



We're here to help.

FAQs:
Welfare Benefits

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What is meant by the term 'welfare benefits'?

Welfare benefits include any claims made which are dealt with by:

- The Department for Work & Pensions, in relation to benefits for adults who are unemployed, incapacitated, disabled, retired or caring for someone
- Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs in relation to benefit for children e.g. Child Benefit, Child Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits
- Local Authority such as housing benefit and council tax benefit

I should get in touch with the welfare benefits team if:

- You have no income of your own and unsure what to do
- You have a problem with getting your benefit paid
- You have had your benefit terminated or suspended
- You have received a decision on your claim and you disagree with it
- You are sick and unable to work
- You believe you should be entitled to a disability benefit which is not paid
- You are unsure about what you may be entitled to
- You are on a low income and have housing costs to meet
- If you have already attended a tribunal hearing and received a decision which you wish to challenge

When should I contact you?

As soon as you believe you have a problem or a letter which gives you instructions/information with which you disagree.

What happens first?

You will be offered an appointment or asked to attend our drop in session to discuss the matter so that we can identify correctly what the problem is and give the appropriate advice. This will be a face-to-face interview where we will discuss your status, circumstances and family situation.

What happens next?

We will confirm our advice in writing and contact any relevant departments to help resolve the situation. If we are pursuing an appeal on your behalf we can help obtain medical evidence and prepare the appeal.

Will I have to go to a tribunal?

You may have to attend a tribunal if your case is for an appeal. If your appeal is to be heard, it is always advisable to attend if you have elected for an oral hearing. This is because you have a better chance of being successful if you are there to answer questions from the tribunal. Attendance at a hearing gives you a chance to put your side of the story across and clarify any misunderstandings that the tribunal may have.

If you do not wish to attend a tribunal hearing you can always elect a paper hearing.

What happens at the end of my case?

When your matter has been completed you will be informed that your file will be closed and sent for archiving. Any documents that we hold will be returned to you.

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How long will my case take?

This will depend on the nature of your issue/enquiry.

It may be possible to deal with the matter at one attendance if the query is straight forward. If it is a housing benefit issue it may take longer depending on the complexity of the enquiry.

Appeals can take up to 12 months at the moment to get resolved due to the number of cases waiting. However, it may be possible in some instances to get an expedited hearing.

How much will it cost me?

If you are on certain welfare benefits or on a low income you should be able to get help through the free legal help scheme.

During your first appointment with us we will determine whether you are eligible for this public funding, otherwise known as Legal Aid. If you are eligible you will receive free legal advice.

Who will look after my case?

The advisor who deals with the initial attendance will usually have control of your case until it is concluded. The advisor will only change if it is unavoidable or because of the level of expertise required varies.