

Case Study

Client is a lone parent with one child, she works 16 hours per week self employed as a cleaner. She is receiving in work benefits made up of tax credits & housing & council tax benefits. Her circumstances have not changed in the last 4 years.

A little while ago the tax credit office wrote to her stating they were cancelling her working tax credit due to the fact they were now not satisfied that a, she was not working the prescribed no. of hours (16pw) to get working tax credit and b, that they now didn't consider her business to be commercial.

Client had already asked for the tax credit office to reconsider the decision to which they had upheld the original decision, at this point she visited the advisor at the drop in session for advice as she was thinking of giving up the argument & could see no way out of it and was becoming increasingly anxious, stressed & depressed at the fact they now no longer believed her having done had the same circumstances for the last 4 years without problem & that her income had reduced significantly.

I contacted the TCO first off & asked them for the statement of reasons and how they had come to this decision & what facts it was based on. They couldn't really give any particular reasons it seemed as though it was based on the decision maker's opinion rather than any hard facts at all. They wouldn't seem to budge on the decision I put it to the advisor that surely it should be for the TCO to prove otherwise that her business was not commercial etc but the decision still stands and the advisor just said it would need to be an appeal from now.

I advised client to maybe get written statements from her clients to prove how long she cleans for them & how much they pay her and to make sure this adds upto 16 hours a week at least.

Client went away & did as I asked, she had the sheltered housing manager of a complex where she cleans several tenants apartments draft a letter backing her & also individual written statements from other clients with their contact details enclosed. She also sent this with her vehicle business insurance & her own business day books.