



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of an **INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION** will be held in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **TUESDAY 11 MAY 2021 AT 10.30 AM**

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 30 April 2021

Note: Due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, non-Committee Members and members of the public will not be able to attend this meeting in person. If you wish to participate in this meeting in line with the Council's Constitution, please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can be watched live using the following link:
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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business

Enriching Lives

- Champion outstanding education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.
- Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to complement an active lifestyle.
- Engage and involve our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

Safe, Strong, Communities

- Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.
- Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to prevent the need for long term care.
- Nurture communities and help them to thrive.
- Ensure our borough and communities remain safe for all.

A Clean and Green Borough

- Do all we can to become carbon neutral and sustainable for the future.
- Protect our borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas.
- Reduce our waste, improve biodiversity and increase recycling.
- Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.

Right Homes, Right Places

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Build our fair share of housing with the right infrastructure to support and enable our borough to grow.
- Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.
- Help with your housing needs and support people to live independently in their own homes.

Keeping the Borough Moving

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- Tackle traffic congestion, minimise delays and disruptions.
- Enable safe and sustainable travel around the borough with good transport infrastructure.
- Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners to offer affordable, accessible public transport with good network links.

Changing the Way We Work for You

- Be relentlessly customer focussed.
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around you.
- Communicate better with you, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough.
- Drive innovative digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.

For consideration by

John Kaiser, Executive Member for Finance and Housing

Officers Present

Nicky Thomas, Service Manager - Assessments

Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

IMD NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	
IMD 2021/14	None Specific	DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS	5 - 32

CONTACT OFFICER

Callum Wernham

Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Email

callum.wernham@wokingham.gov.uk

Postal Address

Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN

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Agenda Item IMD14

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: IMD 2021/14

TITLE	Discretionary Housing Payments
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Executive Member for Finance and Housing - John Kaiser
DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME	11 May 2021 Council Chamber at 10.30am (Please see front sheet for attendance details)
WARD	None Specific;
DIRECTOR / KEY OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

PURPOSE OF REPORT (Inc Strategic Outcomes)

The Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) scheme is funded by Government to assist residents who are on Housing Benefit or receive the housing element of Universal Credit, with their rent or costs associated with moving.

DHP are not payments of benefit and are outside of the Housing Benefit Regulations and Universal Credit Regulations.

Under amendments to the Financial Assistance Regulations April 2013, expenditure falls within 4 broad areas:

- Local Housing Allowance Changes;
- Benefit Cap;
- Under Occupancy;
- General DHP awards.

How the DHP Policy may be written or operated has not been defined by DWP. It is a matter entirely for each local authority to compile their own scheme reflecting local needs and priorities. A document produced by the DWP called "Discretionary Housing Payments Guidance Manual" January 21, is to assist LA's with the administration of any scheme. Generally, calls on this fund represent "exceptional situations" for each applicant. Support through this scheme is to provide short-term assistance to claimants to meet rental costs or assistance in obtaining housing. Although seen likely as being short term in nature, the proposed scheme is flexible enough to continue support, in appropriate cases, for longer periods to potentially enable more permanent solutions to be found and implemented.

Without operating a scheme, residents could fall into arrears with their rent commitments and be at risk of becoming homeless, therefore impacting on other council resources. The scheme can also assist with costs associated with moving which can help with moving to more affordable accommodation. The purpose of this scheme is to assist in meeting those payments while longer term solutions are found.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Member for Finance and Housing:

- 1) Approve the Policy amendments to be implemented from 11th May 2021. Amendments are to financial year, job titles and funding details,
- 2) Agrees with the proposal that going forward the policy only needs formal sign off by Executive Member should there be any fundamental changes to the policy or award criteria, excluding those described above.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Wokingham Borough Council considers that it is in the best interests of the community to run a DHP Policy utilising the funding provided by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP). Amendments to the existing scheme are proposed to reflect changes to legislation, financial year, funding, and job titles. There are no substantive changes proposed and on the whole the scheme itself remains the same.

This updated scheme will continue to be known as the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme.

The responsibility for DHP is contained within the portfolio of the Executive Member for Finance and Housing. It falls under the provisions of an Individual Executive Member Decision for the proposed revised Policy to be adopted.

The DHP scheme is funded by the Government and the Council may top this up by two and a half times the Government contribution from its own funds. Wokingham Borough Council has been awarded an initial amount of £132,323, which will be reviewed and topped up by Government at mid-year based on caseload data. Government funding was £239,158 for 2020/21 for the full year, for 2021/22 the maximum amount of funding will be in the region of £186,000. The Council does not normally intend to make any top ups from its own budgets although may consider, if it is appropriate. However, for 21/22, the council has reserved an amount of £20,000 from its own funds, should additional spend be required.

DHP are not payments of benefit and are outside of the Housing Benefit Regulations and Universal Credit Regulations. The DHP scheme is set out in the Discretionary Financial Assistance regulations (S.I.2001/1167) as amended by the Council Tax Benefit Abolition (Consequential Provisions) Regulations 2013 (S.I. 2013/458), which came into force on 1 April 2013; and the Universal Credit (Consequential, Supplementary, Incidental and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2013 (S.I. 2013/630), which came into force on 29 April 2013.

Background

In developing this Policy, account has been taken of other forms of statutory and discretionary financial assistance that are available across the Council. These include:

- Local Welfare Provision,
- Rent Deposits & Rent in Advance (loans available through Housing Needs)

Normal practice for payments made under the scheme will be for the sums awarded to be paid either with current housing benefit using the current methods of payment, direct to the landlord or in the most appropriate way for assistance with moving costs or claimants in receipt of Universal Credit. Only in exceptional circumstance are payments made direct to claimants.

In developing the initial Policy in 13/14 an extensive consultation was undertaken involving the Corporate Leadership Team and many internal Departments/Services. External agencies such as welfare rights advisors (e.g. CAB; Reading Welfare Rights), support agencies (e.g. Age UK; Transform) as well as service providers (e.g. Job Centre Plus; Food Banks) were also consulted. All comments received were taken into account. A full Equality Impact Assessment was completed at the time of the original approval in April 2013 and kept under review. This assessment is not affected by these proposed changes.

Other changes were made in 14/15 to reflect feedback received from other services.

Further consultation was held with Housing Needs Team, Tenant Services, Income & Payments, Housing Solutions and Transform in connection with 15/16 changes, as the main proposal was to stop assisting with rental arrears. All were given the opportunity to comment on this change and included if appropriate.

DHPs are administered within the Assessments Service of Resource and Assets Directorate. It sits alongside the administration and determination of similar financially based claims for housing costs support (rent and council tax), as well as wider welfare benefits advice and Local Welfare Provision support. Therefore, the Service can determine whether there is any likely other funding that a claimant may access as an alternative source of assistance.

Existing funding streams already available locally have been identified and where appropriate, claimants will continue to be signposted to other forms of financial assistance, local or national, if that is deemed more suitable for their needs. This should help maximise the effectiveness and impact of DHP scheme.

Due to abolition of Council Tax Benefit from 1st April 2013, help with council tax liabilities can no longer be claimed.

Business Case (including Analysis of Issues)

The Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) scheme is funded by Government to assist residents who are on Housing Benefit or receive the housing element of Universal Credit, with their rent or costs associated with moving.

DHP are not payments of benefit and are outside of the Housing Benefit Regulations and Universal Credit Regulations.

How the DHP Policy may be written or operated has not been defined by DWP. It is a matter entirely for each local authority to compile their own scheme reflecting local needs and priorities, which should be done in conjunction with "Discretionary Housing Payments Guidance Manual" (January 21). Generally, calls on this fund represent "exceptional situations" and support through this scheme is to provide short-term assistance to claimants to meet rental costs or assistance in obtaining housing. However, the proposed scheme is flexible enough to continue support, in appropriate cases, for longer periods to potentially enable more permanent solutions to be found and implemented.

Without operating a scheme, residents could fall into arrears with their rent commitments and be at risk of becoming homeless. The scheme can also assist with costs associated with moving which can help with moving to more affordable accommodation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	The Council received an initial amount of £132,323, which will be reviewed and topped up by Government at mid-year based on caseload data to cover the cost of awards made for 21/22. The maximum amount of funding will be in the region of £186,000. The council have also reserved £20,000	Yes. No further awards will be made if funding is exhausted in year.	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Not yet Known	DWP advises LA's of grant amount in the	Revenue

		February/March prior to the start of each financial year	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Not yet known	DWP advises LA's of grant amount in the February/March prior to the start of each financial year	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The Council gets a small administration grant towards the running of this scheme. The amount for 2021/2022 is £13,008. All applicants must be entitled to Housing Benefit or the Housing element of Universal Credit in order to qualify for a Discretionary Housing Payment. Administration is undertaken by the Specialist and Customer Delivery Teams in order to minimise any cost implications to the Council.

Cross-Council Implications

During the initial development of this Policy, other Council service areas were consulted to ensure that this scheme was complimentary to but did not overlap with any similar provision in those service areas. The suggested amendments outlined above do not change that position.

Provision of a revised Policy to use the specific funding provided by Government for its intended purpose is seen as a way to maximise support for some of the most vulnerable residents in the borough. This should help mitigate or reduce calls for other statutory support services via the Council which may otherwise result in higher costs being faced

Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard has been given to WBC's duties under the Equality Act 2010

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Director – Resources and Assets	No major changes to policy that required consultation. Changes include updating of financial years, finances/funding
Monitoring Officer	Consulted with MO, nothing to add
Leader of the Council	Emailed policies to Leader on 13 th April 2021

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers

DWP Circular S4/2021
Revised DHP Policy

Contact Nicky Thomas	Service Income & Assessments, Resources & Assets
Telephone No 0118 974 6000	Email nicky.thomas@wokingham.gov.uk

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS POLICY 2021 - 2022

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1	13 December 2012	Nicky Thomas Mark Redfearn	First Full Draft
	25 th February 2013	Nicky Thomas	Final
Final	22 nd March 2013		Agreed by Anthony Pollock
2	16th October 2013	Nicky Thomas	Revisions draft
3	18th February 2014	Nicky Thomas / Kevin Mercer	
2 nd Final	29 th August 2014		Agreed by Anthony Pollock
4	19 th February 2015	Nicky Thomas Barbara Blake	Revisions draft
Final	24 th April 2015		Agreed by Anthony Pollock
5	24 th February 2016	Nicky Thomas Barbara Blake	Revision Draft
Final	22 nd April 2016	Nicky Thomas Barbara Blake	Agreed by Anthony Pollock
6	13 th January 2017	Nicky Thomas Barbara Blake	Revision Draft
7	3rd August 2017	Nicky Thomas Barbara Blake	Agreed by Oliver Whittle
8	9 th March 2018	Barbara Blake	
9	16 th March 2018	Andrew Kupusarevic	Final version submitted
10	29th March 2018	Andrew Kupusarevic	Final version – signed off via delegated powers
11	20 th February 2019	Nicky Thomas	Revision Draft
12	29 th March 2019	Nicky Thomas	Agreed by Anthony Pollock
13	24 th February 2020	Nicky Thomas	Revision Draft
14	4th June 2020	Nicky Thomas	Final version - Agreed by John Kaiser
15	24 th March 2021	Nicky Thomas	Revisions
16	11 th May 2021	Nicky Thomas	Final version - Agreed by John Kaiser

Discretionary Housing Payments

1. Introduction

National Picture

In July 2001 Local Authorities were granted new powers under the Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 to make discretionary payments in respect of Housing Rent and Council Tax liabilities, known as Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).

Due to the abolition of Council Tax Benefit from 1st April 2013, help with council tax liabilities can no longer be claimed under DHP.

Under the Universal Credit (Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2013, further amendments have been made to allow someone in receipt of Universal Credit, with a rental liability, to claim a DHP.

DHPs are not payments of benefit and are outside of the Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Regulations. We operate our scheme within guidance issued by Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) for best practice.

Under amendments to the Financial Assistance Regulations, from April 2013 Discretionary Housing Payments can be paid to cover other housing costs in addition to rent commitments. Expenditure is expected to fall within 4 broad areas:

- Local Housing Allowance Changes
- Benefit Cap
- Under Occupancy
- General DHP awards

The scheme is funded by the Government and the Council may top this up by two and a half times the government contribution from its own funds. Wokingham Borough Council has been awarded an initial amount of £132,323, which will be reviewed and topped up by Government at mid-year based on caseload data. Government funding was £239,158 for 2020/21 for the full year, the maximum amount of funding for 2021/22 will be in the region of £186,000. The Council does not normally intend to make any top ups from its own budgets although may consider if it is appropriate to do so. However, for 2021/22, the council has reserved an amount of £20,000 from its own funds, should additional spend be required.

This policy has been designed with consideration of The Human Rights Act 1998 and The Equality Act 2010.

Local Picture

Since 2013, Wokingham Borough Council (the Council) expanded the scheme to cover rent deposits, rent in advance and moving costs in addition to or instead of only allowing a time limited payment of rent in exceptional circumstances. This enables the Council to assist claimants with real solutions to ongoing financial hardship.

In addition to general DHP funding, further additional funding has been and continues to be provided by Department for Works and Pensions to assist hardship arising from Welfare Reform including:

- Reductions in Housing Benefit or Universal Credit where the benefit cap has been applied;
- Reductions in Housing Benefit or Universal Credit for under occupation in the social rented sector;
- Reductions in Housing Benefit or Universal Credit as a result of local housing allowance restrictions;
- Rent shortfall to prevent a household becoming homeless whilst the housing authority explores alternative options;
- Rent officer restrictions such as local reference rent or shared room rate Non-dependant deductions;
- Income tapers.

The responsibility for DHP is contained within the portfolio of the Executive Member for Finance and Housing.

2. Statement of Objectives

The Council recognises that it must be able to respond flexibly to the needs of tenants within the borough if it wants to support strong and sustainable local communities.

Discretionary Housing Payments will be used to help mitigate the escalation of needs that arise from unforeseen or exceptional circumstances that threaten tenants' abilities to remain in their homes, or secure suitable housing.

By providing an additional financial resource, DHPs will complement the running of the Council's Rent in Advance/Deposit Loan Scheme that is administered by the Housing Needs Team

In general payments of DHPs are to assist with a short-term fix, while longer term solutions are sought.

The intentions of DHPs are:

- To help secure and move to alternative accommodation (e.g. rent deposit, downsizing as a result of Social Sector Size Criteria deductions)

- To help with short-term rental costs until the claimant is able to secure and move to alternative accommodation
- To help with short-term rental costs while the claimant seeks employment
- To help with on-going rental costs for a disabled person in adapted accommodation
- To help with on-going rental costs for a foster carer
- To help with short-term rental costs for any other reason.

In recognition of the current economic situation due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the council will aim to be as flexible as possible while still adhering to this policy and DWP guidance.

3. Policy

3.1 Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme

DHPs are intended to provide short-term financial assistance in exceptional circumstances, where there is a shortfall between statutory benefits and rent. The scheme was extended to particularly help with financial difficulties as a result of welfare reform, although in general awards are still for a fixed period and are intended to be short term.

The delivery of the DHP scheme is purely at the Council's discretion. The scheme set out in the following paper shall be known as the Discretionary Housing Payments Policy and will apply from 11th May 2021 onwards, until changed.

Awards can be made for any period up to a maximum of 52 weeks, without review, under normal circumstances. Any claimant can apply for a new award up to 4 weeks before the end of an existing award. This reflects the expected temporary nature of DHP support. Financial criteria and checks for entitlement are carried out in accordance with guidance and DWP best practice guide.

In addition to the detail stated on page 4 of this policy, DHP awards can be made to cover:

- Moving costs – to assist in moving to more suitable or affordable accommodation
- Rent in Advance – to secure a new affordable tenancy.

DHP awards cannot cover:

- A shortfall if Housing Benefit or Universal Credit has been reduced to recover an overpayment or because other benefits have been reduced, for example, because the claimant left their last job voluntarily
- The cost of any services which are not eligible for help under the Housing Benefit or Universal Credit schemes such as ineligible service charges, water & sewerage, fuel and heating charges

- Increases in rent due to outstanding rent arrears
- Sanctions and reductions in benefit as set out within the current DWP DHP Guidance Manual
- Help towards the cost of Council Tax if there is a loss of assistance due to the abolition of Council Tax Benefit.

3.2 Applying for a Discretionary Housing Payment

- The adopted DHP scheme will be advertised directly to benefit claimants, to welfare rights organisations and will be on our website, where an application form can be downloaded. Consideration will also be given to undertaking wider publicity, for example, through Borough News and Housing Matters. DHPs will complement the objectives of the Rent Deposit Scheme (operated by Housing Needs Team) and the Council's Health and Well-Being Strategy.
- Applications must be made on the appropriate application form available on our website or in hard copy by request.
- Evidence may be required to assist with the decision making of the application.
- All outcomes will be notified in writing.

3.3 Eligibility Criteria

To be considered for a DHP the applicant must:

- be entitled to Housing Benefit, or Universal Credit that includes a housing element towards housing liability,
- satisfy the Council that further financial assistance (in addition to the benefit or benefits to which they are entitled) is required in order to meet housing costs,
- have an assessed weekly income no more than 110% of assessed weekly essential expenditure,
- In the case of requests for removal costs, rent deposit and rent in advance, where one-off payments could be made, we would look to see the affordability of the charges, for example where funds are needed urgently to secure accommodation and/or facilitate a move. Bullet points 1 & 2 above still apply, however the assessed weekly income may exceed the 110% buffer but the main consideration in an award for removal costs, rent in advance and rent deposit is the overall affordability including the sustainability of rent payments going forward.

3.4 Awarding a Discretionary Housing Payment

When awarding a DHP the following will be considered:

- If awarded due to a shortfall, awards cannot exceed the rent charged but could be up to 100% of any shortfall of benefit compared to the full eligible rent,
- If awarded in connection with a claim of Universal Credit, DHP awards can, in general, be up to the level of the claimants housing element of UC,
- If awarded due to a shortfall caused by a non-dependant deduction, the income of the non-dependant (this could be an adult member of the household including grown up children) will first be considered, along with the reason why they are not making or are unable to make a financial contribution to the household costs,
- In addition, no payment will exceed the difference between the assessed weekly income and assessed weekly essential expenditure, unless it is a lump sum payment for removal costs/rent deposit/rent in advance where affordability is looked at, or an additional sum towards rent, providing award does not exceed the rent charged but could be up to 100% of any shortfall of benefit compared to the full eligible rent and would assist in resolving a short-term issue,
- Different types of claim may demand different support levels and length of award,
- The Council may decide, where appropriate, to start to apply a taper to reduce the amount of DHP received, where a customer could be reasonably expected to address the issues surrounding the need for claiming,
- There will be no limit on the number of repeat applications where a positive award has been made,
- Repeat claims previously refused within the last 6 months for the same situation will not be allowed unless there is a change in circumstances,
- Any award is seen ideally as being a temporary assistance with the aim being to allow claimants time to assess and change their circumstances and to be able to financially support themselves going forward. Recommendations may be made to assist the customer to help address specific areas, and where such recommendations are not heeded, conditionality could be applied for any future applications for assistance.

3.5 Payments of a Discretionary Housing Payment

Any award will be paid either with current housing benefit using the current methods of payment, direct to the landlord or in the most appropriate way for assistance with moving costs.

DHP payments for Universal Credit recipients will be paid in the most appropriate manner deemed by the authority and in accordance with DWP guidance.

3.6 Notification

The Council will notify the claimant of the outcome in writing including the amounts and length of time of award, within 10 working days, whenever possible, of a completed claim and evidence being received.

The notification will also include details of what to do at the end of the current award if help is still required.

It will also include details of how to appeal a decision.

3.7 Right to Appeal

DHPs are not subject to any formal statutory appeals process.

The Council has formulated an internal appeals process for those who are not satisfied with the decision made.

If the claimant is dis-satisfied they can appeal within 1 calendar month of the decision being made, where it will be reviewed by a specialist officer who will be different from the officer who made the original decision.

The officer will look at the case and make a decision whether to change the outcome or leave the original decision in place. Where the original decision remains unchanged, before notifying the decision to the claimant, a final review will be carried out by the Service Manager – Assessments.

The claimant will be notified of this decision in writing within 10 working days of all relevant information being received.

This is the only and final appeal process open to the claimant. However, claimants do have the option to use the Judicial Review process to review the manner in which the Council has determined to exercise a discretionary function.

3.8 Overpayments

If the Council becomes aware that the information contained in an application for a DHP award was incorrect or that relevant information was not declared, either intentionally or otherwise, the Council may seek to recover the value of any DHP award made as a result of that application.

3.9 Fraud

The Council is committed to the fight against fraud in all its forms. Any applicant who tries to fraudulently claim a DHP award might have committed an offence under the Fraud Act 2006.

If the Council suspects that fraud may have occurred, the matter will be investigated as appropriate and this could lead to criminal proceedings.

3.10 Publicity

In addition to details being contained on the Council's website, the scheme is advertised directly to benefit claimants and to local welfare rights advisors.

Application forms are available to be downloaded via the Council website or will be issued in response to any request received by email, telephone, in person or in writing.

Consideration will also be given to undertaking wider publicity through Borough News, Housing Matters or any other Council publication.

4 Monitoring

The Assessment Team will monitor the amount and types of award made. This monitoring information will be available for management and Members at any time, and any other relevant persons or organisations with whom data can be shared within appropriate legislation and guidance.

In addition, the Department for Works and Pensions carries out monitoring on the amount of awards made to each funding stream: general Discretionary Housing Payment, Local Housing Allowance changes, Benefit Cap and Under Occupancy.

5 Financial Implications

The total Government funding allocation for England and Wales in 2021-22 will be £140 million (compared to £180 million for 20/21). An initial amount of £100m will be allocated at the start of the year using each Council's individual funding amount for 2020-21 as a starting point. This will be reviewed at mid-year 2021-22 and the reserved fund of £40m

will be allocated based on the latest caseload data. The Council's initial funding is set at £132,323 (compared with £239,158 for 2020/21) and the maximum funding is estimated to be in the region of £186,000.

It remains difficult to assess the level of take up each year, but it is anticipated that claims and payments during the continued COVID 19 pandemic may rise. However, the council has allocated a reserve fund of £20,000 to be available if the need should arise. The position will be closely monitored and reviewed.

Housing Benefit Circular

Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NA

HB S4/2021

SUBSIDY CIRCULAR

WHO SHOULD READ	All Housing Benefit staff
ACTION	For information
SUBJECT	2021-22 Discretionary Housing Payments government contribution for English and Welsh local authorities

Guidance Manual

The information in this circular does not affect the content of the HB Guidance Manual.

Queries

If you

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2021-22 Discretionary Housing Payments government contribution for English and Welsh local authorities

Introduction

1. This circular provides details of the government contribution and overall expenditure limit for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) for 2021-22 for local authorities (LAs) in England and Wales.

Background

2. Since 2011-12, additional DHP government contribution funding has been made available to enable LAs to provide transitional support to claimants as they adjusted to the Housing Benefits (HB) Welfare Reforms.
3. Whilst working on the allocations for 2021-22, we identified errors within the allocation for 2020-21. We have informed the LAs who were directly impacted.
4. The total DHP funding for England and Wales in 2021-22 will be £140 million. We are allocating £100m at the start of the year using each LA's individual funding amount for 2020-21 as a starting point. This amount will then be corrected to the amount they would have received for 2020-21 if the errors had not occurred. This amount will then be reduced in line with the overall funding from 2020-21 to 2021-22 (whilst preserving the rural pot).
5. At mid-year 2021-22 we will allocate a reserved £40 million of funding based on the latest caseload data.

Rural Funding

6. The funding for 2021-22 maintains the ring-fenced £1.5 million for the eight most rural LAs which are Ceredigion, Craven, Eden, Gwynedd, Powys, Richmondshire, Ryedale and West Devon (West Somerset is no longer included having merged with Taunton).

Overall Reduction in funding

7. Most LAs will receive the same proportion of funding they received in 2020-21 minus overall reduction in funding (and taking into account the fact that only £100 million of the funding will be allocated initially).

Errors in 2020-21 allocations

8. The 26 LAs who were directly impacted by the errors in the 2020-21 allocations will notice changes in that they are different to the average overall reduction in funding.
9. In order to smooth the impact on the LAs who received too much funding for 2020-21, the maximum reduction that any LA faces, will be capped at 44.7% for the initial £100 million of funding, which is the same level of reduction faced by most other LAs

Allocation of reserved £40 million based on caseload data

10. The £40 million reserved funding will be allocated at mid-year based on the latest caseload data.

2021-22 £100m of DHP government contribution LA allocations

Local authority	Initial (£100m) DHP allocation (in £) 2021-22	Top-up limit (x2.5) for initial (£100m) allocation
Adur	£93,041	£232,604
Allerdale	£139,045	£347,613
Amber Valley	£123,091	£307,727
Arun	£233,710	£584,276
Ashfield	£175,159	£437,898
Ashford	£195,188	£487,970
Babergh	£83,439	£208,598
Barking and Dagenham	£677,147	£1,692,868
Barnet	£1,398,050	£3,495,126
Barnsley	£398,959	£997,397
Barrow-in-Furness	£82,403	£206,007
Basildon	£298,144	£745,359
Basingstoke and Deane	£220,252	£550,630
Bassetlaw	£133,081	£332,703
Bath and North East Somerset	£193,424	£483,559
Bedford	£225,896	£564,741
Bexley	£381,012	£952,530
Birmingham	£2,752,983	£6,882,458
Blaby	£71,728	£179,319
Blackburn with Darwen	£262,756	£656,890
Blackpool	£168,006	£420,016
Blaenau Gwent	£148,187	£370,468
Bolsover	£106,929	£267,323
Bolton	£507,461	£1,268,652
Boston	£84,763	£211,907
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	£747,182	£1,867,955
Bracknell Forest	£135,991	£339,978
Bradford	£842,888	£2,107,221
Braintree	£170,315	£425,787
Breckland	£154,007	£385,017
Brent	£1,538,673	£3,846,684
Brentwood	£81,732	£204,331
Bridgend	£269,861	£674,652
Brighton and Hove	£647,076	£1,617,689
Bristol, City of	£747,840	£1,869,600
Broadland	£87,503	£218,757
Bromley	£494,221	£1,235,553
Bromsgrove	£70,496	£176,239

Broxbourne	£237,058	£592,645
Broxtowe	£88,387	£220,966
Buckinghamshire	£570,829	£1,427,073
Burnley	£177,703	£444,258
Bury	£243,809	£609,523
Caerphilly	£341,832	£854,580
Calderdale	£409,150	£1,022,875
Cambridge	£130,913	£327,283
Camden	£557,223	£1,393,057
Cannock Chase	£98,884	£247,210
Canterbury	£201,141	£502,853
Cardiff	£802,079	£2,005,199
Carlisle	£79,133	£197,831
Carmarthenshire	£275,050	£687,624
Castle Point	£156,498	£391,244
Central Bedfordshire	£255,501	£638,752
Ceredigion	£276,903	£692,257
Charnwood	£157,412	£393,530
Chelmsford	£197,098	£492,744
Cheltenham	£122,148	£305,370
Cherwell	£181,942	£454,856
Cheshire East	£339,987	£849,967
Cheshire West and Chester	£432,279	£1,080,697
Chesterfield	£142,360	£355,901
Chichester	£138,371	£345,928
Chorley	£107,051	£267,627
City of London	£11,560	£28,901
Colchester	£260,261	£650,652
Conwy	£180,217	£450,541
Copeland	£114,655	£286,638
Cornwall	£791,832	£1,979,580
Cotswold	£72,434	£181,086
County Durham	£837,194	£2,092,986
Coventry	£793,304	£1,983,259
Craven	£114,999	£287,497
Crawley	£203,105	£507,763
Croydon	£1,261,732	£3,154,329
Dacorum	£237,255	£593,137
Darlington	£159,109	£397,773
Dartford	£161,233	£403,083
Denbighshire	£176,464	£441,160
Derby	£377,149	£942,873
Derbyshire Dales	£57,717	£144,293
Doncaster	£500,136	£1,250,341
Dorset	£550,175	£1,375,438

Dover	£181,781	£454,453
Dudley	£477,620	£1,194,049
Ealing	£1,433,406	£3,583,515
East Cambridgeshire	£66,344	£165,861
East Devon	£154,640	£386,600
East Hampshire	£87,107	£217,768
East Hertfordshire	£154,164	£385,410
East Lindsey	£235,748	£589,369
East Riding of Yorkshire	£373,273	£933,182
East Staffordshire	£131,512	£328,780
East Suffolk	£337,949	£844,872
Eastbourne	£252,887	£632,217
Eastleigh	£135,378	£338,444
Eden	£145,339	£363,347
Elmbridge	£172,406	£431,016
Enfield	£1,645,182	£4,112,956
Epping Forest	£79,564	£198,909
Epsom and Ewell	£106,131	£265,327
Erewash	£130,877	£327,192
Exeter	£135,856	£339,640
Fareham	£85,197	£212,993
Fenland	£138,985	£347,462
Flintshire	£205,444	£513,609
Folkestone and Hythe	£224,770	£561,924
Forest of Dean	£73,343	£183,357
Fylde	£85,400	£213,499
Gateshead	£358,771	£896,927
Gedling	£116,929	£292,321
Gloucester	£193,892	£484,730
Gosport	£69,324	£173,311
Gravesham	£166,788	£416,969
Great Yarmouth	£210,753	£526,881
Greenwich	£624,022	£1,560,056
Guildford	£141,247	£353,117
Gwynedd	£644,618	£1,611,544
Hackney	£1,167,701	£2,919,253
Halton	£292,081	£730,203
Hambleton	£74,508	£186,269
Hammersmith and Fulham	£555,327	£1,388,317
Harborough	£53,450	£133,625
Haringey	£1,146,410	£2,866,026
Harlow	£163,028	£407,571
Harrogate	£146,809	£367,023
Harrow	£661,985	£1,654,963
Hart	£84,833	£212,082

Hartlepool	£243,239	£608,098
Hastings	£264,677	£661,691
Havant	£161,957	£404,892
Havering	£459,703	£1,149,257
Herefordshire, County of	£197,433	£493,582
Hertsmere	£193,087	£482,719
High Peak	£85,018	£212,546
Hillingdon	£630,651	£1,576,627
Hinckley and Bosworth	£89,210	£223,025
Horsham	£119,480	£298,700
Hounslow	£816,986	£2,042,465
Huntingdonshire	£159,208	£398,019
Hyndburn	£140,428	£351,071
Ipswich	£207,411	£518,529
Isle of Anglesey	£148,577	£371,443
Isle of Wight	£235,976	£589,939
Isles of Scilly	£461	£1,152
Islington	£557,339	£1,393,348
Kensington and Chelsea	£538,800	£1,347,000
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	£186,569	£466,422
Kingston upon Hull, City of	£549,377	£1,373,443
Kingston upon Thames	£308,487	£771,219
Kirklees	£505,306	£1,263,265
Knowsley	£399,879	£999,698
Lambeth	£880,244	£2,200,610
Lancaster	£205,589	£513,973
Leeds	£1,204,704	£3,011,761
Leicester	£630,858	£1,577,146
Lewes	£165,437	£413,593
Lewisham	£859,136	£2,147,841
Lichfield	£80,718	£201,794
Lincoln	£138,379	£345,947
Liverpool	£1,161,057	£2,902,642
Luton	£543,226	£1,358,066
Maidstone	£224,709	£561,772
Maldon	£56,108	£140,269
Malvern Hills	£74,532	£186,331
Manchester	£1,404,496	£3,511,241
Mansfield	£90,394	£225,984
Medway	£490,547	£1,226,368
Melton	£40,958	£102,394
Mendip	£154,754	£386,884
Merthyr Tydfil	£153,953	£384,883
Merton	£418,522	£1,046,305
Mid Devon	£78,873	£197,183

Mid Suffolk	£76,781	£191,952
Mid Sussex	£148,234	£370,586
Middlesbrough	£400,943	£1,002,357
Milton Keynes	£449,453	£1,123,633
Mole Valley	£69,930	£174,825
Monmouthshire	£132,088	£330,220
Neath Port Talbot	£297,794	£744,485
New Forest	£203,555	£508,887
Newark and Sherwood	£122,267	£305,666
Newcastle upon Tyne	£603,902	£1,509,754
Newcastle-under-Lyme	£119,368	£298,420
Newham	£1,306,817	£3,267,044
Newport	£414,562	£1,036,405
North Devon	£136,150	£340,375
North East Derbyshire	£113,826	£284,564
North East Lincolnshire	£284,043	£710,107
North Hertfordshire	£136,690	£341,724
North Kesteven	£95,525	£238,813
North Lincolnshire	£138,273	£345,682
North Norfolk	£112,447	£281,117
North Northamptonshire	£420,379	£1,050,945
North Somerset	£287,314	£718,286
North Tyneside	£309,105	£772,762
North Warwickshire	£59,138	£147,846
North West Leicestershire	£92,459	£231,147
Northumberland	£404,202	£1,010,505
Norwich	£255,383	£638,458
Nottingham	£642,329	£1,605,822
Nuneaton and Bedworth	£174,371	£435,929
Oadby and Wigston	£59,614	£149,035
Oldham	£438,888	£1,097,220
Oxford	£254,058	£635,144
Pembrokeshire	£238,680	£596,700
Pendle	£116,884	£292,209
Peterborough	£371,759	£929,397
Plymouth	£449,474	£1,123,686
Portsmouth	£438,842	£1,097,106
Powys	£524,255	£1,310,638
Preston	£219,122	£547,805
Reading	£369,691	£924,227
Redbridge	£884,151	£2,210,378
Redcar and Cleveland	£270,902	£677,256
Redditch	£89,510	£223,774
Reigate and Banstead	£188,175	£470,436
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	£418,632	£1,046,580

Ribble Valley	£35,033	£87,582
Richmond upon Thames	£278,141	£695,353
Richmondshire	£117,583	£293,957
Rochdale	£388,837	£972,093
Rochford	£94,808	£237,021
Rossendale	£70,731	£176,828
Rother	£150,041	£375,101
Rotherham	£423,801	£1,059,503
Rugby	£113,259	£283,147
Runnymede	£106,120	£265,301
Rushcliffe	£82,772	£206,931
Rushmoor	£161,621	£404,054
Rutland	£23,671	£59,179
Ryedale	£187,795	£469,487
Salford	£548,903	£1,372,258
Sandwell	£707,801	£1,769,503
Scarborough	£180,005	£450,012
Sedgemoor	£191,431	£478,579
Sefton	£511,785	£1,279,463
Selby	£70,483	£176,206
Sevenoaks	£131,769	£329,423
Sheffield	£748,846	£1,872,116
Shropshire	£302,175	£755,437
Slough	£475,055	£1,187,638
Solihull	£243,234	£608,084
Somerset West and Taunton	£250,376	£625,940
South Cambridgeshire	£101,836	£254,591
South Derbyshire	£86,879	£217,196
South Gloucestershire	£255,975	£639,937
South Hams	£95,794	£239,484
South Holland	£88,400	£220,999
South Kesteven	£160,408	£401,020
South Lakeland	£73,839	£184,596
South Norfolk	£113,770	£284,425
South Oxfordshire	£130,550	£326,375
South Ribble	£99,771	£249,428
South Somerset	£174,760	£436,901
South Staffordshire	£84,070	£210,176
South Tyneside	£316,147	£790,367
Southampton	£455,162	£1,137,904
Southend-on-Sea	£413,020	£1,032,551
Southwark	£748,579	£1,871,447
Spelthorne	£190,233	£475,582
St Albans	£142,159	£355,397
St. Helens	£340,487	£851,217

Stafford	£95,435	£238,589
Staffordshire Moorlands	£66,975	£167,438
Stevenage	£138,629	£346,571
Stockport	£284,681	£711,702
Stockton-on-Tees	£312,414	£781,036
Stoke-on-Trent	£408,579	£1,021,449
Stratford-on-Avon	£119,235	£298,087
Stroud	£54,457	£136,143
Sunderland	£275,882	£689,705
Surrey Heath	£74,783	£186,958
Sutton	£352,591	£881,479
Swale	£265,769	£664,422
Swansea	£396,905	£992,262
Swindon	£304,038	£760,095
Tameside	£406,942	£1,017,355
Tamworth	£100,959	£252,397
Tandridge	£105,677	£264,192
Teignbridge	£174,090	£435,225
Telford and Wrekin	£342,009	£855,021
Tendring	£320,443	£801,107
Test Valley	£114,005	£285,012
Tewkesbury	£78,671	£196,676
Thanet	£357,910	£894,776
The Vale of Glamorgan	£197,461	£493,652
Three Rivers	£121,768	£304,419
Thurrock	£361,725	£904,313
Tonbridge and Malling	£148,277	£370,694
Torbay	£345,910	£864,776
Torfaen	£190,567	£476,417
Torridge	£83,360	£208,400
Tower Hamlets	£1,066,848	£2,667,120
Trafford	£300,632	£751,580
Tunbridge Wells	£121,683	£304,209
Uttlesford	£65,325	£163,311
Vale of White Horse	£124,441	£311,102
Wakefield	£542,093	£1,355,233
Walsall	£546,985	£1,367,463
Waltham Forest	£758,023	£1,895,057
Wandsworth	£725,373	£1,813,432
Warrington	£231,292	£578,231
Warwick	£109,416	£273,541
Watford	£198,289	£495,723
Waverley	£106,962	£267,404
Wealden	£168,444	£421,111
Welwyn Hatfield	£172,312	£430,781

West Berkshire	£167,287	£418,218
West Devon	£134,153	£335,383
West Lancashire	£148,548	£371,369
West Lindsey	£120,406	£301,014
West Northamptonshire	£438,123	£1,095,308
West Oxfordshire	£97,687	£244,218
West Suffolk	£166,313	£415,782
Westminster	£810,964	£2,027,411
Wigan	£434,165	£1,085,414
Wiltshire	£291,784	£729,459
Winchester	£95,730	£239,325
Windsor and Maidenhead	£163,418	£408,546
Wirral	£610,217	£1,525,542
Woking	£117,699	£294,249
Wokingham	£132,323	£330,807
Wolverhampton	£541,423	£1,353,558
Worcester	£119,054	£297,634
Worthing	£176,057	£440,142
Wrexham	£231,581	£578,953
Wychavon	£106,913	£267,282
Wyre	£136,141	£340,352
Wyre Forest	£122,340	£305,849
York	£164,829	£412,072
Total	£100,475,443	£251,188,607