

Application for direct payments of Local Housing Allowance to your landlord

What is this form for?

The Benefits Service will make all payments of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) directly to you, but we can make payments directly to your landlord where you have difficulty managing your personal or financial affairs.

The information you provide in this form will help the Benefits Service decide whether it is appropriate to pay LHA directly to your landlord. You may not need to complete all the questions, as each case will be different, but try to give as much information and evidence as possible.

Who should complete this form?

This form should be completed by the tenant, but it can also be completed on behalf of the tenant by:

- family or friends
- main carer
- an advice or welfare agency
- the landlord or letting agent
- another service within the Council.

The tenant must always sign the form, and be fully aware that it may lead to their benefit being paid directly to the landlord to cover their rent.

What should be sent with this form?

Written evidence needs to be supplied to support the information provided. This can be from various sources depending on a person's individual circumstances, for example:

- Community Psychiatric Nurse
- General Practitioner (GP)
- Hospital Consultant
- Probation Officer
- Social Worker
- Main carer/support worker
- Welfare Agency
- Department for Work & Pensions
- landlord (**for arrears only**)

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

For office use

Claim ref:

Date issued:

If you require assistance in completing this form a translation service is available.

1 Name of tenant

2 Address of tenant

3 Person completing the form, contact address, telephone number and the relationship to the tenant (if not the tenant).

4 Tell us about any learning disabilities that may cause you problems in paying your rent

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

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

7 Tell us about anything else that may cause you problems in paying your rent.

8 Do you have a care or support worker? Please give name and contact number.

9 Have you had any previous problems in maintaining rent payments?

10 Financial details

Do you currently have rent arrears? Yes No

How much are your rent arrears ?
and how long has this been going on?

11 Do you have other substantial debts or loans? Yes No

Have you taken advice from CAB or any other debt specialist Yes No

If yes please provide details and supporting evidence.

12 Tenant's Declaration

THIS BOX MUST BE COMPLETED

- The information given is true and correct.
- I am happy for my Local Housing Allowance to be paid directly to my landlord to cover the contractual rent
- I will contact the Benefits Service should I feel I am able to receive my benefit directly

I have read and understood the declaration.

Please sign and date the form below (if you have a partner they should also sign below)

You Your Partner

Date

PLEASE REMEMBER TO INCLUDE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE WHERE POSSIBLE TO SUPPORT YOUR REQUEST

13 Person completing the form, if not the tenant

- The information given is true and correct.
- I believe it to be in the best interest of the tenant to pay Local Housing Allowance directly to their landlord

I have read and understood the declaration.

Please sign and date the form below

Name Signature

Date

**Please return this form together with documentary proof to support the information to
The Benefits Section SIGNED BY BOTH TENANT AND LANDLORD**

Please use this space for any additional information

If you need this printed in a larger format please contact the appropriate benefit office or if you need a translation service, they will advise you.

Please return this form to:-

**Benefits Section
Spelthorne Borough Council
Council Offices
Knowle Green
Staines TW18 1UY
email:benefits@spelthorne.gov.uk
01784 446374**

**Benefits Section
Runnymede Borough Council
Civic Centre
Station Road
Addlestone
Surrey KT15 2AH
www.runnymede.gov.uk/benefits
01932 425388**

Application for direct payments of Local Housing Allowance to your landlord

Guidance notes

Introduction

- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) payments will be made directly to tenants. However, you can have payments made to your landlord in special circumstances.
- If you feel that you could have problems keeping up your rent payments and it would be easier for you if your landlord was paid directly, please complete this form. You can fill it in yourself or if you can't manage, someone else can help you. See the front of the form for details of who can help.
- For ease all questions are asked in the first person.
- The Benefits Office will use this information to make a decision. Tell us as much information as possible and provide relevant evidence so that we can make a quick decision. In some cases it may be necessary to gather further evidence 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 receive LHA up to the amount of the contractual rent. If there is any excess, this will be paid to you.
- It is important that you give as much information as possible to the questions so we can make a sensible decision. Wherever possible, please provide written evidence to support the information when you return the form.
- Please use extra paper if there is not enough space.

Make sure your name and address where you are claiming benefit and applying for direct payment of LHA to your landlord is completely clear.

The name of anyone completing the form on your behalf or helping you complete it should be clearly stated. We need to know their address and whether they are from a statutory or voluntary agency, as we may need to contact them directly.

Please also tell us about the relationship you have with the person completing the form and the reasons they are filling in the form for you.

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

This is likely to be for people with slight learning difficulties; those with severe disabilities should have appointees. The way learning disabilities affects people's lives varies greatly. You may find it harder to learn and understand how information fits into a bigger picture. You may experience difficulties with everyday practical skills like cooking or using public transport, or social skills like holding a conversation. In some cases like these, it may be appropriate to pay benefit directly to your landlord so that you don't get into rent arrears.

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

Physical disabilities vary enormously, and it may 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 additional problems with communication, mobility and access to information. You may need to remain close to medical equipment. Similarly, some disabilities may be encountered when you go out or try to access public buildings. You may also have physical problems because of your age.

Tell us about any mental health problems that may hinder your ability to pay your rent

Some people coping with mental illness may be less able to manage their financial affairs and may feel that organising rent payments are too much to cope with. You may only require additional help from the Benefits Service for a short time whilst receiving assistance from other support networks and/or medication.

The most common forms of mental illness include:

- Anxiety
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Phobias
- Personality Disorders
- Alzheimer's
- Manic Depression (Bipolar Disorder)
- Dementia
- Depression
- Eating Disorders
- Postnatal Depression
- Schizophrenia

Are you coping with an addiction?

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

Have you encountered difficulties in managing your affairs because you need assistance with understanding English?

The barriers faces by people who are not fluent in English can inhibit their ability to deal with agencies and organisations. This can extend to banks and/or 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 benefit paid directly to the landlord whilst you receive support and assistance to help you manage your affairs.

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

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

Have you had any previous problems in maintaining rent payments?

You may have fallen into rent arrears in the past which has led to eviction and possibly homelessness. If you feel there is a risk of this happening again and are receiving support to sustain your current tenancy, please give us details. We may be able to offer additional support and help keep your rent payments up to date by paying your LHA to your landlord. If possible, please provide evidence of the previous eviction, homelessness or rough sleeping.

Do you have rent arrears?

Please give us details of any rent arrears that you currently owe. Provide evidence of any action taken by the landlord to recover these debts, e.g. eviction notice or a rent arrears letter.

Do you have other debts that you need help to resolve?

If you have major debts, you may find yourself in a position where you are unable to open a bank account due to bad credit rating. This can be severe debts such as Undischarged Bankruptcy and County Court Judgements, or simply mounting bills such as electricity, gas, water etc.

Please give us the details. .

Do you currently receive ongoing support from an agency, organisation, friend or family member to help you to make rent payments?

Support from various organisations is available to many people to help with basic skills. Please advise us whether you receive any support or care packages.

Are you having deductions made from your other income, such as DWP benefits to help repay debts?

The Department of Work and Pensions can make deductions from your benefit for rent arrears, council tax or utility debts. You may also have deductions from your earnings to pay the Child Support Agency or to repay your council tax arrears. Please provide evidence if this is happening to you.

How long might you need payments to be made to the landlord?

Please indicate whether you would expect the payments to the landlord to be a temporary or permanent arrangement. For example, it could only be while you are in hospital or until other priority debts have been repaid.

Tenant's 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 benefit being paid to your landlord. We may share some of this information with other sections of the council, or the Department for Work and Pensions.

Declaration from person completing the form?

If someone has completed the form on your behalf, they must also sign the form.

Please return the form together with documentary proof to support the information provided to:

The Benefits Office
Spelthorne Borough Council
Council Offices
Knowle Green
Staines
TW18 1UY