



## A guide to discretionary housing payments

**This leaflet explains discretionary housing payments. The rules are the same if you receive council tax benefit, housing benefit or local housing allowance.**

### What are discretionary housing payments (DHP)?

DHPs are extra payments to help pay rent, council tax or both. We give DHPs to people claiming benefit who need more help with their housing costs, if these are more than the amount of benefit they get. The government gives us an amount of money to pay out each year as DHPs and we cannot spend more than this. Once the fund has run out, we cannot consider any further requests.

We cannot give DHPs for the following:

- Ineligible service charges not covered by housing benefit.
- Any rent you owe.

- If we take any amount from your housing benefit because your jobseeker's allowance has been sanctioned (ie, not been paid because you have broken the terms of your claim).
- When your housing or council tax benefit payments are suspended.
- Rent, if you are only entitled to council tax benefit.
- Council tax, if you only get 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 benefit section for an application form.

## 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 house can help you.
- If you have any loans or debts.
- If you could manage your money better.
- If you or anyone in your family 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 and see us to discuss your claim in more detail.

We will send you a letter telling you our decision and our reasons for that decision.

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?

How much we give you depends on your circumstances. Each request is considered on its own merit. However, we cannot guarantee we will definitely give you a payment.

Any successful award is granted for a limited period to enable you to seek an alternative solution.

For housing benefit, we cannot give you more than your total rent (less amounts for services such as electricity or water). And, for council tax benefit, we cannot give you more than the amount of your council tax.

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

We will usually pay it with any housing or council tax benefit that you get, although a DHP is **not** a benefit payment. Your local housing benefit office will be given these figures every month.

## 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 we will give you a DHP for, you can ask us to look at the decision again. You should write to us within one calendar month of the date on the decision letter, telling us why you do not agree with our decision. You cannot appeal to the Tribunals Service if you disagree with our decision not to pay you a Discretionary Housing Payment.

## 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 to you.

## Where can I get more advice?

If you want more help or advice, you can contact us at:

### Council Offices

Civic Centre,  
Sandown,  
Isle of Wight  
PO36 9EA

**Tel:** 01983 823950

**Email:** [housing.benefit@iow.gov.uk](mailto:housing.benefit@iow.gov.uk)

### Opening times:

8.30am to 5pm, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

8.30am to 4.30pm Friday.

This office is closed all day on Tuesdays.

Late night for phone calls to the benefit team on  
Wednesday evenings until 6pm.

### Customer Services Centre

County Hall,  
Newport,  
Isle of Wight  
PO30 1UD

### Opening times:

8.30am to 5pm, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and  
Thursday.

8.30am to 4.30, Friday.

### Ryde Help Centre

Ryde Library,  
101 George Street,  
Ryde,  
Isle of Wight  
PO33 2JE

### Opening times:

9am to 5pm, Monday, Tuesday and Friday

### Freshwater Library

41 School Green Road,  
Freshwater,  
Isle of Wight  
PO40 9AP

### Opening times:

9.30am to 12.30pm, and 1.30 to 4.30pm, Tuesday

If you would like more information on benefits, please refer to our website at [iwight.com](http://iwight.com) and follow our quick link to **revenues and benefits**. Alternatively visit [direct.gov.uk](http://direct.gov.uk)

You can also get more help from the following websites:

[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk) – Department for Work and Pensions

[www.therentservice.gov.uk](http://www.therentservice.gov.uk) – The Rent Service

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk) – Citizens Advice

## Independent advice

### If you need independent advice, contact your

**local citizens advice bureau.** You can find their phone number (and the numbers for other local advice agencies) in the phone book and at your local library, or by contacting your local council.

**This leaflet is a guide and does not cover every circumstance. Some of the information in this leaflet may have been simplified and some information may become out of date because of changes to the law. We recommend that you get independent advice before making financial decisions based on this leaflet.**

Isle of Wight Council, Revenues and Benefits,  
Council Offices, The Broadway, Sandown, PO36 9EA

Telephone (01983) 823950

Email [housing.benefit@iow.gov.uk](mailto:housing.benefit@iow.gov.uk)

Web [www.iwight.com](http://www.iwight.com)

If you have difficulty understanding this document, please contact us on 01983 821000 and we will do our best to help you.