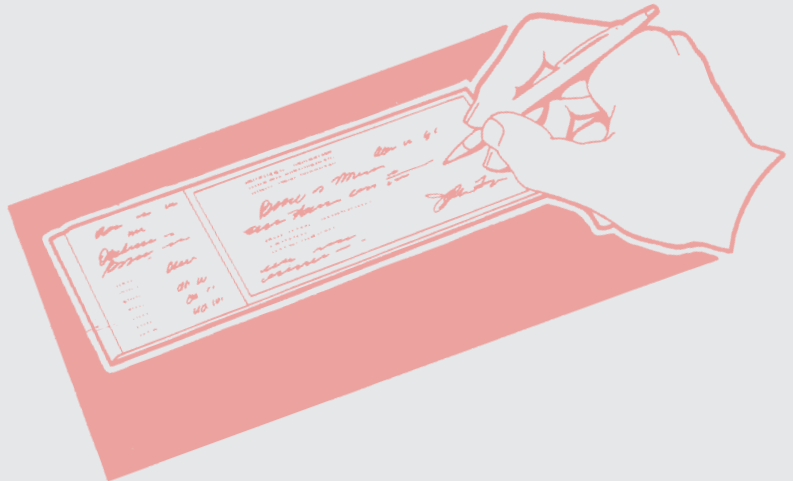


Gedling

Borough Council

Housing and Council Tax Benefit

Discretionary Housing Payments



In this booklet:

- *what are Discretionary Housing Payments*
- *who can apply*
- *application form*

plain English
approved
by the word centre



GEDLING
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Discretionary Housing Payments

What are Discretionary Housing Payments?

We can make Discretionary Housing Payments if we decide someone needs extra help with housing costs.

The payments are on top of any Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit that has been awarded. We only have a certain amount of money to spend on these payments, so the application form in this booklet will help us to decide if a Discretionary Housing Payment can be made to you.

What are housing costs?

‘Housing costs’ means the amount you have to pay for your rent and Council Tax. But a number of items can’t be counted.

These include:

- parts of rent that are not covered by Benefit, for example, charges for fuel, hot water or meals
- charges for water and sewerage
- increases in rent due to you paying back rent arrears on top of your normal rent
- benefit that has been suspended because you have not supplied information needed to support your claim
- any reduction in benefit because you did not go to a work-related interview
- any reduction or loss of benefit due to Jobseeker’s Allowance employment sanction
- any reduction in benefit due to a Reduced Benefit Direction or because you have not co-operated with the Child Support Agency in arranging maintenance.

We cannot make a Discretionary Payment to meet any shortfall between Second Adult Rebate and your Council Tax liability.

Who can apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment?

To be eligible for a payment, you must be receiving Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, or both. You also have to prove that you need more help with your housing costs. You cannot apply if you do not receive Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit.

If you are getting Housing Benefit but do not get Council Tax Benefit you will not be able to get help with your Council Tax.

If you are getting Council Tax Benefit but do not get Housing Benefit you will not be able to get help with your rent costs. You will not be able to get a Discretionary Housing Payment if you are already getting full benefit.

How can I apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment?

Fill in the form inside this booklet and send it to us straight away. You will need to enclose proof of the money you have coming in and going out.

We only have a limited amount of money for Discretionary Housing Payments, so not all applications will be successful.

If the application is filled in by someone acting on your behalf, please make this clear on the form.

How will it be paid?

Payment will be made along with your Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit. It will normally start from the Monday following the day we receive your application. Discretionary Housing Payments are paid for at least 1 week.

Strictly Confidential

Application for a Discretionary Housing Benefit Payment

Please answer all the questions in full, or tick the boxes that apply. Fill in and pull out this form and send it to the address on page 15 of this leaflet.

Title

Your Surname

All other names

Your date of birth

National Insurance (NI) number

Get this from your NI number card, payslips, tax papers or other letters from social security

Your Address

Daytime phone number

1 Why did you leave your last address?

2 How did you find about your present home

3 If you are a private tenant, did you ask for a 'Pre Tenancy Determination' before moving into the property?

Yes No

4 If you are a private tenant, have you tried to negotiate with the landlord to lower the rent?

Yes No

If 'Yes', please enclose proof that the landlord refuses to lower the rent

5 If you are a tenant, is there a risk you will be evicted if you cannot pay the shortfall?

Yes No

If 'Yes', please provide proof

6 Are all members of your household in good health?

Yes No

If 'No', please give details, and enclose supporting medical evidence

7 Has the property been adapted in any way?

Yes No

If 'Yes', please give details

8 Do you have any family living locally who could give you help or financial support?

Yes No

If 'Yes', please give details

9 Do you have any income that you could use to top up your rent or Council Tax payments?

Yes No

If 'Yes', how much could you pay towards the shortfall?

£ a week (rent)

£ a week (Council Tax)

10 Do you have any property or belongings that you could sell to help pay the rent or Council Tax?

Yes No

If 'Yes', please give details.

11 Please fill in the financial statement on the next page and then go to question 12

Financial Statement

Income details	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>
Wages or salary of the claimant		
Wages or salary of any partner		
Working Families' Tax Credit		
Disabled Person's Tax Credit		
Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance		
Other benefits (please say which)		
Retirement Pension		
Other pensions (please say which)		
Other income		
Total savings		

Please use the following space to give details of any other income you may have.

Outgoings	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>
Mortgage or rent		
Council Tax		
Electricity		
Gas		
Water		
Telephone		
Television and satellite costs (please give details)		
Travel costs (please give details)		
Insurance premiums		
Food		
Maintenance costs		
Medical costs		
Loans, court orders or fines (please give details)		
Clothing		
Household items		
Any others (please give details)		

12 Could you move if you were not able to pay your rent or Council Tax?

Yes No

If 'No', please say why not

13 Have you tried to find somewhere else that is cheaper?

Yes No

If 'Yes', please give details of any accommodation you found, when you found it and why you were not able to move.

14 Have you contacted the Citizens Advice Bureau or a similar organisation to check that you have claimed all the benefit you are entitled to.

Yes No

15 Please give any other information that you think supports your application. Continue on a separate sheet if you need to.

Declaration and warning

If you give false information, or you do not tell us information that is relevant, you may be prosecuted under the Theft Acts 1968 and 1978 or the Social Security Act 1992.

Declaration

- The information I have given is true and complete.
- I authorise the local authority to check the information if they want to.
- I will write and tell you if there are any changes in my circumstances or my household's circumstances.
- I understand that my application may not be considered if I do not give all the information you have asked for.

We must protect the public funds we handle and so we may use the information you have given on this form to prevent and detect fraud. We may also share this information, for the same reasons, with other organisations which handle public funds. This information may be given to other departments within the council.

The information may also be used for statistical surveys. This means we may pass this information, in confidence, to the Department for Work and Pensions and agencies working on our behalf.

Do not delay in sending back this form otherwise your benefit may be affected

You must sign the declaration below

I have read the declaration and warning above and declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information shown on this form is true and complete.

Your signature Date

Your partner's signature Date

What do I do if my circumstances change?

You must tell us as soon as possible if your circumstances change. We may need to change an award of Discretionary Housing Payment if your circumstances have changed. If the change means that you have received money you are not entitled to you may be asked to pay it back.

Examples of changes in income and family circumstances are:

- when Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance stops or starts
- change of address
- changes in income or savings
- when someone moves in or out of your home.

This list cannot cover everything. If you don't know if a change in your circumstances will alter your Discretionary Housing Payment, tell us anyway.

What do I do if I do not agree with your decision?

Discretionary Housing Payments are not part of the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit scheme. Therefore you have no legal right to appeal.

However, if you disagree with the decision you can write and ask us to look at your application again. You must contact us within one month of the date on the decision letter, giving the reasons why you disagree. You can phone, write or visit us and ask us to explain the decision. You can also ask us for a written statement of reasons, which will show more information about the decision.

The Benefits Manager will deal with these requests.

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We will look again at our decision if you ask us to. Please write to us saying why you do not agree with the decision.

Do I have to tell the council of any changes?



YES: If your circumstances change in any way, the law says you must tell the benefits section immediately

Would you like more information?



If you would like more information please phone the Housing and Council Tax benefit section on the following number.

0115 901 3970



Gedling Borough Council
Housing Benefits Section
Civic Centre
Arnot Hill Park
Arnold
Nottingham NG5 6LU



Website address
www.gedling.gov.uk



Our Benefits Office is open during the following hours:

Monday - Thursday
8.45am to 5.15pm

Friday
8.45am to 4.45pm

You can visit or write to us at:

**Gedling Borough Council
Housing Benefits Section
Civic Centre, Arnot Hill Park
Arnold, Nottingham NG5 6LU**

Telephone
0115 901 3970

You can email us at:
housingbenefits@gedling.gov.uk

Or visit
**Carlton Enquiry Office
Cemetery Lodge, Cavendish Road
Carlton, Nottingham NG4 3EF**

Open weekdays: 9.00am to 4.00pm

FRAUDLINE

*Do you know someone who
is falsely claiming benefit?*

If you do please tell the
Benefit Investigation Unit
on the fraudline number

0115 901 3999

