

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive

18 April 2024

TITLE:	Discretionary Housing Payment and War Pensioner Policy
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Cllr Barrow – Executive Councillor for Corporate Services and Finance
CONTACT OFFICER:	Joanne Wheeldon - Head of Revenues and Benefits
WARDS INVOLVED:	N/A

Appendix A1 – Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

Appendix A2 – War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Disregard Policy

1. Reason for the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to introduce policies for Discretionary Housing Payments and War Pensions and Armed Forces compensation disregards.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Executive note the content of the report and approve the policies.

3. Executive Summary

3.1 The Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme provides an amount of funding to deal with anomalies and hardship in situations where residents need further help with their rent. The amount of funding for each Council is determined annually by the Department for Work and Pensions and councils must monitor spend and complete returns, showing the category of spend against:

- Supporting claimants affected by benefit cap;
- Supporting claimants affected by social sector size criteria;
- Supporting claimants affected by LHA reforms; and
- Any other reason (covers original funding).

3.2 In order to qualify for funding from the scheme, a customer must be entitled to:

- Housing Benefit; or
- Universal Credit; and

- has a rental liability and is in receipt of the housing element.

3.3 Applications for Discretionary Housing Payments will be made via an application form and any awards are usually credited to rent accounts or paid with a private tenant's rent allowance. These costs are met by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

3.4 The Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 make provision for the first £10.00 of income from War Widows (Widowers)/War Disablement Scheme and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme to be disregarded in any benefit assessment. The cost of this disregard is fully reimbursed to the Council.

3.5 The Social Security Administration Act 1992 gives the Council discretion to disregard any amount it chooses in addition to the statutory provision. The Council has already agreed to this provision and fully disregards income that claimants receive from the War Widows (Widowers)/War Disablement Scheme and the Armed Forces Compensation Schemes. The cost of this is borne by the Council (c.£13,000 pa). Implementing this policy confirms that this provision will continue.

4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

4.1 Help and create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live and work.

5. **Alternative Options**

5.1 N/A

6. **Implications**

6.1	<u>Community safety, including safeguarding and prevention of terrorism</u> None
6.2	<u>Workforce</u> Having formal policies in place, supports the Benefits Team to administer payments and disregards.
6.3	<u>Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment</u> The report has been drafted in line with the Council's policy and procedures.
6.4	<u>Financial Considerations</u> Funding for Discretionary Housing Payments is met by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The costs of the War Widows (Widowers)/War Disablement Scheme and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme is c.£13k pa.

6.5	<u>Legal</u> The Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act 2000. Regulations, Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 Discretionary Housing Payments (Grants) Order 2001 (as amended). Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 Social Security Administration Act 1992
6.6	<u>Climate Change and Sustainability</u> None
6.7	<u>Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity</u> None
6.8	<u>Consultation</u> Not required
6.9	<u>Risk Assessment</u>

Martin Owen
Executive Director (Finance and Customer Services)

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

Appendix A1: Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Policy
Appendix A2: Housing Benefit - War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Disregard Policy
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/discretionary-housing-payments-guidance-manual/discretionary-housing-payments-guidance-manual>

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