



Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) provide customers with further financial assistance when the local authority considers that help with housing costs is needed.

Whether you are granted a DHP, how much it is and for how long it is paid will be a decision for Merton Benefits Service and will entirely depend on your individual circumstances, those of your family and household and the purpose of the DHP.

Who is entitled to claim DHPs?

Anyone who requires further assistance with housing costs and is currently claiming Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit can claim DHP.

What will they cover?

Among other things DHP will cover is:

- Restrictions in your eligible rent and Housing Benefit due to the introduction of under occupation rules in the social rented sector from April 2013.
- Increase in essential work-related expenditure due to moving further from your place of employment.
- Rent deposits or rent in advance if you need to move home.

What information do I need to provide?

You must provide any information that is relevant to your claim to help our decision maker fully assess your claim and come to a decision.

Additional DHP funding

The Government has given Merton additional DHP funding from April 2013, specifically to help two groups who may be affected by the introduction of the under occupation rules in the social rented sector. These are people living in significantly adapted accommodation and foster carers.

Adapted accommodation

If you live in accommodation that has been significantly adapted for you or someone in your household due to a disability, you may be entitled to a DHP to make up any shortfall in your rent from having a reduction for your spare room.

Foster carers

If you or your partner are an approved foster carer, you can get one additional bedroom under the size criteria rules, for a foster child or foster children. You may still be under-occupying your accommodation and see a reduction in your Housing Benefit, especially if you have more than one approved foster children. As a result you may want to claim DHP to cover any shortfall in rent.

How to claim a DHP

If you are already experiencing difficulties with a shortfall between your actual rent and your Housing Benefit, you can claim a DHP in any of the following ways:

- Go to our webpage www.merton.gov.uk/dhp and download and print the DHP claim form
- Email Housing.Benefits@merton.gov.uk , or
- Phone us on 020 8274 4903, or
- Come into Merton Link at the ground floor Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, SM4 5DX

If the changes relating to under occupation are going to affect you from 1 April 2013, the actual restriction in your rent will not affect you until then. It would be best to delay your claim for DHP just before then. We advise you to do so in early 2013 when you know what any April 2013 rent increase will be.