

Discretionary Housing Payments

What are Discretionary Housing Payments?

These are extra payments that can be paid to you by your local authority to help meet your rent or council tax payments - they are not housing or council tax benefit and have different rules attached to them. Payments are made from a cash limited budget and you do not have a right to a payment.

Who can claim a discretionary housing payment?

You may be able to get a payment if:

- You are entitled to housing or council tax benefit and
- You appear to require some financial assistance in addition to your housing or council tax benefit.

Payments cannot be made if your need for financial assistance is due to:

- Service charges not covered by housing benefit.
- Water/sewerage charges.
- Rent arrears or other unpaid charges.
- Council tax if you only qualify for housing benefit.
- Rent payments if you only qualify for council tax benefit.
- A decrease in your income due to any benefit penalties, suspensions or restrictions.

How do I make a claim?

You need to contact your local authority to make the claim. Someone can make the claim on your behalf if you are unable to make it yourself. You must provide reasons for your claim and any information the local authority requests to help them make a decision.

How will it affect other benefits?

The payments are not taxable and they are ignored as income and capital for income support, job seekers allowance, housing and council tax benefit, working tax credit and child tax credit.

What do I do if I am refused payments or unhappy with the amount given?

The local authority decides whether to pay you, how much to pay and for how long it will pay you. There is no right of appeal against a discretionary housing payment decision. However you can ask them to review the decision. If you are still unhappy you may be able to challenge the review decision by asking for a judicial review but you would need to seek legal advice for this.