

Discretionary Housing Payments Leaflet and application form

What are Discretionary Housing Payments?

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) provide customers in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (which includes an element for Housing Cost), further financial assistance if they are in exceptional need with their housing costs.

The U.K. Government provides each Local Authority with a cash-limited budget each financial year to help those in greatest need.

What do we mean by housing costs?

In general, housing costs means rental liability, but housing costs are interpreted more widely to include:

Rent in Advance;

Rent Deposit;

Other lump sum costs associated with a housing need such as removal costs, or credit checks for letting agents.

What is the criteria to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment?

You must already be in receipt of Housing Benefit (HB) or Universal Credit (UC) within Conwy Borough which includes an element for Housing Costs and facing a shortfall in housing costs which you have been unable to budget for, or currently fund.

What types of shortfalls in housing costs can a Discretionary Housing Payment cover?

Benefit Cap reductions to HB or UC Housing Cost element.

Under-occupation reduction (social rented sector) to HB or UC Housing Cost element.

Local Housing Allowance restrictions to HB or UC Housing Cost element.

Non-dependant deduction from HB or Housing Cost contribution in UC Housing Cost.

Income Taper reductions.

Rent Officer restrictions, such as a local reference rent or shared accommodation rate.

Rent shortfalls to prevent a household becoming homeless whilst the Housing Department explores alternative options.

Rent deposits, Rent in Advance, Removal Costs, Credit Checks for letting agents.

Discretionary Housing Payments can be awarded for the above for a property an applicant is yet to move into. The applicant has to be in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Costs element at their current address within Conwy Borough and the new property should be affordable for the applicant.

**If you have any questions about your claim, please phone
the Benefit Offices of Conwy Council Borough Council for advice.**

Benefits Customer Service: 01492 576491

**BT Text Relay: 18001 01492 576491 or call in at a local office of Conwy County Borough Council
detailed on page 12**

Or by email on: hben.enquiries@conwy.gov.uk

**and by post to: Revenue & Benefits Assessment Service, CCBC, P.O. Box 1,
Conwy LL30 9GN**

Your call may be recorded for training and monitoring purposes

**If you need a copy of this form in Welsh, Braille or large print please contact this office.
We also have access to an interpreting service called "The Big Word" which is a 24 hour
telephone interpreting service.**

What Discretionary Housing Payment cannot cover?

Discretionary Housing Payment cannot cover the following:

- ineligible service charges in a customer's rent, such as meals water charges etc.
- assistance with Council Tax payments.
- increase in rent due to outstanding rent arrears
- certain sanctions and reductions in benefit detailed as follows:
 - any reduction in Income Support (IS) or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA(IB)) due to a Reduced Benefit Direction (RBD) for failure to comply with the Child Support Agency in arranging maintenance. The RDA is a reduction in benefit of 40% of the personal allowance and only applies to IS or JSA (IB).
 - any reduction in benefit as a result of non-attendance at a work-focused interview. This applies both where the customer's Housing Benefit is reduced and when any other benefit that the customer is receiving, such as Income Support is subject to a sanction.
 - any reduction or loss of benefit due to a Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) employment sanction. JSA is not payable for the period of sanction if the customer has contributed towards their unemployed status, for example, by leaving employment voluntarily or failing to attend a prescribed training scheme.

In such cases, it may be possible for a reduced rate of JSA to be paid under the JSA hardship provisions.

- any reduction in benefit due to a JSA sanction for 16/17 year olds - this is for certain young people who receive JSA under a Severe hardship Direction. JSA is not payable for the period of the sanction if the customer has contributed towards their unemployed status, for example, by leaving paid employment voluntarily or failing to attend a prescribed training scheme, or
- any restriction in benefit due to a breach of a community service order
- Housing Benefit/Universal Credit that has been suspended because the customer has failed to provide the required information for the claim.
- shortfalls caused by Housing Benefit recovery from a customer's entitlement.

How can I apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment?

You will need to complete and return the attached application form without delay and send with supporting evidence (either with your application or at a later date) to The Benefit Office, Revenue and Benefits Assessments Service, Conwy County Borough Council, P.O. Box 1, Conwy, LL30 9GN or visit a Conwy County Borough Council Benefit Office detailed on page 12.

How do we decide whether to award a Discretionary Housing Payment?

There is now a more consistent approach in the administration of DHP's in Wales where a points system has been developed. It is designed to make discretionary decision-making more systematic, consistent and transparent. However it is definitely not intended to impose a one size fits all solution. The exercise of discretion remains at the heart of the scheme. This is explained in more detail in the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy. <http://www.conwy.gov.uk/doc.asp?cat=7255&doc=25178>

How will I be informed of the decision on a Discretionary Housing Payment application?

You will be informed of the decision in writing within 10 days, or as soon as possible thereafter which will include the start and end day of the entitlement if you are successful, the amount, and who the payment will be sent to. A Discretionary Housing Payment is not an 'open ended' benefit. There is no guarantee that if you reapply after your Discretionary Housing Payment has ended you will be awarded a further payment, even if your circumstances are the same.

You will also be informed in writing if you are not successful.

The length of award

The length of the Discretionary Housing Payment award will depend on the circumstances of the applicant/family. There is no minimum period of an award, which could be a one off payment for rent in advance/rent deposit/removal costs. A periodic payment could be for a few weeks but generally is made between 13-26 weeks. The maximum number of weeks for a DHP is 12 months, an example of such a case would be if a property has been specifically adapted for an individual's needs.

Can I appeal against the decision made on my claim?

If you disagree with the decision, you would need to write to the Benefit Office, Conwy County Borough Council, P.O. Box 1, Conwy, LL30 9GN within a calendar month of the original decision and request an Appeal giving the reasons why you were unhappy with the decision. A different Senior Benefit Officer would then consider the Appeal and you would be informed in writing of the outcome within 10 days or as soon as possible thereafter.

What do I do if my circumstances change?

You must tell the Benefit Office, Conwy County Borough Council, P.O. Box 1, Conwy, LL30 9GN as soon as possible if your circumstances change. The Benefit Office may need to revise your Discretionary Housing Payment award. If the change in circumstances means that you have received money that you are not entitled to, we may ask you to pay it back.

For our use only	
Reference number:	
Date of issue	
Reason for issue	

DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT APPLICATION FORM

Full name and title

Current address:
(including room/flat number)

National Insurance No.

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Date of Birth

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Telephone numbers:

Landline

Mobile

Housing Benefit Ref:

Email address
(optional)

1. What sort of help do you need? (please tick)

- ONE-OFF PAYMENT** to help with a specific payment (e.g. Rent Deposit/Rent in advance) if YES, go to **question 12.**
- ONGOING PAYMENT** to help with your weekly rent.

Please tell us why you are applying for a DHP? (please tick those that apply)

- My benefit is reduced because I am classed as having a spare bedroom.**
- I am affected by the Benefit Cap.**
- I am affected by a non-dependant deduction/Universal Credit housing cost contribution reduction.**
- My benefit is reduced because of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate.**
- I am affected by Income Taper Reductions.**
- Rent officer restriction such as local reference or shared accommodation rate.**
- I need financial support while I am seeking employment or more employment.**
- The Housing Department are assisting me with a possible homelessness issue and I have a shortfall in the rent payment.**
- I cannot afford to pay the difference between my rent and Housing Benefit/Universal Credit Housing Cost element for other reasons. Please tell us why here.**

How much extra help do you think you need in monetary terms?

£	per week
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- 2. Has your home been adapted to help with a disability affecting you or a member of your family?** Yes
 No

If 'Yes', please provide details of the adaptations and the reasons why they are needed.

- 3. Do you have shared custody of a child or children, but do not receive Child benefit for them?** Yes
 No

If 'Yes', please provide proof (if you have a court order granting access please provide this).

If 'Yes', but you do not have a court order, please forward a copy of a letter from former partner or any other proof.

Name	Date of birth	Usual Home address	How often do they stay with you?

How often has the child/children stayed with you in the last 12 months?

- 4. Housing Benefit Size Criteria (Private Sector)/Underoccupation Reduction (Social Sector) where you have more rooms under the Housing Benefit/Universal Credit Housing Cost Rules than you are deemed to require.** Yes
 No

Only complete this question if your home has more rooms than allowed by the Housing Benefit/Universal Credit Housing Cost Rules. This includes tenants in the Private Rented Sector who have more rooms than required and in the Social Rented Sector tenants who are affected by the Spare Room Subsidy/Under Occupation Reduction. If you have answered 'Yes' to this question please explain if you actually need the additional rooms, for example if you are part of a couple and unable to share a bedroom with your partner due to disability please give detail below.

- 5. Do you, your partner, child or non-dependant adult living at your address have a carer who resides somewhere else, but provides care overnight in your home and you have a bedroom available for them?** Yes
 No

If 'Yes', please give details which should include the name and address of the carer/s, how often they stay at your home and if they receive Carers Allowance for looking after you or your partner.

- 6. Have you tried to find cheaper alternative accommodation?** Yes
 No

If 'Yes', please give details. If you found cheaper accommodation but did not move, please explain why below.

If 'No', can you please explain why you haven't looked for cheaper accommodation.

Conwy Borough Housing Register (SARTH) is managed by Conwy Housing Solutions and can be contacted on telephone number 0300 124 0050 or by email on sarth@cartreficonwy.org
Conwy Housing Solutions will also give help and advice to customers on Housing, both social and private and can be contacted at Coed Pella, Conway Road, Colwyn Bay LL29 7AZ, telephone number 0300 124 0050. Office hours 9.30am - 4pm Monday-Friday.

- 7. If you are currently a Social Housing Tenant within Conwy Borough and affected by the under occupation reduction, have you registered with Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) for alternative smaller accommodation?** Yes
No

If 'Yes', please provide details which should include the date you registered for the smaller accommodation and the location you would accept this accommodation to be in.

If 'No', please explain your reasons for not doing so.

If you have been offered social housing accommodation/alternative Social Housing which you've refused, please provide the details below:

- 8. Please tell us if it would cause you problems if you moved from the area which you live in now, e.g. you need to live near a particular nursery/childcare, school, hospital or other services, or you are receiving care or providing care to a member of family not living with you. If 'Yes', please provide details.** Yes
No

- 9. If you have a private landlord have you asked your landlord if they would consider lowering your rent?** Yes
No

If 'Yes', tell us below what the outcome was.

If 'No', can you please tell us why you haven't considered this?

- Have you any objection to Conwy County Borough Council contacting your private landlord to see if your rent can be reduced?** If 'Yes', please tell us why below. Yes
No

- Do you have any rent arrears?** Yes

(Please answer if you are a social or private tenant).

If 'Yes', how much?(please send a copy of any evidence of this) £

- No

Has your landlord taken any legal action against you to recover these arrears?

If 'Yes', please give details of action taken.

Yes

No

10. Please tell us if you have any plans to help your situation in the long term, such as increasing your income or moving house, even if you just register for a smaller property (see Question 7). Any evidence that you can provide will help us to make a decision.

11. The DHP fund granted to the Council by the Government is cash limited, and it **would not be possible for the Council to use DHP to help everybody who does not receive full Housing Benefit/Universal Credit Housing costs to meet their rent.** If none of the questions have described your true circumstances, please tell us below why you consider that your claim is exceptional.

ONLY APPLICANTS WHO TICKED "ONE-OFF PAYMENTS" IN QUESTION 1 SHOULD COMPLETE QUESTIONS 12 TO 23

12. Please tick the payment you are applying for: **(EVIDENCE WILL BE REQUIRED).**

Rent in advance Total Amount due £ Total amount applied for £

Deposit Total Amount due £ Total amount applied for £

Other Total Amount due £ Total amount applied for £

If other, please state what the payment is for:

13. If you are leaving your current address, please state why.

- 14. Have you been served with a notice to quit/seeking possession?** Yes
If 'Yes', please provide a copy of this and the reason/s it has been served. No

- 15. Did you pay rent in advance on your existing tenancy?** Yes
If 'Yes', how much? £ No

- 16. Did you pay a deposit on your existing tenancy?** Yes
If 'Yes', how much? £ No

- 17. Are you due to have a deposit returned to you?** Yes
If 'Yes', please give date it will be returned to you. If it will not be returned to you, please explain why. No

- 18. Have you any savings that could be used to meet this need (or part of this need)?** Yes
If 'Yes', please give details. No

- 19. Have you approached Conwy Housing Solutions (Homelessness Officers) for help?** Yes
If 'Yes', what did they say? No

- 20. Have you asked for help from the Department for Work and Pensions or Discretionary Assistance Fund/Nacro Bond?** Yes
If 'Yes', please give detail of the outcome. No
If 'No', is there any reason why not?

- 21. Have you asked for help with rent deposit/rent in advance/other housing costs from anyone else.** Yes
No

If 'Yes', please give details and the outcome.

- 22. What is the address of the property you are applying for rent in advance/ deposit for and the amount of rent you would be charged?**

23. Tenancy deposit protection schemes

Tenancy deposit protection (TDP) schemes guarantee that tenants will get their deposits back at the end of the tenancy, if they meet the terms of the tenancy agreement and do not damage the property. Landlords must protect their tenant's deposits using a TDP scheme if they have let the property on an assured shorthold tenancy which started after 6 April 2007.

Landlords or agents must use one of the three approved TDP schemes to protect tenants' deposits where these conditions apply. If any other scheme is used, deposits are not protected in law. The three approved schemes are:

- Deposit Protection Service (DPS)
- MyDeposits
- Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS)

Please ask your landlord/agent to confirm which Tenancy Deposit Scheme they will be using and tick the relevant box above.

ALL APPLICANTS TO COMPLETE QUESTIONS 24-26

24. Information about you and your partner's income, outgoings and debts (if any).

This information will help us decide if you need further financial assistance to meet your housing costs.

Please take your time and include everything. All the information you give us is confidential and we will only use it to see if we can give you extra help.

Please enter number of adults in your household

Number of children in your household

INCOME - please give weekly figures	
Take Home Pay	£
Child benefit	£
Child Tax Credit	£
Working Tax Credit	£
State pension	£
Occupational Pensions	£
Private Pensions	£
Income Support	£
Job Seekers Allowance	£
Employment & Support Allowance/ Incapacity Benefit	£
Disability Living Allowance/ Personal Independence Payments	£
Carers Allowance	£
Universal Credit (Total Amount)	£
Maintenance received	£
Contribution from other people in your household (non dependant adult relative or friend living with you). If the non dependant/s have unavoidable high personal expenses, please detail below under - Any further information	£
Rent from lodger/tenant	£
Other - give details below	£
	£
TOTAL	£
Capital/savings actually held	Amount
	£
	£
	£
TOTAL	£

Any further information in relation to income/outgoings

EXPENDITURE - please give weekly figures	
Rent	£
Council Tax	£
Gas	£
Electricity	£
Water Charges	£
Telephone/mobile	£
TV Rental/Licence	£
TV Satellite (e.g. Sky)	£
Internet Access	£
Life Insurance	£
Home Insurance	£
Bus/Train fares	£
Petrol	£
Car Insurance	£
Car Tax / MOT	£
Special dietary costs	£
School meals	£
Glasses/Contact Lenses	£
Household (including toiletries and cleaning materials)	£
Clothes/footwear	£
Nappies	£
Child Care payments	£
Food	£
DWP Budgeting Loan repayment	£
Maintenance (e.g. CSA payments)	£
Doorstep lender	£
Court costs and fines	£
Catalogues/Mail order	£
HP repayment	£
Credit/Store card repayment	£
Bank/Building Society overdraft repayments	£
Any other spending (Please state what for)	£
TOTAL	£

Have your tried to renegotiate any debt or arrears repayments? Yes No

If 'Yes', please provide details

Would you like the Benefit Office to refer your case for debt advice to the Citizen's Advice? Yes No

25. Are there any further details about your income and expenditure you have not already included? Yes
If 'Yes', please give details below. No

26. Who would you like the payment of Discretionary Housing Payment to be made to if you are successful with your claim? Yourself
 Your Landlord

Name of Bank or Building Society

Bank or Building Society Sort Code

Account Name

Bank or Building Society Account Number

27. DECLARATION

Please read this declaration carefully before you sign and date the application.

- **I declare** that the information given on this form is correct.
- **I agree** that the Council may make enquiries necessary to check the information I have given.
- **I understand that if any information I provide is incorrect that I will have to repay any awarded DHP back to the Council.**

Signature of Claimant:

Signature of Partner:

Date:

/ /

Declaration of the person filling in the form on behalf of the tenant.

Print Name:

Signature:

Relationship to applicant:

Date:

/ /

Please send the completed form with supporting evidence, either with your application, or at a later date to: Benefit Offices, Revenue and Benefits Assessment Service, P.O. Box 1, Conwy, LL30 9GN or take it to an Area Benefit Office of Conwy County Borough Council detailed on page 12

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

The questions in this section are for statistical analysis, monitoring and the development of improved services. All information is stored on a confidential database.

You do not have to complete this questionnaire.

About Yourself

I am: Male Female

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

White

British

Irish

Welsh

Any other White Background

Please give details

Mixed

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed Background

Please give details

Asian or Asian

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

British Black or Black British

Caribbean

African

Chinese or other ethnic group

Chinese

Any other Asian, Black background. Any other ethnic group. Please give details.

Age 16 to 24 25 to 34 35 to 44 45 to 54 55 to 64 65 and over

Do you have any long-term illness, health problem or disability that affects your day to day activities?

Yes No

Thank you for completing this form

Conwy County Borough Council Housing Benefit Offices

Main office of Conwy County Borough Council

Benefit Office

Revenues and Benefits Assessment Service, Coed Pella, Conway Road, Colwyn Bay LL29 7AZ
Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm - Friday 9am-4.45pm Phone: 01492 576491

Local Housing Benefit suboffices of Conwy County Borough Council

Area Office

Revenues and Benefits, Assessment Service, Town Hall, George Street, **Llandudno** LL30 2ST
Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm - Friday 9am-4.45pm Phone: 01492 576491

Area Office

Revenues and Benefits, Assessment Service, Bodlondeb, Bangor Road, **Conwy** LL32 8DU
Monday-Thursday 9.00am-5.00pm - Friday 9.00am-4.45pm Phone: 01492 576491

Area Office

Revenues and Benefits, Assessment Service, The Library, Plas yn Dre, Llanrwst LL26 0DF
Tuesday 10am-1pm Phone: 01492 576491

Useful addresses

Other Government Departments

The Pension Service
Post Handling Site B
Wolverhampton
WV99 1AN

Phone: 0800 731 0469

Job Centre
Princes Park 2
Princes Drive
Colwyn Bay
Conwy
LL29 8PL

Phone: 0800 169 0310

Department for Work
and Pensions
Post Handling Site B
Wolverhampton
WV99 2GN

Phone: 0800 169 0310

Rent Officer Service
Welsh Assembly Government
Sarn Mynach
Llandudno Junction
LL31 9R2

Tel 0300 0625106

Job Centre
29/31 Chapel Street
Llandudno
Conwy
LL30 2SY

Phone: 0800 169 0310

Discretionary Assistance
Fund in Wales
PO Box 2377,
Wrexham,
LL11 OLG

Tel: 0800 859 5924

Other Organisations

Shelter Cymru
Unit 5, Station Buildings,
Bodfor Street, Rhyl
LL18 1AT
Phone: 01745 361444

Shelter Cymru provides free confidential and independent advice and services to people in housing need, aimed at addressing both crisis needs and longer underlying issues.

Citizens Advice
District Office,
Eryl Wen, Eryl Place,
Llandudno,
LL30 2TX
Phone: 0344 477 2020

Rural Advice Service
The Bon
Bridge Street
Llanrwst
LL26 0ET
Tel: 01492 641313

The Citizens Advice service helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, impartial, independent and confidential advice

North Wales Credit Union
144 Conwy Road
Llandudno Junction
Conwy
LL31 9DU
Tel: 0333 2000 601

Membership of the North Wales Credit Union gives access to low cost and ethical financial services for the public of Conwy County, including current accounts, savings accounts and low interest loans.

Age Concern
15 Bridge Street
Denbigh
LL16 3LF
Tel: 01745 816947

Age Concern provide information and advice for the elderly about benefits care, age related discrimination and training.