

Discretionary Housing Payment

Discretionary Housing Payment is a payment you may receive at the discretion of your local authority which can help towards housing costs. You can only get it if you are entitled to Housing Benefit or the Housing Costs element of Universal Credit.

It is available to people who are not receiving enough to cover their rent. There can be several reasons for this, for example:

- Your Local Housing Allowance is lower than your rent in private rented property
- Your Housing Benefit is reduced because of non-dependant deductions/housing costs contributions
- Your Housing Benefit is reduced because you are working age and it has been decided that you have a spare bedroom in social rented property
- Your Housing Benefit is reduced due to the Benefit Cap.

Discretionary Housing Payment is also available for one-off costs like a rent deposit, rent in advance or removal costs to help you move into a new home.

Discretionary Housing Payment cannot be used to cover an increase in rent due to arrears or to make up the difference if an overpayment is being recovered from your Housing Benefit.

A Discretionary Housing Payment is for people in need of extra financial assistance on top of their Housing Benefit.

You must be entitled to Housing Benefit or the Housing Costs element of Universal Credit to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment.

Your local authority will decide how to treat any income or other resources you have.

The Government has increased the funding given to Local Authorities for Discretionary Housing Payments to help people affected by the Benefit Cap and other Housing Benefit changes. Specifically the following groups of people:

- Those in temporary accommodation
- Individuals or families fleeing domestic violence
- Those with kinship care responsibilities
- Those who cannot move immediately for reasons of health, education or child protection

- Households moving to more appropriate accommodation
- Households having difficulty finding more appropriate accommodation
- Disabled people living in significantly adapted accommodation
- Approved or prospective adoptive parents or foster carers.

Once your local authority has spent its budget (provided by the Government) it cannot award any more payments for that financial year. They cannot help everyone so decisions about priority have to be made.

How do I claim a Discretionary Housing Payment?

A claim for a Discretionary Housing Payment is different to a claim for Housing Benefit.

You should ask your local authority how to make a claim. They may accept claims in writing, over the telephone or electronically.

You can find the contact details of your [local council \(link opens in a new window\) on the GOV.UK website](#)

What documents will I need to claim a Discretionary Housing Payment?

Each local authority will have its own claim form but the following documents will usually be required to support a claim.

- your most recent payslip if you are working
- your partner's most recent payslip (if you have a partner and they are working)
- bank account statements covering the last two months (and partner's)
- proof of any loan or credit-card or hire-purchase repayment agreements
- any letters you have received from the landlord about rent arrears
- proof of any expenses that are especially high
- if you are ill recent medical evidence

When will my Discretionary Housing Payment claim begin?

There are no rules on backdating. It is up to your local authority whether any award will be backdated and for how long.

Change of circumstances

You are required to notify your local authority of any changes of circumstances which may be relevant to you continuing to receive Discretionary Housing Payments. You will be told about the changes you should report.

How do I challenge a Discretionary Housing Payment decision?

You can ask your local authority to review its decision and you should receive the new decision and any reasons in writing

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