



Application for a Discretionary Housing Payment

How to Claim

Please fill in and return this form to Bedford Borough Council:

- **By post** to Bedford Borough Council, Housing Benefit Office, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP, or
- **In person** at the Customer Service Centre at 2 Horne Lane, Bedford MK40 1RA, which is open 8.45am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday, 8.45am to 4.45pm on Friday
- **Alternatively** you can scan and email a copy to: customerservices@bedford.gov.uk

We will cross reference any information on your form with data already held by the Council and may need to write to you for more information.

If you need help with this form or need it in another format (such as large print) then please phone us on **01234 718097**.

Claim Reference Number and/or National Insurance Number:

Part A - About you

1. Your full name:

2. Your partner's full name:

3. Address and postcode:

4. Why are you applying for a DHP? Please tick all which you think apply.

- I rent from a housing association and my benefit is being reduced as I have a spare bedroom(s).
- I rent from a private landlord and the rent used in my benefit calculation is restricted by the Local Housing Allowance rates.
- I am on Universal Credit (UC) and I am struggling to pay my rent – we will need to see details of your UC award.
- I am subject to the Benefit Cap.
- I am moving to a more affordable/suitable home and need assistance with the deposit and/or rent in advance – please provide details of the prospective tenancy.
- There has been a change of circumstances and I am now suffering hardship - please provide details in the 'any other reason box' below or as a separate letter.
- Any other reason, please specify:

5. What date do you want to claim Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) from?

Part B - About you and your family

6. Are you entitled to: Housing Benefit? Housing Element of Universal Credit?

If you receive Universal Credit we will need to see proof of your entitlement, including the calculations. If you are not entitled to either of these benefits then you are not entitled to DHP.

7. Does anybody regularly stay overnight in your home to provide care for you and/or your partner? If yes, please provide their name, normal address and explain the care they provide.

8. Does anybody in your household have a medical condition which would mean they could not share a room? If yes, please provide their name, explain the condition and why they cannot share a room.

Part C - About your rent

9. How much rent are you charged? £ per month / week (please circle).

Please provide proof of the current rent you are charged.

10. Are you behind with your rent payments?

Yes

No

If 'yes', how much are you in arrears?

£

Has your landlord commenced eviction procedures?

Yes

No

11. Have you looked for a smaller/cheaper property?

Yes If 'yes', please explain what you have done

No If 'no', why not?

Part D - Affording your shortfall

12. What steps are you taking to be able to afford the shortfall yourself? e.g. are you looking for work or are you budgeting to afford the shortfall? If not, please explain why not.

13. If you have applied for a DHP before, please explain what steps you have taken to improve your situation since your last application.

14. Are you seeking assistance from any external agency regarding the above?
e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau or The Jobs Hub.

15. DHPs are intended as short term assistance only, please tick which of these options would best describe your longer term solution:

- I need help while I find cheaper/smaller accommodation.
- I need help until my finances improve, e.g. by finding work.
- I need help while I reorganise my finances, e.g. by budgeting to afford the shortfall from my other income.
- Other, please give details:

Part E - Income / Expenditure details

INCOME	Weekly	CAPITAL (Savings/Assets)	Amount/Value
Please detail all income eg. Benefits, tax credits, wages etc.		Post Office Account(s)	
Income		Bank Account(s)	
Income		Building Society Account(s)	
Income		Any Other Savings?	
Income		TOTAL SAVINGS / ASSETS	
Income		Please provide your most recent two months statements for all accounts	
Is DLA paid towards a car?	Yes / No		
Income from family members			
Maintenance payments (Please state who for)			
Other (Please state)			
TOTAL INCOME			
EXPENDITURE	Weekly	1. TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME:	
Gas			
Electricity			
Water Rates			
Telephone - Landline / Mobile			
Food / Housekeeping			
Clothes / Shoes		2. TOTAL HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE:	
Home / Contents Insurance			
Public Transport			
Life Insurance / Pension			
Car Expenses (tax, fuel, insurance etc.)			
Broadband / Internet			
Entertainment / TV Licence		DISPOSABLE INCOME: (1 minus 2)	
Childcare		If your income is less than your expenditure, please explain how you are currently funding this shortfall or what steps you are taking to be able to afford it.	
Child Maintenance / C.S.A.			
Regular Prescriptions			
Loan Repayment (please provide proof)			
Other (Please state)			
TOTAL EXPENDITURE			

If you receive Housing Benefit your DHP will be paid with your Housing Benefit.
If you receive Universal Credit please state where you would like your DHP paid:

Bank Account Number: Sort Code:

Name:

If your Housing Element of Universal Credit is paid direct to your landlord, please provide proof of this and we may pay any DHP to your landlord as well.

Part G - Declaration

Please read the following statements and sign below.

We cannot deal with your application if you have not signed it.

- This is my claim for a Discretionary Housing Payment.
- I will tell you if the information on any letter you send me is incorrect.
- The information I have given is true and complete, as far as I know and believe.
- I understand that if I give information that is incorrect or incomplete, you may take action against me. This may include court action.
- I understand that you may check the information I have given on this form.
- I understand that you may use the information I have given in connection with this and any other claim I have made or may make for state benefits. You may share information with other departments in the Council as well as other government agencies and private companies such as banks and organisations that may lend me money, if the law allows this.
- I know that I must tell you if my circumstances change after I make this claim.

Your Signature: **Date:**

Your Partner's Signature: **Date:**

If someone else has filled in this form for you they must fill in the section below. Please tell us why you are filling in this form for someone else.

I declare that I have read the information in this form back to the claimant and they have confirmed that it is a true statement of what the person asked me to write.

Name of person who filled in this form:

Their signature:

Relationship to you:

About the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) is extra money the Council can give to help with a shortfall in your rent on a short term basis. To qualify you must receive some Housing Benefit or Housing Element of Universal Credit and show you are having difficulties with your finances which prevents you from being able to afford your full rent.

Discretionary Housing Payments are not the same as Housing Benefit. They are special payments which come from a separate fund, and the total amount available is fixed for the year. It is up to the Council to decide how much to pay to a person applying for DHP and the Council has a policy to follow in decision making so that the limited funding can be used to help those people most in need of extra financial help.

This Policy will be available on our website:



www.bedford.gov.uk/dhp

Making a decision

When making a decision we need to look at things like:

- The shortfall between your Housing Benefit or Housing Element of Universal Credit and your rent
- The reason(s) for the shortfall;
- The amount available in the DHP budget at the time of the claim;
- The amount and period of any previous DHP awards;
- The steps you have taken to either reduce your rental liability or to restructure your finances to be able to afford your current home;
- The availability of other affordable homes in the area;
- The financial and medical circumstances of your family
- Any relevant information held by other Council departments, including costs that they may incur in providing additional support, should a DHP not be paid;
- Whether any sanctions have previously been imposed for the fraudulent claiming of benefits or Council Tax Support;
- The amount of the shortfall in proportion to the household income;
- The needs of any children resident in the household;
- Whether you or your family would be disadvantaged as a result of service in the armed forces;
- Any other special circumstances brought to the attention of the Council;

You are more likely to get an award if you can show:

- That you are taking steps to reduce or remove the shortfall, but need some assistance in the short term.

The award

We will write to you to tell you whether your application has been successful or not and the amount we have awarded. This might not be as much as you need to pay your full rent.

The period of the award

We will tell you how long the payment will last for. Discretionary Housing Payments are meant to help with short term difficulties only. If you get an award, there is no guarantee that another award will be made at a later date even if your circumstances have not changed.

What to do if you think our decision is wrong

You may ask us to look at our decision again and another decision maker will look at your application. You can ask for a review if we have refused your award, awarded a reduced amount or we have told you we have overpaid you. There is no right of appeal to an independent Tribunal.

Where to go to get more help and information

If you need help and advice about managing your finances the organisations below may be able to help:



Bedford CAB

7a St. Paul's Square, Bedford



01234 354384



Bedford Salvation Army Debt Advice Services

Bedford Congress Hall, Bedford



0845 521 0170

If you rent from a Housing Association, they may have a welfare/debt advisor who may be able to assist you with any money/benefit issues you may have. Contact your landlord direct to see if they offer this service and how to book an appointment.

Bedford Borough Council's Housing Options team:



01234 718058



housing.advice@bedford.gov.uk



www.bedford.gov.uk/housing/housing_advice_options.aspx

They can assist you with your options and offer support in finding accommodation that is more affordable for you in the long term.