

# Discretionary housing payments (DHP)

**This factsheet advises on when you can get an extra payment from the council to help pay your rent called a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)**

You can apply for a discretionary housing payment (DHP) if your universal credit or housing benefit won't cover your full rent.

## What is a DHP?

A discretionary housing payment is an extra payment made by your local council if you get universal credit or housing benefit and need more help with your housing costs.

It doesn't need to be repaid.

You can apply for a DHP if there is a shortfall between your rent and the amount your benefits cover.

You may be more likely to get a DHP where your benefit has been reduced by either:

- the bedroom tax
- the benefit cap

You can also apply for a DHP to help with a tenancy deposit or rent in advance if you get universal credit or housing benefit in your current home.

## When you can't get a DHP

You can't get a DHP to cover heating or water charges included in your rent that universal credit or housing benefit won't cover.

You also can't get one to cover a rent shortfall if your benefits have been reduced because of an overpayment.

## Will you get a DHP?

It's up to the council whether to give you a DHP.

Each council has its own policy on making these payments.

Your council only has a certain amount of money to make payments every year. Once this is used up you can't get a payment.

## How to apply

You apply to your local council. You may be able to apply online or fill out a paper form.

Provide as much information as possible about your income and why you need help.

Tell the council about any special circumstances, such as if you have any additional living costs because you have a disability.

Tell the council if you are at risk of homelessness because you can't afford the rent.

## How are DHPs paid?

If you get a discretionary housing payment, it may be paid as a lump sum, or in regular instalments. Payments can be backdated.

You'll usually have to reapply after a certain time. The council should tell you when.

## If the council refuse you a DHP

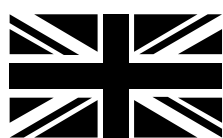
The council should give reasons if it refuses you a DHP.

You can ask them to reconsider their decision if you think it's unfair or if they got the facts wrong.

## Further advice

You can get further advice from [england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice), a local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice.

If you have nowhere to sleep tonight, are at risk of harm or losing your home within the next 2 months, call Shelter Helpline on 0808 800 4444 for advice and information on your options. Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.



Funded by  
UK Government

Shelter

Registered charity in England and Wales (263710)  
and in Scotland (SC002327).

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