

This fact sheet is about complaints regarding housing benefit and council tax benefit. It should be read together with our Complaints Procedure.

Carmarthenshire County Council is responsible for the administration of housing and council tax benefit for Carmarthenshire. To do this, the Council has to work within the relevant law, regulations and government guidance.

The Complaints Procedure can:

- look at complaints that the Council failed to advise you properly of a benefit decision or your right of appeal against a decision.
- check that the Council has taken action to recover an overpayment of benefit from you fairly and by following the rules.
- consider issues like unreasonable delay, failing to recognise your appeal, failing to keep proper records, failing to communicate properly or making payment mistakes.

The Complaints Procedure cannot:

- help you to make your claim.
- increase the amount of benefit you receive.
- reduce the amount of benefit that you owe.
- interfere in the Council's decision to take legal action against you for benefit fraud.
- normally look at a complaint where there is or was a right of appeal against a decision to the Independent Appeals Service.

You have a right of appeal in law against many housing and council tax benefit decisions. If you think that the Council is wrong to refuse you benefit, if the amount of your benefit payment is wrong or you are not responsible for an overpayment of benefit, you should write to the Council in the first instance. If the matter is still unresolved, you may have a right of appeal against the Council's decision to the Independent Appeals Service. You can contact them by telephone on 029 2066 2180. More information can be obtained at www.appeals.service.gov.uk

Further information can be obtained by visiting our website:

<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/English/council/counciltax/Pages/Home.aspx>

You can get free, independent advice about your welfare rights from your local Citizens Advice Bureau, details of which can be obtained at www.citizensadvice.org.uk

The Law Centres Federation also operates a Community Legal Advice helpline (which covers England and Wales) on 0845 345 4345 or via the internet at www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk.

Further information is available on our website:

<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/english/advice/benefits/pages/home.aspx>