

# discretionary housing payments

epilepsy  
society

benefits guide

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Discretionary housing payments (DHPs) can provide extra money when your council decides that you need extra help to meet your housing costs. You can only get DHPs if you are entitled to housing benefit, or the housing costs element of universal credit.

## what are discretionary housing payments and how do I apply?

DHPs are payments of extra money given to some people claiming housing benefit, or for those claiming the housing costs element of universal credit, to help with their housing costs. For example, someone can apply for a DHP from their local council if the amount of housing benefit they get does not cover their rent. DHPs can also cover a rent deposit, rent in advance and removal expenses if you need to move. A DHP cannot be used to help with other costs such as fuel bills, food, council tax, service charges not covered by housing benefit, or increases in rent because you owe rent payments from previous weeks or months (called 'rent arrears'). Although DHPs don't help with council tax, some councils run similar funds alongside their local Council Tax Support schemes.

You don't need to repay these payments. You need to apply specifically for the extra payments from your local council, as they will not be given to you automatically. DHPs are paid in addition to any benefits you may receive.

The council may ask for detailed information about your situation and what money you receive and spend. They may also ask about anything specific that has affected your financial situation. For example, if you have epilepsy or another condition that has affected your ability to work or pay your rent recently. They may ask about any needs you have that are related to a medical condition or disability, and the needs of others who live with you. It is important to give as much information as possible to help the council understand your situation.

 **Contact your local council to ask how to claim discretionary housing payments.**

## what happens next and how are discretionary housing payments paid ?

If you apply for DHPs, your local council will look at your individual situation and contact you to say whether you will get a DHP, how much, and for how long the payments will last. Often these are temporary, but some people may qualify for longer term support. The payment could be made to you or direct to your landlord. There is no limit to length of time over which DHPs can be made. It could be a one-off or an indefinite award.

## further information

[epilepsysociety.org.uk/benefits](https://epilepsysociety.org.uk/benefits)

Information about epilepsy and applying for benefits. This includes information about Universal Credit.

[gov.uk/universal-credit](https://gov.uk/universal-credit)

Government guide to claiming universal credit.

[gov.uk/housing-benefit](https://gov.uk/housing-benefit)

Government guide to housing benefit and contacting your local council.

[citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk)

Information on benefits and support for claiming. For help with applying for Universal credit call 0800 144 8444.

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helpline

01494 601 400

Monday and Tuesday 9am to 4pm

Wednesday 9am to 7.30pm

Confidential (national call rate)

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