

DHP – Frequently asked questions

What is Discretionary Housing Payment

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) is a local discretionary award to help people who are struggling to pay their rent. It is a short-term award from a limited fund.

Who can apply for DHP

DHP can only be awarded if a person :-

- Is in receipt of Housing Benefit **or**
- Is in receipt of Universal Credit with the housing cost element

When are DHP awards considered :-

DHP awards are considered for the following:-

- The shortfall between a person's rental liability and the amount of Housing Benefit award **or** housing element of Universal Credit
- Housing Benefit **or** Universal Credit housing cost are reduced due to the Benefit Cap shortfall
- Household's who are under-occupying the property they are renting (often known as bedroom tax)
- A person under 35 whose Housing Benefit **or** UC housing element is restricted to a share room rate and rent a one bedroom property.

Other reason DHP could be considered under the DHP guidance but not often awarded due to funding/policy :-

- Rent in advance/deposit if a referral is received via Housing to prevent homelessness
- Rent arrears
- Income taper
- Non-dependant deductions

When DHP cannot be awarded

- For Council Tax
- To cover ineligible service charges included in the rent
- Increases to rent to cover rent arrears which are not eligible for HB
- Reduction in any benefits due to a recovery of an overpayment

If a person has no local connection, not lived in the borough for 6 months or more, DHP is likely to be turned down. This is a local policy.

How is DHP paid

DHP payment are included with a person's Housing Benefit payments and are paid to the person who gets those payments.

Universal Credit DHP payments are normally paid to the person making the application. If there are rent arrears and/or the housing element of UC is paid direct to Landlord (known as APA) then DHP payments are paid to Landlord. Each application is considered on a case-by-case based to safeguard the tenancy.

How much is awarded and length of the award

DHP award depends on each individual's, circumstances based on the information provided.

Awards are granted for a limited period, can be for 13, 26 weeks depending on the circumstances. This is to allow a person to look at all their options:-

- to look for work or increase hours of work
- to look at alternative accommodation, housing advice/options
- to look at other health benefits i.e. DLA/PIP or health element of UC etc
- to look at formalising maintenance
- to look at managing debts
- to look at budgeting

Completing a form and evidence

A person will need to complete an on-line application form and provide the evidence requested to support the application. The form can be completed on behalf of a person with their permission and details of the person completing the form can be provided at the end of the form.