

If you have any questions about your Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit phone us on: **01322 343705**

We welcome calls via Talktype.

Write to us at:

**Benefit Section
Dartford Borough Council
Civic Centre
Home Gardens
Dartford
Kent
DA1 1DR**

E-mail us at benefits@dartford.gov.uk

Visit our main Dartford office at the following times:

Monday to Thursday: 8.45am - 5.15pm

Friday: 8.45am - 4.45pm

What if I want to comment on your service?

Please get in touch with us. We would like to know what you think. Information on how we deal with comments about our services is available on our website www.dartford.gov.uk

Alternatively, a leaflet entitled '**How to complain to Dartford Borough Council**' is available from our offices. This leaflet includes an easy to use complaint form.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Extra help towards your rent and Council tax



www.dartford.gov.uk/benefits

DARTFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Equal Opportunities Statement

Dartford Borough Council recognises that there are groups in society who are discriminated against and therefore aims to make sure that all the people it serves have equal access to all facilities and services.

Leaflets available:

- A Guide for Working Age People (Leaflet 1)
- A Guide for Pensioners (Leaflet 2)
- Can my claim be backdated? (Leaflet 3)
- Changes you need to tell us about (Leaflet 4)
- A Guide for the Self-Employed (Leaflet 5)
- Extra help towards your rent & council tax (Leaflet 6)
- What do I do if I disagree with your decision? (Leaflet 7)
- What happens when I have been paid too much? (Leaflet 8)
- A guide for landlords (Leaflet 9)

This leaflet can be made available in large print, please phone: 01322 343705

This leaflet can be explained in other languages please phone: 01322 343705

Please note that whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the details given in this leaflet are correct, the information should not be treated as an authoritative statement of benefit regulations.

What are Discretionary Housing Payments?

Discretionary Housing Payments are extra payments made at the discretion of Dartford Borough Council to help people on Housing and/or Council Tax Benefit who are in serious financial difficulty. They are freestanding payments and can only be made to help with housing costs for a specified time period. The amount of money we have for these payments is subject to an annual cash limit.

What DHP cannot be paid for

We cannot give assistance with fuel, water or sewerage charges if these are included in your rent. Also food charges for breakfast, lunch and dinner cannot be paid. Any increase in your rental charge due to outstanding rent arrears cannot be paid by a DHP.

Who can get a Discretionary Housing Payment?

If your Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit is less than the amount of your rent or Council Tax you must pay you can apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment.

How do I apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment?

Complete and return the Discretionary Housing Payment request form in the centre of this leaflet. Please include any further information to support your request on a separate sheet if necessary.

We aim to give you a decision within 10 working days. If we need longer we will contact you and explain why.

How do you decide if I can have a Discretionary Housing Payment?

Each case is considered individually. The more information you are able to give the easier it will be for us to decide. We look at things like:

- your total income
- your total outgoings
- whether you have any savings
- whether anyone else in the household is able to help you financially
- whether you have any loans or debts
- whether you could rearrange your finances to ease your situation
- whether you or your family have any special circumstances such as ill health or disability.

If we need more information we will write to you. We may also ask you to come and talk to us.

How much help might I get and for how long?

How much you get and for how long depends on your circumstances at the time you apply.

If my request is successful how will you pay the Discretionary Housing Payment?

If you are awarded Discretionary Housing Payments to help pay your rent we will usually pay it by the same method and time you are paid your Housing Benefit.

If you are awarded Discretionary Housing Payments to help pay your Council Tax we will credit your Council Tax account. Our decision letter will explain this.

What if I disagree with the amount or period of the Discretionary Housing Payment?

This is a discretionary scheme and there is no formal external appeal procedure. If you disagree with our decision, you should write to us within one month of the date of our letter telling you of the outcome of your application. In your letter please explain why you feel we should reconsider. We will review your application in line with our Discretionary Housing Payment policy and write to you advising you of the outcome.

What if my circumstances change?

You must tell us about any changes in your income or your partner's income, investments, savings, benefits, as well as changes in your rent paid to a private landlord. We also need to know if anyone leaves or joins your household. You should tell us within one month of the change happening - sooner if possible. We will then look at the Discretionary Housing Payment we awarded and see whether it needs to be changed.

If the change results in additional financial difficulties we may be able to award more Discretionary Housing Payments. If the change means you are better off we may end or reduce the payments.

For more information regarding change of circumstances see our leaflet **Changes you need to tell us about** (leaflet 4).

Equality Monitoring of Service Users Questionnaire

We want to ensure we shape and design our services around the local population. So that we can provide the services that meet your needs, we should be grateful if you would complete the Equality Monitoring Questionnaire enclosed with the Discretionary Housing Payments request form.

Your answers are key to us finding out about the profile of our customers and staff and whether any of the services we provide need improving to meet particular needs.

Your answers will not be used for any other purpose. Your questionnaire will be separated from your Discretionary Housing Payments request form prior to assessment and will be kept **confidential** and **anonymous**.

Where can I get help?

You can always phone us for help and advice. For details visit our website www.dartford.gov.uk or see the back of this leaflet.

You could also contact or visit the following:

Dartford Citizens Advice Bureau
Trinity Resource Centre
High Street
Dartford
Kent
DA1 1DE

Telephone: 01322 224686
Fax: 01322 220448
Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Telephone Advice:

Tues, Wed & Thurs 10am-1pm
Open Door (no appointments necessary):
Monday 10am-1pm
Wednesday 10am-1pm
Thursday 10am-1pm

Home visits are available by appointment for clients who are housebound and can be arranged by telephoning 01322 224686.

Free independent advice and information on a range of issues including legal rights, housing rights, welfare benefits and debt counselling.

REQUEST FOR DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS

Complete this form answering all questions and return it to the Benefits Section at the Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford, Kent DA1 1DR. Please use black ink.

You should supply as much detail as possible so that we fully understand your situation. You will also need to tell us about all the money you have coming into your household and all the money you pay out each week/month and provide your last two months bank statements. **Your application may be held up if you do not supply your bank statements.**

NAME:

ADDRESS:

Benefit ref:

National Insurance No:

Please answer the questions below:

1. Did you ask for a Pre-Tenancy Determination to see how much benefit you would be likely to receive, prior to accepting the tenancy? (Private tenants only) YES/NO

If No, why not?

If Yes, why did you accept this tenancy?

2. Have you tried to negotiate a lower rent with your landlord? (Private tenants only) YES/NO

If No, why not?

If Yes, what was the outcome?

3. Have you considered/tried moving to cheaper accommodation? (Private tenants only) YES/NO

Please give details or give reasons for not moving.

4. How much notice do you have to give your landlord if you want to move?

5. Could you live with relatives/friends?

YES/NO

6. Has there been a death in the household in the past 12 months?

YES/NO

If yes, please give details.

7. What disabilities, health problems or special needs do you or any member of your family have?

8. Please list all of the bank accounts (including Post Office accounts) and other savings and/or invested money that you and your partner (if you have one) have. Please list all single name and joint accounts/savings/investments, even if the accounts are overdrawn or not used very often. Please provide the latest 2 statements for each account.

State the name of the bank(s) etc. and the type of account(s), do not list the account number(s).

9. Are family or friends able to financially assist you or help with your children's expenses?

YES/NO

Please give details.

10. Do you have rent arrears?

YES/NO

If yes, how much (please provide proof).

11. Has your landlord taken any action against you to recover the arrears?

YES/NO

If yes, please tell us what action they have taken?

12. If you have a Sky/Cable TV package, please give the date your contract started and details of how long you are tied in to your current agreement.

13. If you own a car, please detail the make, model and age.

Please use this space to explain why you need extra help with your rent and/or council tax and to tell us anything else about your circumstances, which might be relevant to this application even if you think it is not very important. Tell us about any action you are taking to improve your future finances.

DECLARATION

I have completed this application form and declare that the information given is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I know that I must notify the Benefits Section of any changes in my circumstances within **one month** from the change. I understand that the information I have given in this application may be checked against other records held by the Council.

Signature:

Date:

Print full name:

*Daytime telephone number:

*It would be helpful if you could provide a daytime telephone number so that we can contact you if there is any query with the information you have supplied.

DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT REQUEST - INCOME & EXPENDITURE

INCOME	CLAIMANT £	PARTNER £	HOW OFTEN ?	EXPENDITURE	AMOUNT?	HOW OFTEN ?
Wages/Salary				Rent you pay (amount not covered by HB)		
JSA (Contribution based)				Council Tax you pay (amount not covered by CTB)		
JSA (Income based)				Water Rates		
Income Support				Court Fines		
ESA (Contribution based)				Maintenance/Child Support payments		
ESA (income related)				Telephone (landline) (mobile)		
Working Tax credits				Insurance (Personal) (Home) (Health/optical/dental)		
Child Tax Credits				Household Fuel (Gas) (Electricity) (Other – please specify)		
Child benefit				TV expenses (licence) (TV/Video hire) (Sky/cable/digital TV)		
Maintenance/Child Support payments				Car expenses (Fuel) (Insurance) (Tax) (Maintenance)		
Retirement Pension				Travel expenses (bus, train, taxi etc.)		
Other pensions				Household shopping (Food, toiletries etc)		
Pension Credits				Clothing		
Incapacity Benefit				School expenses (dinners) (Children's clubs) (Other please specify)		
Disability Living Allowance (Care)				Internet access		
Disability Living Allowance (Mobility)				Loan repayments/HP payments		
Housekeeping/money from non-dependants				Catalogues/ Shopping clubs		
Income from lodgers				Credit card payments		
Other benefits				Pension Contributions		
Other income (please specify)				Regular savings		
				Subscriptions		
				Cigarettes/tobacco		
				Alcohol		
				Entertaining/Eating out		
				Any other expenditure		
INCOME TOTAL				EXPENDITURE TOTAL	£	£
	£	£				

Please provide evidence. Photocopies will be accepted.

If any of your expenditure includes arrears please provide evidence, e.g. rent arrears, telephone bill arrears.

Please specify purpose of loan/hire purchase:		Balance in bank accounts £	
Remaining terms of loan/hire purchase:		Other Investments £	

EQUALITY MONITORING QUESTIONNAIRE

We want to ensure we shape and design our services around the local population. So that we can provide the services that meet your needs, we should be grateful if you would answer the questions below.

Your answers are key to us finding out about the profile of our customers and staff and whether any of the services we provide need improving to meet particular needs. Your answers will not be used for any other purpose.

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1	Ethnic Group			
White:				
British	<input type="checkbox"/>	Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Any other white background	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Mixed:				
White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	
White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other mixed background	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Asian or Asian British:				
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other Asian background	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Black or Black British:				
Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	African	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Any other black background	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other ethnic group	<input type="checkbox"/>	

2	Sex			
Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	

3	Age			
Under 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	25-59	<input type="checkbox"/>	
16-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	60-64	<input type="checkbox"/>	
20-24	<input type="checkbox"/>	65 and above	<input type="checkbox"/>	

4	If you have a disability, what is its nature?			
Difficulty getting around	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hearing difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Difficulty seeing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mental health problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	