

Benefit Guide 2008-09

IT PAYS TO CLAIM

DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS

Housing Benefit & Council Tax Benefit

Please return your completed form to:

Maidstone Borough Council
13 Tonbridge Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME16 9UG



WHAT ARE DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS (DHP'S)?

DHPs are additional payments towards rent, Council Tax or both, paid to benefit customers who need more help with their housing costs over and above their benefit award. The Council is given an amount of money to pay out each year as DHPs and cannot spend more than the normal limit set by the Government.

DHP'S CANNOT BE GIVEN FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Service charges not covered by Housing Benefit
- When your Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit payments are suspended
- Towards rent if you are only entitled to Council Tax Benefit
- Towards your Council Tax if you only get Housing Benefit
- Where Second Adult Rebate is the only benefit in payment.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A DHP?

You can only apply for a DHP if you have a current entitlement to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit.

Complete the declaration and provide evidence as requested throughout the form.

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.
- The level of shortfall in your rent and the reasonableness of the rent you pay.

You will be asked for a lot of information and you may be visited in your home to discuss your claim in more detail. You will receive a letter telling you the decision and the reasons for that 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?

How much you get depends on your circumstances. Each case is looked at individually and is paid for different periods of time. **They are meant to help on a short-term basis only, and there is no guarantee that you will actually get a payment.**

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

HOW WILL YOU PAY THE DHP IF MY APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL?

If your application is successful, your DHP is usually paid with any Housing Benefit or Council Tax 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 us within one calendar month of the date of the decision letter, telling us why you do not agree with the decision.

You cannot appeal to the Tribunals 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 us straight away. Your DHP will be looked at again to see if there is a change to

NAME:

CLAIM NO:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

Please complete the form below with all your income and expenditure details:

YOU WILL NEED TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE/PROOF OF YOUR EXPENSES (E.G. BILLS)

INCOME AND OUTGOINGS					
INCOME			OUTGOINGS		
TYPE	WK/MNTH	AMOUNT	TYPE	WK/MNTH	AMOUNT
Child Benefit			Rent difference		
Disability Living Allowance (Care)			Rent arrears		
Disability Living Allowance (Mobility)			Council Tax (including arrears/Bailiff)		
Income from others in household			Water/Sewage		
Income Support			Electricity / Gas		
Job Seekers Allowance (Contribution Based)			Telephone / Mobile Phone		
Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)			Food/toiletries		
Maintenance			Car/Travel expenses		
Working Tax Credit			TV Licence		
Child Tax Credit			Cable/Satellite		
Pensions (State/Private)			Catalogues		
Pension Credit			Loans/HP agreements		
Wages			Fines		
Carers Allowance			Credit cards		
Incapacity Benefit			Clothing		
Other			Pet costs		
	TOTAL		TOTAL		

Details of any other income/expenses:

