

Discretionary Housing Payment FAQ's

1. Why are you changing to an online claim?

We want to make the ability to claim a Discretionary Housing Payment more robust, so having an online claim form enables claimants to access the form any time 24/7 that is suitable to them, and removes the need for them to contact the Council for a form which can only be done during the Council's opening hours which excludes weekends and evenings, and which is sent via post which delays the process.

The online application form also pre-populates the information in the back office which will speed up the process as the Council does not have to data input the information which has been provided by the claimant.

Also this reduces the risk of miss-reading the information provided and miss-keying in the data. This means better use of resources allowing us to focus on making decisions.

2. What if I don't have access to the Internet?

Although most people have access to the internet either at home or via mobile devices such as phones, it is recognised that this is not true for all claimants. We can provide claimants with access to a PC at Elizabeth House for use in office hours so that claimants can access the website and complete a form online. Alternatively a Customer Services Advisor can assist with completing a form online at Elizabeth House or via the telephone.

In extreme cases the Council will issue a paper application form, although it will look at the reasons why an online application cannot be made. It is the Council's intention to remove paper forms in the future.

3. What will I be asked on the application form?

The online form asks a number of questions relating to who is part of your household including their names and dates of birth, details of the property including number of bedrooms, the rent paid and who your landlord is. You will also be required to provide details of your income and expenditure/outgoings which will assist the Council in deciding whether there is a financial requirement for the additional assistance. The form will lead you through the process.

4. How do I start the process?

Access the Council's website and on the search enter Discretionary Housing Payment

Alternatively search under DHP

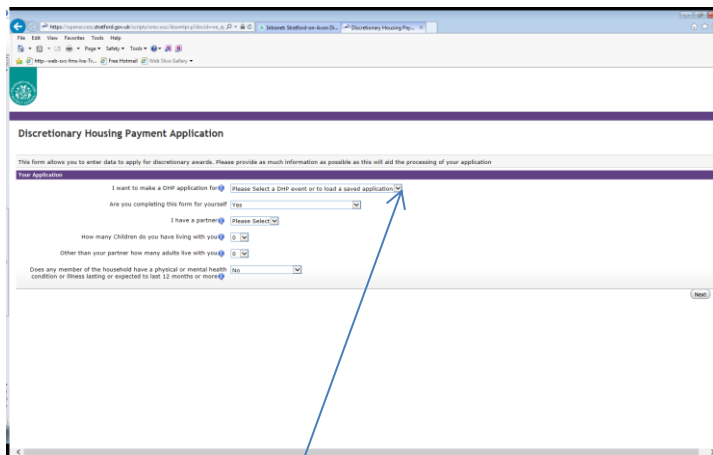
Select Benefits & Support : Housing Benefit

Scroll down the page to the paragraph "Applying for a Discretionary Housing Payment"

Click on the link DHP Form which will open the application in a separate window.

Or type the following link in your internet browser:-

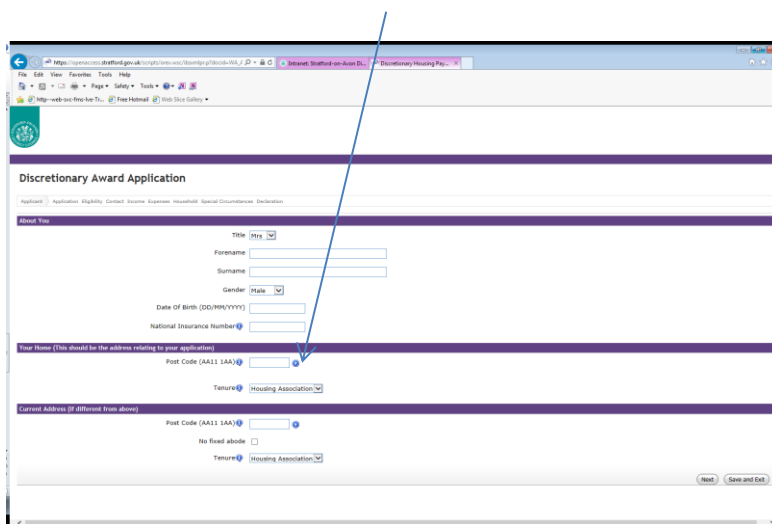
https://openaccess.stratford.gov.uk/scripts/orev.wsc/ibsxm|pr.p?docid=wa_application&DHP=true



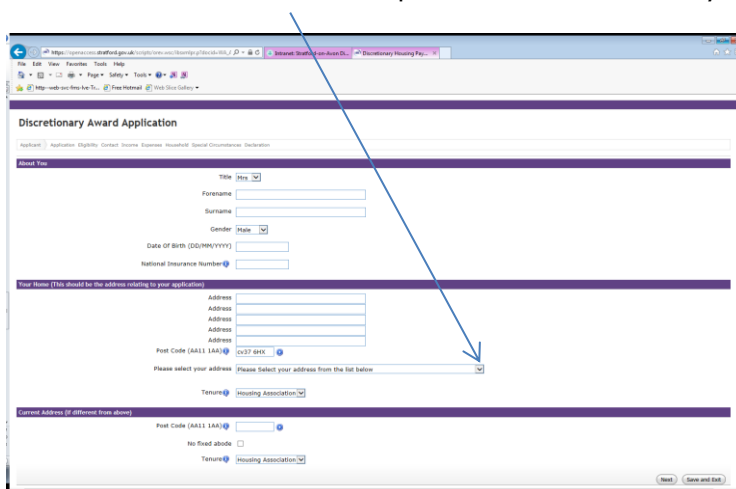
Select the reason for the application from the drop down menu
Continue to complete the form and select the next button to move onto the next page

5. How to enter my Address?

Enter your Post code into the relevant box and click on the little blue button



This will then enable the additional question "Please select your address"



Click on the drop down menu to select your address from the list.

If your address doesn't show within the list please manually enter your details

6. Why do I need to provide bank account details?

Discretionary Housing Payments can be awarded to claimants who receive Universal Credit which includes Housing Costs in the award as the Council doesn't hold details so requires this information in order to pay any award of Discretionary Housing Payment which is paid via BACS separately to any award of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit.

The screenshot shows the 'Applicant Contact Details' form. The 'Bank Account Details' section is highlighted with a blue arrow pointing to the 'Bank Account Name' field. The form includes the following fields:

- Telephone Number
- Mobile Number
- Email Address
- Confirm Email Address
- Contact Address Post Code (AA11 1AA)
- Bank Account Name
- Sort Code
- Account Number
- Roll Number/Over Ref

Bank account name is the account holder's name on the account not the name of the bank

Eg Mr R Smith-Jones rather than Lloyds Bank plc

7. How do I enter my Income and Capital?

The screenshot shows the 'Applicant Financial Details' form. It is divided into three sections:

- Please provide details of your earnings:** A table with columns for Income Source, Value, Frequency, and Next Payment Date. The first row shows 'Earnings / wages' with a value of 0.00 and a frequency of 'Weekly'. There is a 'Delete' button next to it.
- Please provide details of any other income you receive:** A table with columns for Income Source, Value, Frequency, and Next Payment Date. The first row shows 'Adoption Allowance' with a value of 0.00 and a frequency of 'Weekly'. There is a 'Please Select' dropdown and a 'Delete' button next to it.
- Please provide details of any investments and Bank or Building Society Accounts you hold:** A table with columns for Capital Type and Balance. The first row shows 'Please Select' and a balance of 0.00. There is a 'Delete' button next to it.

'Add More' buttons are located at the end of each section. 'Previous', 'Next', and 'Save and Exit' buttons are at the bottom of the form.

To enter an income and capital please select the drop down menu to select the relevant income.

To enter additional income or capital please select the Add more button and select the relevant income from the drop down menu.

You can use the delete button to remove any lines of income or capital that have been incorrectly entered.

8. How do I enter my Household Expenses?

Type of Expense	Amount	Frequency	Next Payment Date	Delete?
Rent	0.00	Weekly		

Debt/Repayment	Amount	Frequency	Next Payment Date	Final Payment Date	Delete?
Hire Purchase Payments	0.00	Weekly			

Similar to entering income and capital select the type of expense from the drop down menu.

To add additional lines of expenses click the add more button

Please remember to include all your household expenses as these are used to calculate whether you have a financial need for additional assistance via the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme, and will be compared against your Income.

9. If I have selected the next button but remembered that I haven't included something on the previous page such as income or expenses, what do I do?

Simply use the navigation buttons at the bottom of each page, selecting Previous.

Please do not use the refresh button

10. What if I have not got the information to hand or I want to come back to the form later?

The form allows you to select the Save and Exit button which will allow you to leave the form. The system will give you a claim number and password so that you can complete the form later but accessing the website as before.

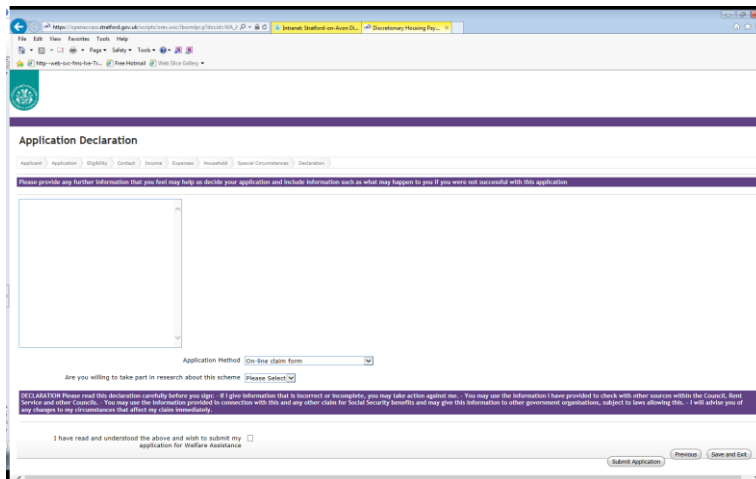
Select Load saved application from the drop down menu in the field "I want to make a DHP application for"

Click on the Next button

You will be asked to confirm your claim number and password to continue
Click Next button

**Please note that the password is case sensitive so needs to be loaded exactly as provided including upper and lower case.
I regret that due to Data Protection the password cannot be accessed by any staff member so if you lose or forget the password you will have to complete a new application.**

11. I have completed the form so how do I send it to the Council?

A screenshot of a web browser displaying the Stratford Council Welfare Assistance application form. The browser address bar shows 'https://www.stratford.gov.uk/...'. The page title is 'Application Declaration'. There are several tabs at the top: 'Application', 'Disability', 'Contact', 'Income', 'Expenses', 'Housing', 'Special Circumstances', and 'Declaration'. Below the tabs is a large text area for providing further information. At the bottom of the form, there is a checkbox labeled 'I have read and understood the above and wish to submit my application for Welfare Assistance' and a 'Submit application' button.

Once you have completed all the fields on the form and you are happy to submit the form to the Council please tick the "I have read and understood the above and wish to submit my application for Welfare Assistance"

Click the Submit Application button

12. I have submitted the application form to the Council but realise that I have made a mistake or failed to include some details on the form what do I do?

Once the form has been submitted I regret that you are unable to amend the form, however you can email the Council via benefits.sdc@stratford-dc.gov.uk with details of your DHP claim number if known and details of the incorrect or missing information that you would like to be included.

13. How do I apply for both a Discretionary Housing Payment and Exceptional Hardship award for Council Tax?

There is now a single application reason for weekly DHP and LCTR Exceptional hardship award