DIRECTION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

I, Paul Martin, Interim Chief Executive of the London Borough of Newham, ('the Authority') make this Direction under paragraph 2 of:

Schedule 11 to the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006, as amended by the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Electronic Communications) (Miscellaneous Benefits) Order 2006,

Schedule 10 to the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006, as amended by the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Electronic Communications) (Miscellaneous Benefits) Order 2006, and

Part 4 of Schedule 7 to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012, implemented under Part 4 of Schedule 1 to the Authority's Council Tax Reduction Scheme

1. An individual who makes a claim for Housing Benefit under the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 or an application for Council Tax Reduction under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 is authorised to do so by means of an electronic communication, provided the individual uses the methods and form in paragraphs 2 and 5 below, approved by the Authority in relation to the claim.

2. The methods and form set out at the time of, and for the purposes of, the delivery of such a claim or application as referred to in paragraph 1 are –

(a) Electronic claims for Housing Benefit or electronic applications for a Council Tax Reduction must be made using the Authority's online application form on the Authority's website or, if available, by means of a face to face assisted interview involving an officer of the Authority or of an organisation authorised by the Authority to act as its intermediary or received via email for applications made using the Temporary Accommodation Housing Benefit agreement form.

(b) Amendments to an electronic claim for Housing Benefit or an electronic application for a Council Tax Reduction, made before the Authority makes a decision on the claim or application, must be made on the electronic application itself, by telephone or in writing.

(c) An individual making an electronic claim or application may be required by the Authority either to sign the document electronically or sign a paper copy of the document.

3. An electronic communication from the Department of Work and Pensions on behalf of a claimant for Universal Credit shall be treated as an application for a Council Tax Reduction under the Local Government Finance Act 1992

This paragraph applies if:

(a) the claimant for Universal Credit is liable to pay Council Tax in the London Borough of Newham; and

(b) the claimant meets the conditions in paragraphs 4 and 5 below.

4. Before it treats a claim for Universal Credit as being also a claim for Council Tax Reduction, the Authority may require the claimant for Universal Credit to confirm:

(a) they are applying for Council Tax Reduction; and

(b) the accuracy of the details used to calculate their entitlement to Council Tax Reduction.

Confirmation shall take any form considered appropriate by the Authority in the circumstances of the application.

5. The methods and form set out at the time of, and for the purposes of, the delivery of such a claim or application as referred to in paragraphs 1 and 3 are –

(a) Notice of a change of circumstances affecting the Authority's decision on an electronic claim or application must be made by telephoning the Authority's Benefits Service, by email or by writing to the designated office of the Authority. The telephone number, email address and designated office address are published on the Authority's website and on all correspondence sent to Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction customers.

(b) To enable the Authority to authenticate the identity of the individual sending it, any electronic communication must include*:*

(i) the individual's name and address,

(ii) the individual's Housing Benefit and Council Tax reference number, if notifying a change of circumstances, or

(iii) the individual's date of birth or national insurance number

(c) The Authority may use intermediaries in connection with –

(i) the delivery of any claim, certificate, notice, information or evidence by means of an electronic communication; and

(ii) the authentication or security of anything transmitted by such means, and may require other persons to use intermediaries in connection with those matters.

(d) Claims, certificates, notices, information or evidence submitted in connection with an electronic application may be verified by the Authority using third party systems as sources of information.

(e) If the Authority requires evidence to support an electronic claim or application, it may accept digital photographic or scanned images of notices, forms, evidence and information provided by a claimant. Where evidence and information cannot be accepted electronically, the claimant must provide information and evidence in accordance with the Authority's instructions.

In certain circumstances, the Authority will require original documents to support the claim.

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(f) An individual submitting an electronic claim or application must maintain records, electronic or written as appropriate, of any reference number given to them and any certificate or notice and information or evidence either submitted to or received from the Authority. Failure to produce records on request may be deemed by the Authority to show that an electronic communication was not made.

(g) Electronic communications will be treated as received on the date and time they are recorded on the Authority's official computer system.

Claims not recorded on the Authority's official computer system will be treated as not received. (The Authority's "official computer system" means the computer system maintained by or on behalf of the Authority for sending, receiving, processing or storing any claim, certificate, notice, information or evidence relating to a claim for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction by means of an electronic communication.)

(h) Universal Credit claims treated as applications for Council Tax Reduction will be treated as received on the date and time of submission of a valid claim for universal Credit provided the application is recorded on the Authority's computer system.

(i) Where the person uses any method other than the Authority's approved method of submitting any claim, application, certificate, notice, information or evidence, that claim, application, certificate, notice, information or evidence shall be treated as not having been submitted.

(j) This Direction may be withdrawn or amended at any time by the issue of a further direction.

This Direction takes effect from 27 October 2025

Signed by Paul Martin

Paul Martin, Interim Chief Executive, London Borough of Newham

Date: 7 November 2025