

Benefits Service – Discretionary Housing Payments

What is a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)?

A DHP is a payment we can give you if your Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit is less than the full amount of your rent or Council Tax.

Unfortunately, we cannot give a DHP to cover the cost of things included in your rent, like fuel, water or food charges.

Can I claim a DHP?

- If you get Housing Benefit you can claim a DHP to help pay your rent.
- If you get Council Tax Benefit you can claim a DHP to help pay your Council Tax. But we must be satisfied that you need more help with your housing costs.

How do I apply for a DHP?

- You can write to us giving us full details of why you feel you should get extra help e.g. details of any medical conditions and family circumstances you feel should be taken into account.
- If you prefer you can ask us for a DHP application form.
- You may be asked to provide details of all your income/ savings/ expenditure and you may be asked to provide evidence of this.

How do you decide if I can have a DHP?

We look at things like:

- your total income;
- whether you have any savings;
- whether anyone else in the house is able to help financially;
- whether you have any loans or debts still to pay;
- whether you could rearrange your finances to ease the situation;
- whether you or your family have any special circumstances, like ill health or disability.

We ask you to give us a lot of information, and if we need more we'll write to you for it.

We might also ask you to call in to see us if we need to discuss your claim in more detail.

How much can I get and for how long?

How much you get depends on your circumstances, and we look at each case individually. We can pay DHPs for different periods of time.

However, there is no guarantee that you will actually get a payment.

How will you pay the DHP if my application is successful?

If your application is successful, we will usually pay your DHP with any Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit that you get, although DHPs are not payments of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit.

What happens if I disagree with the amount or period of the DHP?

If you disagree with our decision, you should write to us within one month of the date of the letter telling you about the DHP.
We will look at your application again and write to you with our decision.

What if my circumstances change?

If your circumstances change, you must tell us, in writing, within one month.
We will then look at the DHP we awarded and see whether it needs to be changed.
We might be able to pay you more DHP.
But, if we think you should get less, you might have to pay back some or all of the DHP we have paid.

Where can I get help?

You can always phone us for help and advice.

Or, you could contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau or Welfare Rights Service.
Details are in your local phone book.