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|  | **Discretionary Housing Payment Claim Form** |
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**Title (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms)**

**Surname/family name**

**First names**

**Address**

 **Postcode**

**Telephone number**

**Email address**

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| **Benefit reference number if you have one (this is a seven-digit number)** |  |

**About discretionary housing payments (DHP)**

The council can award a discretionary housing payment (DHP) to top up housing benefit and the housing costs element of universal credit if entitlement is less than the full rent. ‘Discretionary’ means that we decide whether to award the top-up payment. It’s discretionary because we don’t have enough money to help everyone who applies. We use the information you give us on this form to decide whether to award you a DHP.

**When may we award a discretionary housing payment?**

We may award a DHP if:

* your benefit is less than your rent because your income is too high to qualify for the maximum benefit
* your benefit is less than the rent you have to pay your landlord because of a rent restriction
* your benefit has been reduced because other adults are living with you
* your benefit has been reduced because you are affected by the Benefit Cap.

A rent restriction is when the rent amount we use to decide your benefit is less than the rent you have to pay your landlord. A restriction can occur either because the rent charged is above local housing allowance (LHA) or because you are treated as having spare bedrooms.

The Benefit Cap applies if you are working age and it is an upper limit on the total amount of benefit you can receive when unemployed. Moving into work or claiming a disability related benefit will make you exempt from the Benefit Cap in most circumstances.

**When can’t we award a discretionary housing payment?**

We can’t award a DHP:

* to cover service charges for fuel and water rates that are included in your rent
* to help with council tax.
* if you don’t qualify for benefit, or your benefit already pays for all your rent

**How long we may pay you**

If your claim is successful, we will make an award for a fixed period. So when completing this form you must tell us how long you think you will need extra financial help and what you will do to avoid needing the money in the long term.

**Part 1: Information about you**

You must complete Part 1 to provide general information about you and your household

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| 1.1 | **What is your full name?** |  |
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| 1.2 | **What is your date of birth?** |  |
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| 1.3 | **What is your National Insurance number?** |  |
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| 1.4 | **When did you move into your current address?** |  |
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| 1.5 | **What is the landlord’s name?** |  |
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| 1.6 | **What is the landlord’s address?** |  |
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| 1,7 | **How many bedrooms are there in your home?** |  |
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| 1.8 | **Use the table below to tell us about your household:** |

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| **Full name** | **Date of birth** | **Relationship to you** |
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**Part 2: Your income and expenses**

You must complete Part 2. Complete the following tables to tell us about the income you are getting and how much you spend. Please use monthly amounts. To convert a weekly amount to monthly, multiply by 52 and then divide by 12.

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| **Type of income** | **Monthly amount** |
| Net pay (after deductions for tax and National Insurance) | £ |
| Income support, jobseeker’s allowance or employment and support allowance | £ |
| Pensions | £ |
| Child benefit | £ |
| Housing benefit | £ |
| Universal credit | £ |
| Child tax credit | £ |
| Working tax credit | £ |
| Child maintenance | £ |
| Money from family or friends | £ |
| Other state benefits | £ |
| Other income | £ |
| Savings | £ |
| **Total monthly income** | **£** |

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| **Type of expense** | **Monthly amount** |
| Rent  | £ |
| Rent arrears (regular extra payments you must make under a court order or as agreed with the landlord) | £ |
| Council tax | £ |
| Council tax arrears (regular extra payments you are making to repay money owing from previous years) | £ |
| Gas | £ |
| Electricity | £ |
| Water rates | £ |
| Home telephone | £ |
| Mobile phone | £ |
| TV licence | £ |
| Family food shopping | £ |
| Meals at work | £ |
| Child care or play scheme | £ |
| School dinners | £ |
| Children’s clothes | £ |
| Nappies and baby products | £ |
| Travel to work | £ |
| Other travel | £ |
| Home contents insurance | £ |
| Life insurance | £ |
| Personal loan repayments | £ |
| Hire-purchase agreements | £ |
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| Any other expenses (please tell us what the expense is for): |
|  | £ |
|  | £ |
|  | £ |
| **Total monthly expense** | **£** |

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| **Based on your budget, what is the most you can afford to pay towards your rent?**  | **£ a week** |
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| **If there are non-dependant adults living with you, how much can they afford to pay towards your rent?**  | **£ a week** |

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| **When we look at your spending, we normally disregard household expenses for food, fuel, clothes, telephone and toiletries. This is because the benefit calculation includes an allowance for essential day-to-day living expenses. But if some of these expenses are especially high at the moment, please tell us why here.**  |
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**Part 3: Special circumstances**

Use this section to tell the Council about any special circumstances you want us to take into consideration when deciding your DHP claim. For example, tell us about any medical needs anyone in your household has and any special educational needs of any children living with you. You should also tell us about any support you are receiving from other Council services like Adult Social Care, Children’s Services and the Housing Solutions Service.

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| 3.1 | **If the rent used to decide benefit is restricted, tell us about any features your current home has that would be difficult to find elsewhere. An example is disability adaptations.** |  |
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| 3.2 | **If the rent used to decide benefit is restricted, tell us about any circumstances that would make it difficult for you to move to a cheaper or smaller home elsewhere?** |  |
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| 3.3 | **If the Benefit Cap limits your entitlement, tell us about what you are doing to look for work.** |  |
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| 3.4 | **If the Benefit Cap limits your entitlement and you are unable to look for work, tell us why.** |  |
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**Part 4: Other information about your claim**

You must complete Part 4.

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| **Please use the space below to tell us anything else you want us to take into account.** Here are some examples:* Medical conditions or disabilities that you or a member of your household has.
* You are claiming a DHP because your benefit has been reduced because another adult lives with you and they can’t contribute towards your rent – please say why they can’t.
* You are claiming a DHP because you have to pay rent for two homes for an overlapping period. Tell us why you were unable to move home when your new tenancy started.

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| **For how long would you like to receive a DHP?** And please say why. |
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| **What actions will you be taking to avoid needing DHP in the future?** |
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**Part 5: Declaration**

You must complete Part 5.

Please check you have completed the form accurately and then read and sign the following declaration.

**I understand all the following:**

* If I give information that is incorrect or incomplete, you may take action against me. This may include court action.
* You will use the information I have provided to check my claims for DHP, housing benefit, universal credit and council tax support. You may check some of the information with other council records and with other local councils.
* The council may ask me to pay back any DHP that it decides it has overpaid.

**I know** I must let the council know about any changes in my circumstances that may affect my claim.

**I declare** the information I have given on this form is correct and complete.

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| --- | --- |
| Signature of person claiming  |  |
|  |  |
| Date | / / |  |

**Supporting evidence**

You must provide the following documents in support of your DHP claim:

* Statements for any bank, building society and Post Office accounts you have covering at least three recent months
* If you rent from a landlord that is not the Council, proof of the rent the landlord is currently charging
* If you rent from a private landlord, proof of the rent payments you are making
* If you are working, the most recent payslip
* Your partner’s most recent payslip (if you have a partner and they are working)
* A screen print showing your current universal credit award including the breakdown showing the housing costs element you are entitled to

It will assist us to decide your claim if you also provide the following documents:

* Proof of any loan or credit-card or hire-purchase repayment agreements
* Any letters you have received from the landlord about rent arrears
* Proof of any expenses that are especially high
* Your landlord’s bank details if they are a private landlord and you want DHP paid to them.

We accept photocopies of these documents – you do not need to send us the originals.

**What happens next?**

Send the form and any photocopies we need to:

**Westminster Benefits Services**

**PO Box 82**

**Erith**

**DA8 1WJ.**

You can also email your claim and supporting documents as file attachments to:

westminster.benefits@secure.capita.co.uk

If we need more information, we will contact you. When we have all the information we need, we will consider your claim and write to you with our decision and reasons.

If you disagree with our decision, you can apply for a review. If you do, a Review Advisory Panel of up to three Westminster councillors will review your case and make a recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration.

Our decision letter will contain more information about how to apply for a review.

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| **Part 6: Consent to share information** |
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| You only need to complete Part 6 if you are claiming a DHP because of a rent restriction and you rent from a private landlord.  |
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| Date sharing powers in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 allow the council’s Benefits Service to share information you have given in support of your claims for housing benefit and DHP with the council’s Housing Solutions Service. The purpose of sharing information is to identify and support people at risk of becoming homeless. The Housing Solutions Service offers a range of support to households affected by benefit changes depending on the circumstances of each case. This support includes:* help negotiating with landlords over rent levels
* access to housing-related support for vulnerable households
* debt counselling and budgetary advice
* help with finding a new home where appropriate and help with moving and settling into a new area.

The Housing Solutions Service will only contact your landlord to discuss a possible rent reduction with your permission.  |
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| **I give consent for the council to contact my landlord to negotiate a rent reduction on my behalf.**  |  Yes  No | [ ] [ ]  |
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|  |  |
| Signature of person claiming |  |
|  |  |
| Date |  |

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| You can withdraw your consent at any time by writing to Westminster Benefits Services, PO Box 82, Erith DA8 1WJ |
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| The outcome of your claim for DHP does not depend on whether you choose to give consent or not. However, if we restrict your housing benefit because of the caps on LHA, it’s important for us to know whether or not the landlord is willing to reduce the rent. |
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