

Housing and Council Tax Benefits

Discretionary Housing Payments Do I qualify?



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This leaflet explains what to do if you cannot afford to pay your Council Tax or rent. It gives advice on how to claim for Discretionary Housing Payments.

What are Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)?

DHPs are additional payments towards rent, Council Tax or both, paid to benefit customers who need more help with their housing costs above their benefit award.

The Council is given an amount of money to pay out each year and cannot spend more than the limit set by the Government.

DHP **cannot** be given for the following.

- Service charges not covered by Housing Benefit
- Outstanding rent arrears
- Deductions from Housing Benefit because your Job Seeker's Allowance is being sanctioned
- When your Housing Benefit 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 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 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.

You will be asked for a lot of information and you may be asked to come into the office to discuss your claim in more detail.

You will receive a letter telling you the decision and the reasons for that decision.

If a 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. However, there is no guarantee that you will actually get a payment.

The amount awarded cannot be more than your Council Tax liability or gross rent, less amounts for services such as electricity or water.

How will you pay the DHP if my application is successful?

If your application is successful, your DHP is usually paid with any Housing 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.

You should 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 our decision not to pay you Discretionary Housing Payments.

What if my circumstances change?

If your circumstances change, you must tell us, in writing, straight away.

Your DHP will be looked at again to see if there is a change to the award.

If the change means your DHP award is reduced, you may have to pay back some or all of the DHP already paid to you.

What next?

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

Fill in all information boxes on pages 4 to 15.

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 01702 318197 or 01702 318198, or e-mail us at revenues&benefits@rochford.gov.uk

Application for Discretionary Housing Payments

Tell us your details

Full name		
Address		
Postcode		
Phone number	Home	Mobile
E-mail address		
Reference number		
When did you move to this address?		
Could you afford the rent when you first moved in?		
What was your previous address?		
Why did you leave your previous address?		
If you rent your property, how much notice do you have to give to end your tenancy?		

What would you like help with?

Would you like help with your

Rent

Council Tax

Both

Please tell us how long you need this help for

4 weeks

8 weeks

12 weeks

26 weeks

Other

If longer than 26 weeks, please tell us how long and why this would help.

When do you need help from?

Please tell us about any arrears you have

Do you have Council Tax arrears?

Yes

No

If yes, please tell us

How much are your Council Tax arrears?

£

What period does it cover?

to

Do you have rent arrears?

Yes

No

If yes, please tell us

How much are your rent arrears?

£

What period does it cover?

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

If other, please specify.

Please tell us why you need to live in this property

Please tell us how your property is suitable for you and your family. For example, has it been adapted if you have a disability, do you need a lift or ground floor accommodation?

Please tell us how the area is suitable for you and your family. Do you or any member of your family need to live near a particular nursery, childcare, school, hospital or other service?

Please tell us why you need to live in this property (continued)

Have you tried to find cheaper or alternative accommodation? If not, why?

Have you asked your landlord to reduce your rent? If not, why?

Please tell us why you need to live in this property (continued)

Have you or a member of your family had any health problems or disabilities? If yes, please give details. Make sure you provide any proof you may have to support this. For example, doctors letters, medical certificates or hospital letters.

Do you or a member of your family have mobility problems, which mean you need easy access to public transport or shops?

Please tell us why you need to live in this property (continued)

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

Please tell us about any recent or future changes affecting you or a member of your family that we should take into account. For example, moving, starting or stopping work, change in your household, bereavement or relationship breakdown.

Your finances

Your income

Income	You	Your partner	How often is it paid?
Net earnings from employment	£	£	
Overtime, tips or bonuses	£	£	
Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance or Pension Credit	£	£	
Working Tax Credit	£	£	
Child Tax Credit	£	£	
Maintenance	£	£	
Child Benefit	£	£	
State Retirement Pension	£	£	
Private Pension	£	£	
Works Pension	£	£	
Incapacity Benefit	£	£	
Carers Allowance	£	£	
Disability Living Allowance (Care Component)	£	£	
Disability Living Allowance (Mobility Component)	£	£	
Money received from family or friends	£	£	

Your finances (continued)

Your outgoings

Outgoings	You	Your partner	How often do you pay this?
Rent	£	£	
Mortgage	£	£	
Council Tax	£	£	
Electricity	£	£	
Gas	£	£	
Water rates	£	£	
TV licence, satellite or cable rental	£	£	
Telephone – Home	£	£	
– Mobile	£	£	
Food and housekeeping	£	£	
Insurance policies	£	£	
Clothing	£	£	
Car – Tax	£	£	
– Insurance	£	£	
Transport costs (buses and trains)	£	£	
Maintenance payments	£	£	
Clubs or catalogues	£	£	
School fees	£	£	
Childcare	£	£	
Fines	£	£	

Your finances (continued)

Your debts

Creditors	Who do you owe the money to?	How much do you owe?	How much and how often? For example, weekly, monthly
Loans or overdrafts		£	£
		£	£
Hire purchase		£	£
		£	£
Credit agreements		£	£
		£	£
Utilities, for example Gas, Electric, Water, Telephone		£	£
		£	£
		£	£
Any other debts (please say what they are)		£	£
		£	£
		£	£
		£	£

Independent advice

If you need free and independent advice, you can contact one of the following agents:

Citizens Advice Bureau

Rayleigh

Rayleigh Civic Suite, Hockley Road, Rayleigh
Open Monday 10am–2pm and 7.30am–9pm
Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 10am–2pm
Phone: 01268 770782

Rochford

Back Lane, Rochford
Open Tuesday–Friday 10am–3pm
Phone: 01702 545552

Southend

1 Church Road, Southend
Open Monday–Friday 10am–4pm
Phone: 01702 610610

Tribunals Services

www.appeals-service.gov.uk

How to contact us

Phone us on 01702 318197 or 01702 318198 between 8am and 8pm, Monday to Friday, and between 9am and 12 noon on Saturday.

You can come to our offices between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Thursday and between 8.30am and 4.30pm on Friday. We are closed at the weekend. Our address is below.

You can also e-mail us at revenues&benefits@rochford.gov.uk

If you would like this information in large print, Braille or any of the following languages, please phone 01702 546 366.



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Rochford Essex SS4 1BW
Telephone: 01702 546366
Facsimile: 01702 545737
Website: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk>