

## **Single Person Discount review FAQ**

From November 2020 the Council will be working with Northgate Public Services (UK) Ltd to carry out a review of the 18,000 single person discounts which are currently being awarded.

### **Why are the Single Person Discounts being reviewed?**

Wokingham Borough Council has a duty to its Council Tax payers to ensure that discounts are awarded correctly. We are working in partnership with Northgate Public Services (UK) Ltd who are undertaking an evidence based single person discount review, using a combination of Council data, third party data sources and specialist validation services. This is to:

- Reaffirm the discount for genuine claimants efficiently and accurately.
- Remove ineligible or erroneous claims and increase revenue for the council.
- To provide 'fairness for all' citizens so that those who are paying the correct level of Council Tax are not subsidising their fellow citizens who are erroneously claiming the discount.

### **How is the discount checked and what data is used to check my discount?**

Address details of all residents claiming the Single Person Discount are passed to TransUnion. TransUnion analyses this information using data matching techniques in order to establish whether there is evidence of any other adults living at the claimant's address. To do this, TransUnion matches the claimant's address information against a range of public and proprietary data sources which includes the electoral register and its own consumer information. No credit checks are performed against any individual as part of this process. TransUnion then provides Northgate Public Services (UK) Ltd with a list of properties with a high likelihood of being occupied by more than one adult and therefore not entitled to receive the discount on council tax

### **What is the process for the review?**

All accounts that currently have a single person discount are being checked and where there appears to be a discrepancy a review form will be sent.

All forms will be issued with a return envelope so that customers can return the forms directly to Northgate Public Services (UK) Ltd, however we are encouraging customers to respond to the review online.

Customers will be given 3 weeks to respond to the first letter and if no response is received, a reminder letter will be sent.

If there is still no response after a further 3 weeks, the discount will be removed. If it turns out a discount has been removed but the customer should still receive it, the discount will be put on to the account again once we have confirmation that they are the only adult in the property.

**I have received a letter from Northgate Public Services (UK) Ltd; is this genuine?**

Yes. All letters and phone calls in relation to this discount review exercise are being dealt with by our partners Northgate Public Services (UK) Ltd. Once the particular case has been dealt with, all forms and documentation associated with the council tax account will be scanned and returned to the council. All images will be destroyed by Northgate Public Services (UK) Ltd so no data is held by them longer than is necessary.

**Who are Northgate Public Services (UK) Ltd?**

Northgate Public Services (UK) Ltd are a well-known, reputable company who specialize in the provision of Revenues and Benefits software, and dealing with Revenues and Benefits processing work for many Local Authorities throughout Great Britain. They employ a large number of highly experienced staff to carry out this work and have successfully conducted single person discount reviews for a number of Local Authorities

Northgate Public Services (UK) Ltd have recently conducted reviews for more than a million single person discount claimants nationally.

**I need some help filling in my form or I am not sure whether I am still entitled to Single Person Discount**

You should contact Northgate Public Services (UK) Ltd on the following telephone number: 0118 447 2233.

Their phone lines are open between 9:00 am and 17:00 pm Monday to Friday.