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DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Application for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and/or Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Payments (EHP)

What are Discretionary Housing Payments?

These are extra help for people who receive housing benefit and who appear to need further help to meet their rent payments. These are not intended to be long term ongoing payments; they are awarded on a short term basis while you take action to improve your circumstances.

What are Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Payments?

These are extra help for people who receive Council Tax Reduction and who appear to need further help to meet the weekly shortfall in their Council Tax Payments.

How do I get Discretionary Housing Payments and/or Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Payments?

The DHP and EHP schemes are intended to help those who have special circumstances and need extra help with their rent or Council Tax payments. These payments are made at the discretion of the Council; the money available is strictly limited and each case is considered individually.

If you want to be considered for a DHP and/or EHP please complete and post this form to us, giving as much information as you can and supply evidence to support this where appropriate.

What will I need to tell you?

When you complete the form we will need to know why you think you should get an additional payment towards your rent and or Council Tax, what your circumstances are, any action you have taken to help yourself and anything else you think may help us make a decision. You should supply as much detail as possible so that we fully understand your situation.

You will also need to tell us about all the money you have coming into your household (income) and all the money you pay out each week (expenditure) and if possible provide your last three months bank statements.

When you have completed and returned the form we will consider all aspects of your circumstances before we decide if we can award you a discretionary housing payment.

How will the benefits section make a decision?

We will consider all requests while trying to ensure that payments are made to those most in need. There is no list of circumstances that will automatically qualify you for an award. Each request will be considered on its own merits, but you will need to demonstrate that you do not have the means to pay the shortfall in your rent and or Council Tax yourself and that you have not intentionally taken on a property that you knew you could not afford. Wherever possible and it is reasonable to do so, you will be expected to take steps to improve the circumstances you that have led to the need for a discretionary payment, for example - finding more affordable accommodation.

Can I claim Discretionary Housing Payments to cover all housing costs?

Discretionary Housing Payments cannot be awarded for any of the following:

- ⊙ Ineligible service or support charges (water, fuel, meals etc).
- ⊙ Any rent you have to pay if you do not qualify for Housing Benefit.
- ⊙ Increases in your rent to cover rent arrears.
- ⊙ Reductions in any benefit as a result of child support, non attendance at a work focused interview; employment sanctions or breach of community service orders.
- ⊙ Shortfalls caused by Housing Benefit overpayment recovery.

Can I claim Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Payments to cover all my Council Tax costs?

EHP cannot be awarded for any of the following:

- ⊙ Amounts of Council Tax Reduction you had previously been awarded, but were not entitled to
- ⊙ Shortfalls in Council Tax Reduction due to sanctions or suspensions
- ⊙ Charges incurred as a result of recovery actions such as summons liability costs.

How much money can I get?

DHP and/or EHP will be paid at the discretion of the Council, but they cannot be greater than the weekly shortfall in your rent and or Council Tax. They are strictly limited each year. If a payment is awarded, it will last for a specified period of time. Once the period ends you can reapply and this will be considered. Reported changes of circumstance can also reduce or end your award early, therefore the Local Authority must be advised of all changes as they occur. If you are awarded a DHP/EHP and we later find out you should not have been entitled to it, we will ask you to return the money.

What if you turn down my request?

If your application for Discretionary Housing Payment or Exceptional Hardship Payment is turned down, and there is something you feel we have not considered or were not aware of, we will look at our decision again if you write to us within one month of the date of the decision.

Changes you must tell us about straightaway

You must tell the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service immediately of any changes in circumstances affecting you, your partner or anyone else living in your home. For example:

- ⊙ Any of your children leave school or leave home.
- ⊙ Anyone moves in or out of your home, including lodgers, sub-tenants and joint tenants.
- ⊙ Your income or the income of anyone living with you, including benefit changes.
- ⊙ Your capital or savings change.
- ⊙ You or anyone living with you becomes a student, goes into hospital or a nursing home, goes into prison, or changes or leaves employment.
- ⊙ You move or your rent changes.
- ⊙ You or your partner are going to be temporarily absent from home.
- ⊙ You or anyone living with you starts work.
- ⊙ Anything you have told us about changes.

If you do not tell us about any changes, you may lose money you are entitled to or you may get too much money.

Application for Discretionary Housing Payments/ Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Payments

About you

Title: _____ Surname or family name: _____

Other names: _____ Benefit Claim Number / Ref: _____

Address, including room number if you have one: _____

Postcode: _____

Email address: _____ Telephone: _____

About your claim

Do you wish to claim (tick one or both):

Discretionary Housing Payments for additional help with your rent

Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Payments for additional help with your Council Tax

*** If you want to claim Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Payments ONLY go straight to page 6 ***

About your circumstances

1 What enquiries did you make prior to occupying this address as to the level of Housing Benefit that may be awarded? _____

2 When did you move to this address? _____

3 Could you afford the rent when you first moved in? NO YES

4 Have you tried to negotiate a lower rent with your landlord? NO YES

If YES, what was the outcome? _____

If NO, why not? _____

5 Did you pay a deposit or rent in advance to secure this tenancy? NO YES If YES, how much? _____

Was this part of the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme? NO YES

6 What was your previous address? _____

Postcode: _____

7 Why did you leave your previous address? _____

8 How long would you need this extra help for? _____

9 When do you need the extra help from? _____

10 How much can you afford to pay towards your rent? _____ per month

11 Do you have any rent arrears? NO YES

If YES how much? _____

12 What period do the rent arrears cover? From: _____ To: _____

13 How and why have the arrears occurred?

14 What action has your landlord taken to recover your rent? Please send us proof of any action.

Court Action Notice to quit Notice seeking possession

A payment plan A letter Other

If **other**, please specify: _____

15 Please tell us how your accommodation is suitable for you and your family:

16 Please tell us how the area is suitable for you and your family:

17 Do you or a member of your family have mobility problems which mean you need easy access to public transport or shops, etc? NO YES

If YES, please provide details:

18 Have you or a member of your family any health problems or disabilities? NO YES

If YES - please give details: _____

Also enclose any supporting evidence when you return this form (Doctors letter, hospital or clinic appointments, medical certificates)

19 Has there been a death in your household in the past 12 months? NO YES

If YES - please give details:

20 Have you considered / tried moving to cheaper accommodation? NO YES

If YES - what action have you taken? _____

If NO, why not? _____

21 Is there anyone else in your family or household who can help you meet your rent payments? NO YES

If YES, please provide details: _____

22 Please tell us about any recent or future changes affecting you or any member of your family that we should take into account? _____

23 Any additional information? e.g. any other special circumstances or unusual spending that makes it harder for you to pay your rent

24 Are you a registered foster carer? NO YES

How many children are you currently fostering? _____

How many children do you usually foster at a time? _____

Please provide details of the organisations for who you provide fostering services: _____

25 The following people are expected to share a bedroom when entitlement to Housing Benefit is calculated:

- Ⓒ A couple
- Ⓒ 2 children aged less than 10, regardless of sex
- Ⓒ 2 children aged 10 or over of the same sex

Is there anyone who you believe must have a bedroom of their own because of their illness or disability?

NO YES

If **YES**, we will contact you for further details.

Do you have a partner who lives with you? NO YES

Household Income	YOU		YOUR PARTNER	
	Weekly	Monthly	Weekly	Monthly
Wages/Salary - Gross				
Wages/Salary - Net				
Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance				
Statutory Sick/Maternity Pay/Company Sick Pay				
Working Tax Credits				
Child Tax Credits				
Retirement Pension				
Private/Occupational Pension				
Pension Credit				
Incapacity Benefit				
Employment Support Allowance				
DLA Care				
DLA Mobility Is this used towards the cost of a car? YES / NO				
PIP Daily Living				
PIP Mobility				
AFIP				
Attendance Allowance				
Maintenance				
Housekeeping/money from people living with you				
Other income/Benefits				
Child Benefit				
TOTAL	£ :00	£ :00		

Expenditure	Weekly	Monthly		Weekly	Monthly
Rent you pay (the amount not covered by benefit)			Car - tax		
Mortgage you pay			Car - maintenance		
Council Tax you pay			Travel expenses		
Household shopping			Clothing/School uniform		
Payments to catalogues			School dinners		
Phone (landline)			Care Charges		
Phone (mobile)			Child minding fees		
Personal insurance			Child clubs/pocket money		
Home insurance			Sky/Cable/Digital TV		
Health/Medical (please specify)			Internet access		
Water rates			Loan repayments		
Gas			Credit card payments		
Electricity			HP payments		
Other household fuel			Pension contributions		
TV licence			Regular savings		
Fines			Subscriptions (please specify)		
Maintenance/Child Support			Cigarettes/Tobacco		
Shopping club			Alcohol		
TV/Video hire			Entertainment/Eating out		
Newspapers/Magazines			Social Fund repayments		
Car - petrol			Other (please specify)		
Car - insurance			TOTAL	£ .00	.00

Please note, some of your outgoings may not be included when comparing your income and expenditure.

Capital

Do you or your partner have any Bank or Building Society accounts? NO

YES if YES, how many accounts? _____

	Amount	Whose?	Account name and number
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Do you or your partner have any assets and investments - shares/bonds, etc? NO

YES if YES, how many accounts? _____

	Amount	Whose?	Account name and number
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Do you or your partner have any property or land? NO YES if YES,

provide the approximate value of the property/land: _____

Address of the property/land: _____

Postcode - UK only _____

Using your personal information

- ⊙ I authorise The Anglia Revenues Partnership to use all the information I have given or will give, for my claim for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction, to decide whether to pay me Discretionary Housing Payments or Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Payments.
- ⊙ I agree that the information I have given may be shared between Revenues Services and the Council's Housing and/or Welfare Rights and Debt Advice officers. Your information may also be disclosed to other agencies to help prevent fraud or if required to do so by law.
- ⊙ I declare that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete.

Declaration

Name of applicant: _____

Address for which the application is being made: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Partner's signature: _____ Date: _____

If this form has been filled in by someone other than the person claiming, please tell us why you are filling in this form for the person claiming: _____

I declare that as far as possible, I have confirmed with the claimant that the answers I have written on this form are correct.

Name of the person who filled in the form: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Relationship to the person claiming: _____

Telephone number *optional (helpful if we have an enquiry)*: _____

You should now have:

- ⊙ Read and made sure you understand the declaration page, before signing to confirm your agreement to the declaration.
- ⊙ Filled in and completed the application form and send to:

Anglia Revenues Partnership

Breckland House, St Nicholas Street, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1BT

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