



Discretionary Housing Payments

Do I qualify?



Discretionary Housing Payments

A guide to Discretionary Housing Payments

This leaflet explains Discretionary Housing Payments. The rules are the same whichever area you live in. If you don't know which Council covers the area you live in, you can find this information on your Council Tax bill.

What are Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)?

DHP's provide customers with further financial assistance, in addition to any Housing Benefit being in payment, when the Local Authority considers that help with housing costs is required.

- You must be currently entitled to Housing Benefit.
- A shortfall must exist between the rental liability and the Housing Benefit; we cannot exceed the total rent due.

It is a cash limited fund, we cannot guarantee an award.

What types of assistance can we give?

- Assistance with any rent shortfalls not being already met through the Housing Benefit scheme.
- Deposits or rent in advance - the claimant must be on Housing Benefit already to be considered for this.
The property they intend to move into must have been accepted as affordable to the claimant by the Local Authority.
- Other lump sum housing costs such as removal costs.

What DHP's cannot cover?

- Service charges not covered by Housing Benefit.
- Increases in rent due to outstanding rent arrears.
- Shortfalls caused by Housing Benefit overpayment recovery.
- When Housing Benefit payments are suspended.
- Certain sanctions or reductions in entitlement.
- Council Tax Support shortfalls.

Discretionary Housing Payments

Applying and proofs required

You should complete the DHP questionnaire and return with the following evidence:

- Your latest 2 monthly bank statements showing expenditure.
- If outgoings are not shown on the bank statements, you must supply a recent bill or invoice.
- Doctors' letters etc. to Support your extra room requirement If necessary.

We cannot process the application without this supporting information.

How do you decide if I can have a DHP?

We look at the following things when we make a decision.

- Your income
- Your savings
- If anyone else in your house can help you
- If you have any loans or debts
- If you could manage your money better
- If you or anyone in your family is ill or disabled
- If you have tried to put the situation right yourself

We will ask you for a lot of information and may ask you to come and see us to discuss your claim in more detail.

You may be required to attend a money advisory service meeting.

How much can I get?

How much we give you depends on your circumstances. We look at each case individually. However, we cannot guarantee we will definitely give you a payment.

Making a decision.

We take into consideration all the income and savings you have and compare this against your outgoings. We will try to make a decision within 6 weeks from receipt of the questionnaire and we will notify you in writing of the outcome. Any award will usually be paid with your normal Housing Benefit payments.

What should I do if I disagree with your decision?

If you disagree with our decision not to give you a DHP, the amount we have decided to give you or how long we will give you a DHP for, you can ask us to look at the decision again.

You should write to us within one calendar month of the date on the decision letter, telling us why you do not agree with our decision.

You cannot appeal to the Tribunals Service if you disagree with our decision not to pay you a Discretionary Housing Payment.

What if my circumstances change?

Decide whether you would like to ask for a Discretionary Housing Payment.

Fill in all information boxes on pages 6 to 11.

Give as much information as possible. If you have any proof to support your reasons for applying, for example, medical certificates or doctors letters, then send this in with the DHP form.

Awards are limited so you may be asked for a lot of information or even an interview.

There is no guarantee of an award.

Return your completed form to us in the envelope provided.

If you need any further help, phone us on 03450 450061 or email us at benefits@scambs.gov.uk

Independent advice

If you have are finding it hard to meet all of your financial commitments, you should seek independent advice as soon as possible. You can contact the following for advice.

Age Concern helpline on 0800 00 99 66.

Citizens Advice Bureau 0844 848 7979 - www.cambridgecab.org.uk

Money Advice - www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

National Debtline 0808 808 4000 - www.nationaldebtline.org

Stepchange Debt Charity 0800 138111 - www.stepchange.org

If you are at risk of becoming homeless or you are worried about your housing situation, it is important to act as soon as possible.

Call 03450 450 051 to book an appointment.

Our Housing Advisers will be able to advise you on your housing options and legal rights if you have any. They will try to prevent you from becoming homeless wherever possible.

However, for some people it may be necessary to take a homeless application.

Discretionary Housing Payments Application

A - Name and address

Your Name:

Your Address:

Do you have a daytime contact number?

Could you afford the rent when you first moved in?

What was your previous address?

Why did you leave your previous address?

B - Housing benefit and/or council tax benefit

Please tell us how long you need this help for

4 weeks

8 weeks

13 weeks

26 weeks

When do you need the help from?

C - Are you in arrears?

Do you have rent arrears? Yes No If yes, how much? £

What period do they cover?

From to

What period do they cover?

From to

What action has your landlord taken to recover your rent? (Please send us proof of any action taken)

Court action

notice of seeking possession

notice to quit

a letter

a payment plan

Other, please specify:

D - Why is the accommodation suitable for you?

Please tell us how your accommodation is suitable for you (and your family)

e.g. has it been adapted if you have a disability, do you need a lift or ground floor accommodation?

Please confirm the number of people living in the household

Have you or a member of your family any health problems or disabilities?

If yes, please give details in the space below. Please enclose any supporting evidence when you return this form (e.g. doctor's letters, hospital or clinic appointments, medical certificates)

Is anyone in the household pregnant? If yes, please confirm the expected delivery date and name of the person

Have you recently suffered Domestic violence, Harassment or Anti-Social Behavior?

Yes No

If yes, please give details, dates etc in the space below.

E - Have you looked for alternative accommodation?

Have you tried to find alternative accommodation? (please refer to guidance notes)

Have you registered with the Council through Homelink? Yes No

if Yes, what is your band? _____ (A-D)

Have you sought any advice from our Housing and Homelessness section?

Yes No

Discretionary Housing Payments Application

F - Is the area particularly suitable for you?

Please tell us how the area is suitable for you and or your family.

Do you or any member of your family need to live near a particular nursery, other childcare, school, hospital or other service?

G - Can anyone else help?

Is there anyone else in your family or household who can help you meet your rent or council tax?

H - Future or recent changes

Please tell us about any recent or future changes affecting you (or a member of your family) that we should take into account? (e.g. moving, starting/stopping work, a change in your household, bereavement, relationship breakdown) Please give details below.

I - How much you can pay

I think I can afford to pay

£

towards my weekly rent

J - Financial statement form

Income	You		Your partner	
Earned Income	£	per	£	per
Income Support / Incapacity Benefit	£	per	£	per
Jobseekers Allowance	£	per	£	per
Employment and Support Allowance	£	per	£	per
Child Benefit	£	per	£	per
Child/Working Tax Credits	£	per	£	per
Child maintenance	£	per	£	per
Retirement/Private Pensions	£	per	£	per
Any other income (please specify)	£	per	£	per

Your current amount of savings

	You		Your partner	
Bank accounts	£		£	
Building Society or Post Office accounts	£		£	
ISA's or shares	£		£	
Endowment, savings or illness policies	£		£	
Other savings	£		£	

Outgoings	You		Your partner	
Rent/Mortgage	£	per	£	per
Council Tax	£	per	£	per
Electricity	£	per	£	per
Gas	£	per	£	per
Water	£	per	£	per
Food/Household Items	£	per	£	per
Alcohol/Tobacco	£	per	£	per

Discretionary Housing Payments Application

J - Financial statement form .. cont

Outgoings Cont..	You		Your partner	
TV licence	£	per	£	per
Satellite/Cable TV package	£	per	£	per
Broadband/ Internet	£	per	£	per
Telephone(landline)	£	per	£	per
Telephone (mobile)	£	per	£	per
Petrol/Travel expenses (including mobility car)	£	per	£	per
Car Insurance	£	per	£	per
Buildings/ Contents insurance	£	per	£	per
Pet Insurance	£	per	£	per
Health Insurance	£	per	£	per
Prescription fees	£	per	£	per
Clothing/Haircuts	£	per	£	per
Other outgoings (please specify)	£	per	£	per

Creditors	Who do you owe the money to?	How much do you owe? (Total)	How much and how often? For example, weekly, monthly
Loans or overdrafts		£	£
		£	£
Hire purchase/ Credit Agreements		£	£
		£	£
Store/Credit cards		£	£
		£	£
Bank charges		£	£
		£	£
Any other debts (please say what they are)		£	£
		£	£
		£	£
		£	£

Any additional information

If you would like to tell us about anything else that has not been covered in the form, but you feel is relevant to your application, please give the details below.

Read this declaration carefully before you sign and date it.

I understand the following:

- If I give information that is incorrect or incomplete, you may take action against me. This includes court action.
- You will use the information I have provided to process my claim for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, or both. You may check some of the information with other sources within the council, rent offices, and other councils.
- You may use information I have provided in connection with this and any other claim for Social Security benefits that I have made or make. You may give some information to other government organisations, if law allows this.

I know I must let the council know about any changes in my circumstances, which might affect my claim.

I declare the information I have given on this form is correct and complete.

Signature of person claiming

Date

Partner's Signature

Date

Form filled in by someone other than the person claiming?

What is the reason you are filling in this form for someone else?

Name of person who filled in the form

Signature of person

Date

Relationship to the person claiming

Contacting the Council

South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA

www.scambs.gov.uk

email: benefits@scambs.gov.uk

Cambourne Office

Housing or Council Tax Benefit enquiries

You can telephone the offices

03450 450061

Our offices are open

Monday- Friday

8.00am - 5.30pm

If you know someone who is claiming benefit fraudulently
you can report this in confidence on the

National Benefit Fraud Hotline - 0800 854 440