one month if:
- your childcare costs go down by an average of £10 a week or more
 - your childcare costs stop or you stop paying for registered or approved childcare
 - your child stops going to childcare for 4 weeks or more when they would normally have gone
 - your working hours drop below 16 a week

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If you do ask someone to act for you, either:

 go to GOV.UK to fill in and return form TC689 'Authority for an intermediary to act on your behalf'

- request a TC689 by writing to us at
Tax Credit Office
IAA Team
HMRC
BX9 1ER

You do not need to include a street name, town or PO box number.

Co-operation

It's up to you whether you give us the information we ask for.

If you're not sure, we suggest you get independent advice before deciding what to do. But we may decide to reduce or stop your tax credits payments based on the information we already have.

About our decision

We'll send you a letter to tell you our decision.

You have the right to ask us to reconsider our decision if we:

- change your award
- ask you to pay a penalty
- charge you interest on any overpayment

We call this mandatory reconsideration. The letter will explain how to do this.

Our leaflet WTC/AP, 'What to do if you think your Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit is wrong' explains how to ask for a reconsideration.

 Go to GOV.UK and search for WTC/AP.

If you're still unhappy after the reconsideration, you can appeal to an independent tribunal. Our Mandatory Reconsideration Notice will tell you how to do this.

In England, Scotland and Wales, you can appeal direct to an independent tribunal without first requesting a mandatory reconsideration. You might be able to appeal direct in Northern Ireland to the Appeals Service Northern Ireland.

If you make a claim for Universal Credit (UC) and your mandatory reconsideration or appeal is successful, we'll only pay tax credits up to the day before you made your claim for UC. This is because UC has replaced tax credits and if you make a claim to UC your tax credits will stop, even if you're not entitled to UC.


Child Benefit

If you're claiming Child Benefit, any changes to your family circumstances may affect the amount you receive.

 For more information, go to www.gov.uk/report-changes-child-benefit

HMRC Charter

HMRC Charter explains what you can expect from us and what we expect from you.

 For more information, go to www.gov.uk/government/publications/hmrc-charter

HMRC may observe, monitor, record and retain internet data which is available to anyone. This is known as 'open source' material and includes news reports, internet sites, Companies House and Land Registry records, blogs and social networking sites where no privacy settings have been applied.


These notes describe in general terms what's likely to happen. If you'd like more details, contact the HMRC office shown on the letter you got with this form.

Change of circumstances

continued

- a child or young person you're responsible for leaves the family to live with someone else or dies
- a child or young person you're responsible for stops qualifying for support, for example, they
 - leave full-time non-advanced education or approved training before the age of 20
 - start to have their training provided under a contract of employment
 - start paid work for 24 hours or more a week and they're not in full-time non-advanced education
 - stop being registered with a careers service, Connexions, local authority support service, Ministry of Defence or similar organisation within the EU
 - start to claim Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit themselves

You should also tell us about any other changes which you think might affect your entitlement.

 For more information, go to www.gov.uk/changes-affect-tax-credits

Open government

The Claimant Compliance Manual contains more details about our work in this area.

 Go to GOV.UK and search for Claimant Compliance Manual.

Yr Iaith Gymraeg

Ffoniwch 0300 200 1900 i dderbyn fersiynau Cymraeg o ffurflenni a chanllawiau.

We have a range of services for disabled people. These include guidance in Braille, audio and large print. Most of our forms are also available in large print. Contact our helplines for more information.

These notes are for guidance only and reflect the position at the time of writing. They do not affect any right of appeal.

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