

Application for Payments of Local Housing Allowance to your Landlord

Guidance Notes

Local Housing Allowance is a scheme of Housing Benefit for people living in private rented accommodation.

Local Housing Allowance is usually paid to the claimant; a claimant cannot simply request that payment is made to their landlord to cover their rent.

There are circumstances where we must pay the landlord the Local Housing Allowance and these are:

- Ø The claimant is 8 full weeks in arrears with their rent
- Ø The claimant is having deductions made from their Income Support of Job Seekers' Allowance to pay for rent arrears

We can also make a decision to pay the Local Housing Allowance to the landlord on behalf of the claimant where we consider the claimant is unlikely or unable to pay their rent (this could be because they are vulnerable or have severe financial difficulties) or where the landlord has reduced the rent in order for a claimant to secure/retain their tenancy.

What do we mean by unlikely to pay the rent?

- Ø A claimant has rent arrears and has consistently failed to pay
- Ø A claimant has previously absconded from a property leaving rent arrears

What do we mean by financial difficulties?

- Ø Claimants who are unable to open a bank or building society account
- Ø Claimants with severe debt problems
- Ø Claimants who are bankrupt

What do we mean by vulnerable?

By vulnerable we mean someone who may difficulty managing his or her money. This may include:

- Ø People with medical conditions
- Ø People with learning difficulties
- Ø People with physical disabilities
- Ø People who are mentally ill
- Ø Illiteracy or an inability to speak, read or write English
- Ø A person with alcohol/substance/gambling addiction
- Ø A person receiving assistance from a homeless charity
- Ø A person who is housebound or lives alone with no support

The above list is not exhaustive and there may be other reasons why the claimant is to be considered vulnerable.

What do we mean by reducing the rent to secure/retain the tenancy?

- Ø That the rent you are charged is equal to or less than the relevant Local Housing Allowance rate due to the change in Local Housing Allowance Regulations from 1 April 2011
 - For new claims, this change would be applicable from 1 April 2011
 - For existing claims, this would be applicable when any transitional protection ended

What evidence is required?

In all cases written evidence will be required and will depend upon the claimant's circumstances.

People who can provide evidence include:

Family and friends of the claimant
The landlord
Welfare groups
Care workers
Money and debt advisors
Social Services
GP
Probation officers
JobCentre Plus
The Pension Service
Support workers
Community nurses
Hospital staff
Court staff

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