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For further information please contact

Benefits Section
Middlesbrough House
PO Box 98, 50 Corporation Road.
Middlesbrough TS1 2YQ.

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Email: housbens@middlesbrough.gov.uk
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Minicom line only: 01642 726980

If you know someone who wants more information but English is not their first language, please contact the Benefit Section who will help you.

Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction is delivered by "Service Middlesbrough", a public private partnership between Middlesbrough Council and Mouchel.

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Overpayment of Benefits

This leaflet is intended as a general guide. People have different circumstances so for more detailed individual advice please contact us.



What is an overpayment?

An overpayment of benefit happens when you are paid benefit to which you are not entitled.

How will I know if I have got an overpayment?

We will write to you. In the letter you receive from us, we will give you full details of the overpayment. We will tell you:

- What caused the overpayment
- The dates and the amount of the overpayment.
- How much the overpayment is.
- What to do if you disagree with the overpayment.

What if I do not understand the overpayment?

There are several reasons why you may have received an overpayment of benefit.

- You may have forgotten to tell us that your income has increased, for example, Working Tax Credit, wages, work pensions or state benefits.
- Somebody may have moved into or out of your home. This would mean we would need to work out your claim again.
- If you have other adults living with you, their circumstances may have changed.
- You may have moved out of your home and not told us.
- You may have started work or changed jobs.

It is your responsibility to tell the Benefit Section about any changes, do not rely on the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or your landlord.

If your overpayment is found to have been your fault, we will recover any benefit paid to you that you were not entitled to.

How is the overpayment recovered?

- If you are still getting Housing Benefit, we may reduce this each week by the amount shown on your letter.
- If you feel that the amount we are reducing your Housing Benefit by is causing you hardship, you can write and ask us to lower it. Please note, we may ask for more details regarding your income and outgoings.
- If you stop receiving Housing Benefit, we will send you an invoice, you can pay this by one of the following methods:
 1. In person by calling into our office or one of the Local Area Housing Offices (excluding Hemlington), with your invoice and payment.
 2. Over the telephone by calling 01642 726726
 3. Online by visiting www.middlesbrough.gov.uk - just have your invoice number and credit/debit card details ready.
 4. At any Post Office or outlet showing the PayPoint logo, you will need your invoice with you when you make your payment.
- If your landlord was paid your benefit, we may ask the landlord to repay us in certain circumstances.
- If you have been overpaid Council Tax Reduction we will send you a new Council Tax bill, which will include any money that has been overpaid.

What if I do not agree with the overpayment?

The first thing to do when you receive your overpayment letter is read it carefully. It will explain what the overpayment is for and the dates you have been overpaid.

If you still disagree with the overpayment, after reading the explanation you can do the following:

- If you do not understand the explanation you can contact us by phone, email, in writing or by calling into our office in person.
- You can appeal against the overpayment. You must do this in writing, within one calendar month of the date on the letter.

Please see our leaflet 'HB5 – How to Appeal'.