

Discretionary housing payments

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Contents

[Discretionary housing payments](#)

[What discretionary housing payments cover](#)

[When discretionary housing payments are made](#)

[Where a benefit cap and a Managed Payment to Landlord is in place](#)

[How to apply for a discretionary housing payment](#)

Discretionary housing payments

A discretionary housing payment is money towards housing costs only.

If claimants are having difficulty paying housing costs they may be able to get a discretionary housing payment from their local authority.

What discretionary housing payments cover

Payments can cover:

- one-off costs such as a deposit or rent-in-advance
- on-going rental costs

Payments don't cover:

- money towards mortgage payments
 - help with council tax (see council tax for available support)
 - ineligible service charges
 - increases in rent due to outstanding rent arrears
 - certain sanctions and reductions in benefit
- these are examples, not a complete list.

When discretionary housing payments are made

Discretionary housing payments are a temporary solution to financial difficulty.

They may be made when people have been affected by the welfare changes like:

- the benefit cap
- removal of the spare room subsidy in the social rented sector
- changes to local housing allowance

To receive discretionary housing payments, applicants must be eligible for Universal Credit help with housing costs.

Local authorities make the decision about:

- eligibility
- when discretionary housing payments are awarded
- how much is awarded

Where a benefit cap and a Managed Payment to Landlord is in place

Claimants, who have a Managed Payment to Landlord Alternative Payment Arrangement in place, may be left with little or no Universal Credit to meet other living costs, once the benefit cap is applied.

Capped claimants in this situation who wish to apply for a discretionary housing payment can also have a Managed Payment to Landlord in place.

How to apply for a discretionary housing payment

Claimants need to check with their local authority. Details of local authorities can be found on GOV.UK.

[Back to contents](#)