

**COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE  
INFORMATION SHEET (NO.3)  
23 JUNE 2016**

### **Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)**

The purpose of this information sheet is to update members on Discretionary Housing Payments following changes to the policy last year.

Following the committee meeting on 24 March 2016, a working group including benefit staff and members has been looking at the impact of welfare reform and the journey of those households affected.

In April 2013, 395 council tenants were affected by the social sector size criteria. This has been reduced to 267.

- 151 customers have not claimed DHP – 34 are in rent arrears and 117 are paying the difference
- 116 customers who have claimed DHP – 46 in rent arrears and 70 are paying the difference
- 267 existing customers, 124 households claimant and/or partner getting DLA or PIP
- 267 existing customers, 141 on list since April 2013

226 households are no longer on the list. The most significant reasons for change are:

Reason	Number of cases
Downsized	44
Income change reducing HB to nil	38
Started work	28
Became pensionable age	19
Non dependent moved in	18
Claimant died	14
Moved out of area	11

In April 2013, 104 Housing Association tenants affected. This has been reduced to 94, of which 61 have not claimed DHP.

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Note: The restrictions are:

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 1 bedroom more than the size criteria:          | 14% reduction |
| 2 or more bedrooms more than the size criteria: | 25% reduction |

The size criteria:

- One bedroom is allowed for each lone parent or couple (married or unmarried)
- One bedroom is allowed for each other person aged 16 or more
- Two children of the same sex aged under 16 are expected to share a bedroom.
- Two children aged under 10 are expected to share a room regardless of sex
- Any other child, a bedroom.

An extra bedroom can be allowed for the following:

- An overnight non resident carer for the claimant or partner.
- For a disabled child who cannot share a bedroom.
- If the claimant or partner is a foster carer.
- Non-dependant student who lives in a hall of residence coming home frequently.
- Non-dependant in the Armed forces during absences if they are on operations and intends to return home afterwards.

### **DHP awards**

We have awarded £13,108.81 during 2016/17, with a further £12,129.97 committed, and helping 56 households.

£59,403.14 awarded during 2015/16

### **Pro-active work**

- increase help to support Rent in Advance and removal costs
- increase publicity via website and benefit notification letters
- build stronger links with food and furniture bank
- build stronger links with landlords through Gloucestershire Welfare Reform Group
- joint working with tenant services and CAB to raise awareness
- simplify referral process and application form
- form submission to be made available on-line
- analysis of 141 cases who remain affected and have since April 2013
- analysis of claimants getting DLA or PIP

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**Benefit CAP update**

- DHP funding for 2016/17 increased to £117,558 to help support households affected by welfare reforms
- summer budget statement announced the benefit cap will be lowered from Autumn 2016
- maximum amount of out of work benefits working age families can receive will be £20,000 (from £26,000) or £384.62 per week from £500
- maximum £13,400 (from £18,200) for single adults with no children, or £257.69 per week from £350
- 92 affected households in the district. Benefit team analysing data to start the process of contact by letter and visit.
- mainly single woman with children affected
- the cap figures range from 51p per week to £245.53 per week

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