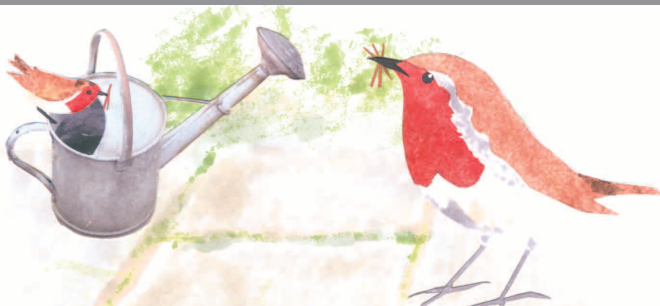


Discretionary housing benefit



10

Number 10 in a series of benefit information leaflets.

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Discretionary housing benefit

We can make a discretionary housing payment in special circumstances to give you extra help with your rent or Council Tax or both. We treat every claim individually. The overall amount of extra payment is restricted by government limits. ('Discretionary' means we have a choice whether to pay it or not.)

This leaflet is part of a series (illustrated opposite) produced by a group of local authorities to help make Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit easier to understand.

- 1 How to claim benefit
- 2 Backdating your benefit claim
- 3 Change of circumstances
- 4 Non-dependants
- 5 Help with child-care costs
- 6 Self-employed benefit claims
- 7 Student benefit claims
- 8 Overpayment of benefit
- 9 Extended benefit payment
- 10 Discretionary housing payment
- 11 Benefit on two homes
- 12 Temporary absence from your home
- 13 Home visits
- 14 Discussing your benefit claim with other people
- 15 How to appeal

Other formats

This leaflet is also available in large print, Braille, on audio cassette and in other languages. Please contact us if you need this leaflet in one of these formats.

This leaflet gives basic advice and is a general guide. If you have a question which is not answered in this leaflet, or if you want more advice, please contact us.

Participating authorities: Broxbourne, Dacorum, Hertsmere, Ipswich, Lincoln City, North Herts, St Albans, Stevenage, Three Rivers and Welwyn & Hatfield.



When can a discretionary housing payment be made?

- We can only consider making a discretionary housing payment if you are already entitled to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit; and
- the benefit you now receive does not cover all your rent and Council Tax; and
- your circumstances justify extra financial help.

You must use a discretionary housing payment for rent and Council Tax only. You must not use it to help with your utility bills such as water rates or fuel bills, or any other bills.

How to make a claim?

Fill in the attached form, completing all questions, and send it to the address on the back of this leaflet.

What happens next?

We will look at the details and decide whether we can award you the discretionary housing payment.

If we need more information before making a decision, we may:

- telephone you;
- write to you;
- visit you;
- ask you to provide a letter from your doctor – if you have given us details about your health or the health of anyone in your household.

If we make the award:

- we will write and tell you how much you will be paid and how long you will go on receiving it;
- the payment will be for a set time depending on the reason for the award;
- we may reduce or stop the award if your circumstances change or if we reach the government spending limit.

If we decide we cannot make the award:

- we will write to you and explain our decision.

If we decide not to make the award and you do not agree with our decision:

- there is no legal right of appeal;
- you can ask us to look at our decision again;
- if you want us to look at our decision again, you will need to write to us and explain why you think our decision is wrong;
- if we look at your claim again, it will be looked at by a different member of staff who has not dealt with your claim before;
- we will write to you again within 14 days and let you know our decision.

Completing the discretionary housing payment form

Please read these notes before completing the form.

Please answer the questions as fully as possible. The more information you give us, the better we will be able to understand your circumstances and your need for extra financial help.

If you need more space to write in, please use a separate piece of paper and enclose it with the form when you return it

When you have completed the form, please sign and date it and return it to:

Council address

Discretionary housing payment form

YOUR FULL NAME

YOUR PRESENT ADDRESS

YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER

Day

Evening

Please answer these questions as fully as possible

1 If you pay rent for your accommodation and are in arrears, has the landlord tried to evict you?

Yes No

If yes, please explain what the landlord has done and provide supporting evidence if possible.

2 Have you tried to negotiate a lower rent with your landlord?

Yes No

3 Is there any reason why your accommodation is particularly suited to the needs of you and your family? (For example, health problems.)

Yes No *If yes, please provide details.*

4

Has anyone offered to contribute towards your rent/Council Tax payments?

Yes No

If yes, please give details. For example do you have a guarantor that you or your landlord has asked for payment?

5

If you had to pay extra to make up the amount of rent and Council Tax not covered by your benefit, would this cause difficulty to you or members of your family?

Yes No *If yes, please explain.*

6

Do you or your partner have any savings or income you could use to pay all or some of this extra money?

Yes No *If yes, please give details.*

7

If you have anyone else living with you who is over 18, are they able to help you pay the rent and Council Tax?

Yes No *If yes, please give details.*

8

Could you spend less on other things?

Yes No *If yes, please give details.*

9

Please give details of any unusual spending that makes it harder for you to pay your rent and Council Tax. *(For example, costs associated with a medical condition, or children's special educational needs.)*

10

Please tell us about anything else that you feel may help with your claim. *(For example any hardship or special circumstance that you or members of your family may be suffering.)*

Please turn over to complete the rest the form...

Financial statement A

Please complete the list below about **the money you get and the money you spend**. If you have a partner, you should show your combined income and outgoings.

INCOME	Weekly	OUTGOINGS	Weekly
Net pay (after deductions)	£	Rent	£
Partner's net pay	£	Mortgage	£
Income Support	£	Income Support	£
Job Seekers Allowance	£	Council Tax	£
Retirement pension	£	Water rates	£
Company pension	£	Electricity	£
Bereavement Benefit	£	Housekeeping/food etc	£
Child/One Parent Benefit	£	Telephone	£
Maternity Benefit	£	Insurance	£
Working Families/ Disabled Persons Tax Credit	£	Petrol	£
Incapacity Benefit	£	Fares	£
Attendance Allowance	£	Hire purchase	£
Disability Living Allowance	£	Loans	£
Statutory Sick Pay	£	Clothing	£
Contributions from other household members	£	TV and video	£
Rent from tenants/ boarder payment	£	Maintenance	£
Maintenance	£	Child Support payments	£
Other income (please detail)		Court Orders	£
	£	Credit/Store cards	£
	£	Other (please detail)	
	£		£
	£		£
TOTAL		TOTAL	

Information

Council contact details

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