

Anglia Revenues Partnership update

The ARP website includes a page specially designed to answer any questions around [Housing Benefit, Council Tax, Local Council Tax Reduction and Business rates](#) during the COVID-19 outbreak.

We continue to be able to assist customers needing to make a new claim for Housing Benefit or Local Council Tax Reduction over the phone. This will be facilitated via call-back. There is limited availability so if able to access other support to do this please utilise this in the first instance.

We would like to make sure our phone lines are used to support our most vulnerable residents, please continue to use and promote our [online forms](#) wherever possible.

Please keep in mind, with regard to Local Council Tax Reduction, if a customer is applying for Universal Credit, they can indicate they wish to apply for Local Council Tax as part of their Universal Credit information gather, this will prompt a notification to the Local Authority. All five Local Authorities of the ARP accept a notification from DWP, in this way, as a new application for Local Council Tax Reduction, so a separate new claim is not needed.

We continue to try and access supporting evidence via methods available to us that will negate the need for a customer to provide all information, if not readily available. If the claimant is unable to provide evidence electronically, and there is outstanding information, we will base our calculation on the information that is available and supplied via their application. We will follow this up later at a more appropriate time.

A quick reminder - If you are supporting customers to make a new claim, if possible please let them know that ticking the appropriate consent boxes on claim forms will allow us to gather information from 3rd parties, this will assist us all by minimising the information we need to request from the customer.

Temporary absence from home outside Great Britain

We are aware that there are claimants who travelled outside Great Britain (GB), expecting to return within their allowable period of absence under the Housing Benefit regulations, but have been prevented from returning due to travel restrictions outside GB. Easements are now in place which allow people to remain entitled to HB where they have been temporarily prevented from returning to GB due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The usual rules on not subletting and having an intention to return still continue to apply to any period of temporary absence.

Anglia Revenues Partnership work and processing information

We are currently processing new applications in an average 18.24 days and changes of circumstances in an average 4.06 days.

Our oldest New applications is 12 days old, oldest change in circumstances is 18 days old and oldest DHP is 13 days old.

We are working hard to manage the increased volume of calls, applications and correspondence during these difficult times. Our partnership working has helped us

prioritise work groups and ensure all Local Authorities are kept as up to date as possible. Thank you all for your support.

Local Council Tax Reduction

Council Tax Hardship Fund – as announced by the Government, working age customers in receipt of Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTRS) will see their Council Tax bill reduced by £150, or the bill will reduce to nil where the current award of LCTRS leaves less than £150 outstanding.

Letters have been sent to eligible customers notifying them about the award, the payment is expected to be made in July and the customer will receive an award notification and adjusted Council Tax bill either by post or via their online account. If the award leaves their Council Tax account with a credit balance then a refund will be automatically processed for DD customers, if the customer doesn't pay via DD then a refund form will be provided with the new bill and the customer will need to complete and return this.

*Customers do not need to contact ARP as the payment will be made automatically *

Discretionary Housing Payments

Table highlights our percentage expenditure as of 22nd June 2020

Local Authority	Percentage
Breckland	17.37%
West Suffolk	16.86%
East Cambridgeshire	17.27%
Fenland	12.81%
East Suffolk	14.90%

The ARP Benefits Liaison Officers undertake projects throughout the year to promote and raise awareness of DHP. One of these projects will be looking at the way in which we highlight DHP to new Universal Credit claimants, specifically those transitioning from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit.

Your ongoing help promoting DHP is greatly appreciated. If you have any ideas, feedback or insight that may help us target households that would benefit most from the help of DHP, please let us know.

If you or your team would like a DHP update, talking about DHP in depth with regard to the application and assessment process, the ARP Benefits Liaison Officers are happy to provide this remotely, via Microsoft Teams. If this is something you would like, please contact sarah.hyman@angliarevenues.gov.uk or kim.cummings@angliarevenues.gov.uk.

Council Tax update

Please be aware that Council Tax reminders have been sent to customers, these have been adapted to encourage customers to contact ARP and include advice for those who are struggling to pay their Council Tax. Taking into account the availability of Exceptional Hardship payments, the LCTR Scheme and Council Tax Hardship fund, we would ask customers to contact ARP as we may be able to offer a 12 month rather than 10 month payment period and will discuss any other options available to them at the time.

Customers requesting a payment break need to complete the form on the ARP website <https://www.angliarevenues.gov.uk/coronavirus/> please note these requests cannot be processed over the phone.

Local Authority news**Local Authority COVID-19 information**

For the latest Local Authority information, news and service updates regarding the COVID-19 outbreak, please visit the relevant Local Authorities dedicated COVID-19 webpages.

[Breckland Council](#)

[East Cambridgeshire Council](#)

[East Suffolk Council](#)

[Fenland Council District Council](#)

[West Suffolk Council](#)

Other news**An update regarding the UC47 process for requesting direct payment of Universal Credit Housing Costs Element or rent arrears deductions.**

There is a new online service for landlords to request direct payments of rent or rent arrears. It replaces the existing UC47 process.

The new [digital form](#) is known as 'Landlord application for direct rent and/or arrears payments'. This replaces the UC47 form titled 'Landlord request for a managed payment/rent arrears deduction'.

All private landlords and social landlords (with tenants who are not on the landlord portal) will now use this digital form to request:

- a Managed Payment to Landlord (MPTL) Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA)
- repayment of rent arrears from their Universal Credit (UC) tenant

Whilst there is a new form and process, the criteria for accepting an APA request has not changed.

Landlords should use this service to request payment of rent directly from a tenant's UC entitlement, if a tenant is having difficulty paying their rent.

Guidance on when to request a MPTL and/or rent arrears deduction from a tenant's UC entitlement can be found in the [Universal Credit and rented housing: guide for landlords](#).

Ban on evictions extended by 2 months to further protect renters.

The suspension of evictions from social or private rented accommodation in England and Wales has been extended by 2 months until 23 August.

New court rules will also ensure vulnerable renters will be protected when the suspension of evictions ends. [Find out more](#).

Useful tools and links

[ARP Coronavirus COVID-19 information](#)

[SCC Financial Inclusion and Advice Service Housing and Benefits Factsheet](#)

[Universal Credit landlord engagement newsletters](#)

[Understanding Universal Credit website](#)

[Universal Credit Guide Finder and helping someone claim](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidance for the charity sector](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): what to do if you're already getting benefits](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): what to do if you're self-employed and getting less work or no work](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): what to do if you were employed and have lost your job](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): what to do if you're employed and cannot work](#)

[Get help with benefits and pensions if you have accessibility needs](#)
