

Discretionary housing payment



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Number 10 in a series of benefit information leaflets.



St Albans
CITY AND DISTRICT

Discretionary housing payment

We can make a discretionary housing payment in special circumstances to give you extra help with your rent or Council Tax or both. We treat every claim individually. The overall amount of extra payment is restricted by government limits. ('Discretionary' means we have a choice whether to pay it or not.)

This leaflet is part of a series (illustrated opposite) produced by a group of local authorities to help make Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit easier to understand.

- 1 How to claim benefit
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- 14 Discussing your benefit claim with other people
- 15 How to appeal

Other formats

This leaflet is also available in large print, Braille, on audio cassette and in other languages. Please contact us if you need this leaflet in one of these formats.

This leaflet gives basic advice and is a general guide. If you have a question that is not answered in this leaflet, or if you want more advice, please contact us.

Participating authorities: Broxbourne, Dacorum, Hertsmeare, Ipswich, Lincoln City, North Herts, St Albans, Stevenage, Three Rivers and Welwyn Hatfield.



When can a discretionary housing payment be made?

We can only consider making a discretionary housing payment if you are already entitled to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit; and

- the benefit you now receive, after taking off any amounts that we cannot help you with, does not cover your rent and Council Tax in full; and
- your circumstances justify extra financial help.

How to make a claim?

Fill in the attached form, completing all questions, and send it to the address on the back of this leaflet.

What happens next?

We will look at the details and decide whether we can award you the discretionary housing payment.

If we need more information before making a decision, we may:

- telephone you;
- write to you;
- visit you;
- ask you to provide a letter from your doctor – if you have given us details about your health or the health of anyone in your household.

If we make the award:

- we will write and tell you how much you will be paid and how long you will go on receiving it;
- the payment will be for a set time depending on the reason for the award;
- we may reduce or stop the award if your circumstances change or if we reach the government spending limit.

If we decide we cannot make the award:

- we will write to you and explain our decision.

If we decide not to make the award and you do not agree with our decision:

- you can ask us to look at our decision again;
- if you want us to look at our decision again, you will need to write to us and explain why you think our decision is wrong;
- if we look at your claim again, it will be by a different member of staff who has not dealt with your claim before;
- we will write to you again within 14 days and let you know our decision.

Completing the discretionary housing payment form

Please read these notes before completing the form.

Please answer the questions as fully as possible. The more information you give us, the better we will be able to understand your circumstances and your need for extra financial help.

If you need more space to write in, please use a separate piece of paper and enclose it with the form when you return it

When you have completed the form, please sign and date it and return it to:

St Albans District Council
District Council Offices
Civic Centre
St Albans
Herts
AL1 3JE

Discretionary housing payment form

YOUR FULL NAME

YOUR PRESENT ADDRESS

YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER

Day

Evening

Please answer these questions as fully as possible

1 If you pay rent for your accommodation and are in arrears, has the landlord tried to evict you?

Yes No

If yes, please explain what the landlord has done and provide supporting evidence if possible.

2 Have you tried to negotiate a lower rent with your landlord?

Yes No

3 Is there any reason why your accommodation is particularly suited to the needs of you and your family? (For example, health problems.)

Yes No *If yes, please provide details.*

4

Has anyone offered to contribute towards your rent/Council Tax payments?

Yes No

If yes, please give details. For example do you have a guarantor that you or your landlord has asked for payment?

5

If you had to pay extra to make up the amount of rent and Council Tax not covered by your benefit, would this cause difficulty to you or members of your family?

Yes No *If yes, please explain.*

6

Do you or your partner have any savings or income you could use to pay all or some of this extra money?

Yes No *If yes, please give details.*

7

If you have anyone else living with you who is over 18, are they able to help you pay the rent and Council Tax?

Yes No *If yes, please give details.*

8

Could you spend less on other things?

Yes No *If yes, please give details.*

9

Please give details of any unusual spending that makes it harder for you to pay your rent and Council Tax. *(For example, costs associated with a medical condition, or children's special educational needs.)*

10

Please tell us about anything else that you feel may help with your claim. *(For example any hardship or special circumstance that you or members of your family may be suffering.)*

Please turn over to complete the rest the form...

Financial statement A

Please complete the list below about **the money you get and the money you spend**. If you have a partner, you should show your combined income and outgoings.

INCOME	Weekly	OUTGOINGS	Weekly
Net pay (after deductions) £		Rent	£
Partner's net pay £		Mortgage	£
Income Support £		Council Tax	£
Jobseeker's Allowance £		Water rates	£
Retirement pension £		Electricity	£
Company pension £		Gas	£
Bereavement Benefit £		Housekeeping/food etc £	
Child/One Parent Benefit £		Telephone	£
Maternity Benefit £		Insurance	£
Working Families/Disabled Person's Tax Credit £		Petrol	£
Incapacity Benefit £		Fares	£
Attendance Allowance £		Hire purchase	£
Disability Living Allowance £		Loans	£
Statutory Sick Pay £		Clothing	£
Contributions from other household members £		TV and video	£
Rent from tenants/boarder payment £		Maintenance	£
Maintenance £		Child Support payments £	
Other income (please detail)		Court Orders	£
	£	Credit/Store cards	£
	£	Other (please detail)	
	£		£
	£		£
TOTAL		TOTAL	

Financial statement B

Please complete the list of any **savings and investments and your current debts** below. If you have a partner, you should show your combined savings, investments and debts.

SAVINGS & INVESTMENTS	DEBTS
Current balances held in:	Current balances owed to:
Bank Account(s) £	Bank Account(s) £
Post Office Account(s) £	Credit Card Companies £
Building Society Account(s) £	Other debts (<i>please detail</i>)
National Savings Certificates £	£
Other savings & investments <i>For example: Premium Bonds or Shares</i>	£
£	£
£	£

Please tell us anything else about your finances that you think may be relevant to your claim.

I declare the information is correct as far as I know.

SIGNATURE

DATE

Where to get help and advice

To get more information you can visit us at:

St Albans District Council
District Council Offices, Civic Centre
St Albans, Herts AL1 3JE

Offices are open: Mon to Thu 8.45am – 5pm
Fri 8.45am – 4.30pm

Telephone: 01727 866100

Text telephone: 01727 819570

Email: benefits@stalbands.gov.uk

Fax: 01727 819467

Website: www.stalbands.gov.uk

Other organisations that provide help and advice

Citizens Advice Bureau

64 London Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 1NG

Telephone: 01727 855269

Citizens Advice Bureau

First Floor, Harpenden Town Hall

Leyton Road, Harpenden, Herts AL5 2LX

Telephone: 01582 769387

Shelter Hertfordshire

Queensway House

Queensway, Hatfield, Herts AL10 0LW

Telephone: 01707 256256