

Application for payment of Local Housing Allowance to your landlord

Guidance notes *(Introduction)*

- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) payments are normally paid direct to you. But, in special cases payments can be paid to your landlord.
- If you feel that you may have problems making your rent payments and it would be easier for you if your landlord was paid directly, please fill in this form. You can fill it in yourself or if you can't manage, someone else can help you.
- We will use this information to make a decision. Give as much information as possible and provide relevant proof so that we can make a quick decision. In some cases we may need to get more proof or interview you and/or your representative.
- We will write to you and anyone else affected by our decision, and of the right of appeal.
- Where we decide to pay your landlord, the landlord will only get LHA up to the amount of the contractual rent. If there is any excess, this will be paid to you.
- Please use extra paper if there is not enough space.

Who should fill in this form?

Where possible the tenant should fill in the form, but it can be filled in by someone on their behalf.

The tenant **must** always sign the declaration and be fully aware that it may lead to their LHA being paid to the landlord.

If the form has been filled in by someone else, they **must** also sign the form.

Guidance notes *(Tenants circumstances questions)*

- 1. Tell us about any learning difficulties that may cause you problems in paying your rent.**
Learning difficulties affects people's lives differently. Some find it hard to learn and understand how information fits into the bigger picture whilst others experience difficulties with everyday practical skills like cooking or using public transport, or social skills like holding a conversation. In cases like these, it may be appropriate to pay LHA direct to your landlord so that you don't get into rent arrears.
- 2. Tell us about any medical conditions or disabilities that may cause you problems in paying your rent.**
Disabilities vary and it may only be in a few cases that it affects how a person manages their affairs. For example, a severe impairment in both your sight and hearing may mean you have other problems with communication, mobility and access to information. You may need to stay close to medical equipment. Some disabilities may be encountered when you go out or try to access public buildings. You may also have physical problems due to your age.
- 3. Tell us about any mental health issues that may cause you problems paying your rent.**
Some people coping with mental health issues may be less able to manage their affairs and feel that organising rent payments are too much to cope with. You may only require additional help from us for a short time whilst getting help from other support networks and/or medication.
The most common forms of mental illness include:
 - Anxiety
 - Dementia
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
 - Alzheimer's
 - Depression
 - Personality disorders
 - Postnatal Depression
 - Bipolar Disorder
 - Eating Disorders
 - Phobias
 - Schizophrenia

Guidance notes - questions *(Continued)*

4. Are you coping with an addiction?

Someone who is experiencing (or has a history of) addiction, for example alcohol, drugs or gambling, may find it difficult to prioritise their outgoings. So, it may be more helpful to pay your LHA direct to your landlord.

5. Have you encountered difficulties managing your affairs because you need help understanding English?

The barriers that are faced by people who aren't fluent in English can inhibit their ability to deal with agencies or organisations. This can extend to banks, landlords or letting agents when trying to organise rent payments and the receipt of benefits. In some cases it may be in your best interest to have your LHA paid direct to the landlord whilst you get support and assistance to help you manage your affairs.

6. Please tell us about any recent changes that mean you need extra support, or if you anticipate any in the near future?

There may be times when you have experienced, or are about to experience, a change in your life that means you need extra help over a short period of time. This could be a bereavement, a relationship breakdown (possibly violent), coming out of hospital after an operation, going into hospital or a terminal illness of a close relative.

7. Do you have rent arrears?

Give details of any rent arrears you owe and provide proof of any action taken by the landlord to recover these debts, for example an eviction notice or rent arrears letter.

8. Have you had any previous problems paying your rent?

You may have fallen into arrears in the past which led to eviction and possibly homelessness. If you feel there is a risk of this happening again and get support to keep your current tenancy, give details. We may be able to offer extra support and help keep your rent payments up to date by paying your LHA to your landlord.

If possible, provide proof of this previous eviction, homelessness or rough sleeping.

9. Are you having deductions made from your Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance to pay rent arrears.

The Department for Works and Pensions can make deductions from your benefit for rent arrears - provide proof if this is happening to you.

10. Do you get support from an agency that can help you organise your rent payments and finances?

Support from various agencies is available to many people to help with basic skills - tell us if you get any support or care packages.

11. Is there anyone else that can help you manage your financial affairs?

This could be a member of your family, other relative or a friend.

12. How long do you think that payments will need to go direct to your landlord?

Tell us how long you would need payments to go direct to your landlord.

Tenants declaration

Make sure you sign and date the form, if you have a partner please make sure they sign it too. By signing the form you are accepting that the information you have provided may lead to your LHA being paid to your landlord.

We may share some of this information with other sections of the council or the Department for Works and Pensions.

Declaration from person filling in the form

If the form has been filled in on your behalf, they must also sign the form and give their contact details.

Financial assessment form

Weekly income

You

Partner

Net earnings from employment	£	£
Income Support/Jobseekers Allowance/Employment Support Allowance	£	£
Tax Credits	£	£
Housing Benefit	£	£
Child Benefit	£	£
Pension Credit/Retirement Pension/Works Pension	£	£
Any other state benefit	£	£
Money received from parents/friends	£	£
Any other income (please state source)	£	£
Total weekly income (A)	£	£

Weekly amount of outgoings

(Convert any monthly outgoings to weekly figures)

Arrears if any

Rent	£	£
Mortgage	£	£
Council Tax	£	£
Electricity	£	£
Gas	£	£
Water rates	£	£
TV Licence/rental	£	£
Telephone	£	£
Food	£	£
Household products	£	£
Clothing	£	£
Car/transport	£	£
Maintenance	£	£
Fines	£	£
Other outgoings (please say what they are)	£	£
Total weekly outgoings (B)	£	
Weekly income less weekly outgoings (A LESS B)	£	

Loans & other credit debts

Name of creditor

Balance owing

Offer of repayment

1	£	
2	£	
3	£	
4	£	
5	£	
Total monthly or weekly repayments		£

Tenants details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms	First name	Last name

Your address

Postcode

Telephone number

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Tenants circumstances *(Use a separate sheet of paper if required)*

1. Tell us about any learning difficulties that may cause you problems in paying your rent.

2. Tell us about any medical conditions or disabilities that may cause you problems in paying your rent.

3. Tell us about any mental health issues that may cause you problems in paying your rent.

4. Are you dealing with an addiction to drugs, alcohol or gambling? If **'Yes'**, give details.

5. Have you encountered difficulties managing your affairs because you need help understanding English? If **'Yes'**, give details.

6. Have you recently had a change in your lifestyle that means you are temporarily unable to deal with your financial affairs? If **'Yes'**, give details.

7.

Do you have rent arrears?

Yes

No

How much are your rent arrears?

£

What period do they cover?

From

To

Has your landlord taken any action to recover the rent arrears i.e. court action, notice of seeking possession, notice to quit, sent you a rent arrears letter, set up a payment plan, other, please specify and provide proof of any action taken.

Tenants circumstances (Continued)

8. Have you had previous problems paying your rent? If 'Yes', give details.

9. Are you having deductions made from your Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance to pay rent arrears?

Yes (If 'Yes', provide proof)

No

10. Are you getting support from an agency that helps you organise your rent payments and finances? If 'Yes', give details.

11. Is there anyone else that can help you manage your financial affairs? If 'Yes', give their name, address and phone number.

12. How long do you think payments will need to go direct to your landlord?

12 weeks

26 weeks

52 weeks

13. Provide any other information which is relevant to your request for LHA to be paid direct to your landlord.

What should be sent with this form?

Written proof to support the information you have provided. This proof can be from various sources depending on your circumstances, for example.

- Welfare groups
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Courts
- Care workers
- General Practitioner (GP)
- Probation Officers
- Social Services
- Hospital
- Family and friends

Please note this list is not exhaustive and proof from other sources may also be accepted.

Don't forget to read and sign the declaration on the next page

Tenants declaration *(Even if this form has been filled in for you, you must sign this declaration)*

Read the declaration carefully before you sign and date it and if you have a partner they must also sign it.

I understand the following:

- If I give information that is incorrect or incomplete, or if I do not tell you about a change in my circumstances, you may take action against me, including court action.
- I agree for my LHA to be paid directly to my landlord, up to the amount of my contractual rent.
- I will contact the Revenues and Benefits Service should I feel able to receive my LHA directly.
- I have read and understood the declaration.

I declare the information I have given on this form is correct and complete.

Your signature

Date

Your partners signature

Date

Declaration of person filling in the form *(If not the tenant)*

Please tell us why you are filling in this form for someone else.

If the tenant hasn't signed this form, give the reasons why in section 13 of this form and provide supporting evidence as to why payments should be made to the landlord.

I understand the following:

- The information is true and correct.
- I believe it to be in the best interest of the tenant to pay LHA, up to the amount of contractual rent directly to the landlord.
- I have read and understood the declaration.

Your signature

Your name

Telephone number

Email address

Your address

Relationship to the tenant

Returning the form

Send the form and any supporting proofs to the council's '**designated office**' for Housing Benefit claims, to:

Customer and Communications Service, PO Box 490, Rochdale, OL16 9AJ.

We actively encourage you to call into any of our customer service centres where staff will:

- Help you complete your form.
- Help with other enquiries or change of circumstances you may have.
- Check and return your documents.
- Pass your form and documents to the '**designated office**' stated above.

Telephone: 0845 121 2970 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm or Saturday, 9am to 1pm)

Email: revenues.benefits@rochdale.gov.uk

Web: www.rochdale.gov.uk

If you need other help you can contact the **citizens advice bureau** (check your phone book for details).

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