

Discretionary Housing Payments



A guide to Discretionary Housing Payments

This leaflet explains about Discretionary Housing Payments. The rules are national and are the same whichever area you live in. If you don't know which Council covers the area you live in, you can find it on your Council Tax Bill.

What are Discretionary Housing Benefit Payments (DHPs)?

DHPs are additional payments for customers who need more help with their housing costs normally where there is a shortfall between their rent and their benefit award.

DHPs can also help with other costs such as:

- Rent deposits,
- Rent in advance,
- Removal costs if you need to move home.

The Council is given an amount of money to pay out each year as DHP's and cannot spend more than the limit set by the Government.

DHPs cannot be given for the following:

- Council Tax
- Service charges not covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing costs.
- Outstanding rent arrears
- When your Housing benefit payments are suspended
- Reduced entitlement due to an overpayment

How do I apply for a DHP?

You can only apply for a DHP if you have a current entitlement to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit with housing costs.

How do you decide if I can have a DHP?

The following things are looked at when making a decision:

- Your total income
- Whether you have any savings
- Whether anyone else in the house can help financially
- Whether you have any loans or debts still to pay
- Whether you could rearrange your finances to help the situation
- Whether you or your family have any special circumstances like ill health or disability
- Whether you have attempted to remedy the situation yourself.

You will be asked for a lot of information and evidence may be required such as bank

statements or proof of loans. You may also be asked to call in to discuss your claim in more detail.

Your application will be determined as soon as we have received all the necessary information. You will then receive a letter telling you the decision .If DHP has been awarded, you will be notified of the amount and the period of the award in the letter.

How much can I get and for how long?

There is no guarantee that you will actually get a payment and how much you get depends on your circumstances. Each case is looked at individually and is paid for different periods of time.

You may be able to reapply once the DHP award has expired.

Awards may have conditions attached in which case these may be taken into account if there is a reapplication.

Please note, for Housing Benefit shortfalls the amount awarded cannot be more than your total rent, less amounts for services such as electricity or water.

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

If your application is successful, a DHP to cover a shortfall is usually paid with any Housing Benefit that you get, although DHPs are not benefit payments.

What should I do if I disagree with the decision about my DHP application?

If you disagree with the decision either not to award a DHP, the amount awarded or the period of the award, you can ask for the decision to be looked at again.

Write to the Housing Benefit Section within one calendar month of the date of the decision letter, telling us why you do not agree with the decision and provide further information to support this request.

You cannot appeal to the Tribunal Service if you disagree with a decision not to pay you Discretionary Housing Payments.

What if my circumstances change?

If your circumstances change, you must tell the Housing Benefit Section, in writing, straight away. Your DHP will then be looked at again to see if there is a change to the award.

If the change means your DHP award is reduced, you might have to pay back some or all of the DHP already paid to you.

Where can I get more advice?

If you want more help or advice, please contact:

The Housing Benefit Section
3rd Floor
Ty Elwyn
Llanelli SA15 3AP

Tel no: 01554 742100

E-mail: Housing.benefits@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Or contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau