

**COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE**  
**INFORMATION SHEET (NO. 3)**  
**24 MARCH 2016**

### **Discretionary Housing Payments**

The purpose of this information sheet is to update members on Discretionary Housing Payments following changes to the policy last year – [DHP\DHP\\_Policy.pdf](#)

- DWP funding for 2015/16 £90,077
- £57,097 spent helping 133 households
- Claims received 165
- Claims refused 32
- 2 permanent applications in payment, relating to substantial adaptations and mental health
- 15 claims we have paid for more than a year
- 33 claims we have paid between 26 weeks to 51 weeks. .

<b>Reason for award</b>	<b>Number of Claims</b>
Benefit Cap	3
Social Sector Size Criteria (bedroom tax)	84
Local Housing Allowance	10
Combination of welfare reforms	25
Rent in advance	1
Award not for welfare reforms (risk of violence, non-dependant deduction)	10

At a recent Gloucestershire Welfare Reform meeting, all authorities are reporting a large under spend in comparison to previous years. The reasons behind this are often that the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) scheme is to assist Housing Benefit claimants who may need further financial help with their housing costs, during periods of short term need, it is not intended as a long term solution. Where help has previously been given, the claimant will now often be paying the shortfall or their circumstances have changed. We will always re-award repeat applications where the claimant is seeking debt advice and are registered and actively bidding on Gloucestershire Home Seeker. We also support rent in advance where appropriate.

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**What's happening in 2016**

- DWP 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
- Affected households will be notified in the spring and advised of support available to help them adjust their circumstances, including providing assistance to secure employment. This will give households several months to take up any support they might need and to prepare for the new cap.
- Estimated up to 200 households will be affected in the Stroud District based on data analysis by DWP

**Pro-active work**

- Increased publicity of DHP scheme – mention of DHP is included in all benefit notification letters
- Joint working with tenant services and CAB to raise awareness and simplify referral process and application
- DHP form submission to be made available on-line with launch of new website
- Working with housing advice team to increase take up of rent in advance

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