

What if my circumstances change?

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

We will look at your DHP again to see if we need to change it. If the change means we have to reduce your DHP you might have to pay back some or all of the DHP we have already paid you.

Where can I get more advice?

Contact our Customer Services section if you want more help and advice on 01903 221062.

Or, you can contact your local Citizens Advice office or Welfare Rights Service. Their details are in your local phone book.



For those in receipt of Housing Benefit And Council Tax Benefit

A guide to Discretionary Housing Payments

Worthing Borough Council, Town Hall
Chapel Road Worthing West Sussex BN11 1HA
Website: www.worthing.gov.uk

Worthing
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This leaflet explains Discretionary Housing Payments. (DHPs) The rules are the same whichever area you live in. However DHPs are not subject to the rules governing benefit payments.

What are Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)?

DHPs are additional regular payments to help pay rent, council tax or both. We give DHPs to people in receipt of housing benefit and/or council tax benefit where it is considered help is needed with their housing costs because they are experiencing severe financial difficulties.

The Government gives the Council a limited amount of money to pay out each year as DHPs and we cannot spend more than is given.

We cannot give DHPs for the following:

- Service charges not covered by housing benefit
- Solely to clear rent arrears
- To cover deductions made from your housing benefit award in respect of an overpayment of housing benefit
- When your housing or council tax benefits are suspended
- Rent, if you are only entitled to council tax benefit
- Council tax, if you only are entitled to housing benefit
- If the only benefit you get is Second Adult Rebate

How do I apply for a DHP?

You can only apply for a DHP if you are currently entitled to housing or council tax benefit. Contact our Customer Services Section on 01903 221062 for an application form or request one at our Public Enquiry Counter at the Town Hall. Alternatively you can download a form set from our website: www.worthing.gov.uk

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 household can help you

If you have any loans or debts

If you could manage your money better

If you or any family member 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 in and see us to discuss your claim in more detail.

We will send you a letter telling you of our decision. If your application is declined the reasons for that decision will be detailed in the letter. If we award you a DHP we will tell you in the letter, the amount and how long we will pay it for.

How much can I get and for how long?

This will depend on your circumstances. We look at each case individually.

For housing benefit, we cannot give you more than your total rent (less amounts for services such as water). For council tax benefit, we cannot give you more than the amount of your council tax. Because of the limited funds available we cannot support people indefinitely.

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

We will usually pay it with any housing benefit payment that you or your landlord receives. Those applicants applying for assistance to pay their council tax and who already receive council tax benefit will have their award credited to their council tax account.

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 the DHP award is for, you can ask us to look at the decision again. This should be done in writing within one calendar month of the date of the decision letter, telling us why you do not agree with our decision. You cannot appeal to the Tribunals Service in respect of DHP decisions. You can appeal to a panel of Councillors.