

Customer Benefits

E-claim

E-claim provides an electronic version of the claims form which may be accessible via the local authority website, authority intranet or via mobile devices.

The e-claim form offers numerous benefits over the traditional paper based form:

- **Quicker and simpler** – only questions relevant to applicants are displayed, simplifying the process and reducing the time taken to complete.
- **Increased accuracy in information submitted** - step-by-step guidance for claimants is given throughout completion, increasing the accuracy of the information submitted. reduces the possibility for errors to be introduced further in the process.
- **Real time submission** – e-Claim forms are transmitted instantly and securely, the postal service and data entry no longer delay the process.
- **Reduced environmental impact** – e-Claim reduces the need to produce printed forms, production and disposal of which has a significant environmental impact.
- **Better service access** – providing a mobile office service using technology to offer processing of council tax and housing benefit claims directly from citizens homes.

Self Service – Council Tax

Using Self Service Council Tax, citizens can:

- **View personal account information** – including outstanding balance, discounts, payments made and property details.
- **Sign up to e-billing** – enabling the authority to reduce the cost of billing.
- **View payment schedules** – enabling citizens to understand when payments are due and budget accordingly.
- **Process a change of address** – citizens can register a change of address without the need to call a contact centre.

- **Change their payment method to Direct Debit** – increasing the uptake of the most cost effective payment method.
- **View correspondence including bills and reminders** – citizens no longer need to call the contact centre for reprints when they mislay important correspondence.
- **Access banding information** – the current gross charge for all properties in the area is easily accessible to the public and other interested parties such as estate agents, reducing calls to the contact centre.
- **Pay outstanding council tax balances** - payment of some or all of the outstanding balance can be made by linking to an online payments facility.

Self Service - Benefits

Using Academy Self Service Benefits citizens can:

- **Access full details** of awards, payments made, payment schedules and overpayments, along with assessment and circumstances used in the calculations. This allows citizens to check their details without calling the authority.
- **Access information easily** – through council web-site. Alternatively the service may be accessed by the Citizen's Advice Bureau or other agencies authorised to assist the claimant empowering third parties to assist and advise individuals.
- **View notifications and other correspondence** – claimants no longer need to call the contact centre for reprints when they mislay important correspondence, and there is no need for the authority to reprint it.
- **Review history** - of past payments and details of future payments – claimants know when they will receive payments as well as how much giving them the information they need to budget.
- **Examine assessment details** – claimants can check that their current claim assessment reflects their present circumstances.
- **View current award and calculation details** – the authority is seen to be open about calculations for benefit, allowing claimants to understand how their benefit was reached.

- **View overpayments** – providing claimants with visibility of how much they have been overpaid and allowing them to budget accordingly.

Self Service – Business Rates

Using Self Service Business Rates, businesses can:

- **View business rate account information** - including outstanding balance, reliefs, payments made as well as fully detailed calculations of their charges.
- **Sign up to e-billing** – making payment of the bill simpler for businesses
- **View payment schedules** – enabling businesses to understand when payments are due and budget their cashflow accordingly.
- **View correspondence including bills and reminders** – businesses no longer need to call the contact centre for reprints when they mislay important correspondence.
- **Access rateable values for any property** – the current gross charge for all properties in the area is easily accessible to the public and other interested parties such as estate agents, reducing calls to the contact centre.
- **Access to pay Business Rates bills online** – a quick and efficient online payment system makes it easy for businesses to pay council tax online encouraging the timely payment of bills.

e-Notifications

- **Meets customer expectations** – many customers are already receiving electronic communications such as bills, from organisations including banks, utility companies and local authorities and expect services such as eNotifications
- **Prompt notification** – customers receive notification of benefits without the delays of the postal system.
- **Convenient** – all benefit notifications received along with other information is easily accessible online.

- **Secure** – eNotifications are more secure than their paper based equivalents.
- **Easy storage** – PDF documents can be stored on a customer's PC or in the case of a large landlord, imported into an EDMS system without the need to scan.

e-Billing

- **Customer choice** – Customers who do not sign up for an eBill will still receive a paper bill, whilst those who prefer the paperless approach will only receive an eBill.
- **Meet customer expectations** – Many commercial companies already use eBilling, customers are increasingly expecting these services from their local authority.
- **Multiple copies** - Each person named on the bill can receive a copy of the bill in their inbox, improving communication in shared houses and aiding prompt payment.
- **Identical eBills** – Bills sent as a PDF attachment look identical to printed bills, ensuring that the authority communicates the same consistent message. Links may be included to useful website content rather than sending expensive printed communications.
- **Immediately available** – Bills may be accessed from anywhere as soon as they become available. Bills do not spend time in the postal system or on the door mat whilst the bill payer is away, aiding prompt payment.