



If you need to contact us:

Enquiries in Person

If you wish to make enquiries in person our offices are:

TORQUAY - Connections

Town Hall, Torquay TQ1 3DR

Opening times

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm

Wed..... 9.30am to 5.30pm

PAIGNTON - Connections

56 Palace Avenue, Paignton TQ3 3HZ

Opening times

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 9.00am to 4.15pm

Wed..... 9.30am to 4.15pm

BRIXHAM - Connections

New Road, Brixham TQ5 8TA

Opening times

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 9.00am to 4.15pm

Wed..... 9.30am to 4.15pm

Telephone Enquiries

01803 207201

The Benefit helplines are staffed during the following hours:

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm

Wed..... 9.30am to 5.30pm

Sat..... 8.30am to 12 noon

Further information about benefits may be found at: www.torbay.gov.uk/benefits

If you need to write to us

our address is:

**BENEFIT SECTION, TOWN HALL,
TORQUAY TQ1 3DS**

Email Enquiries

For Housing and Council Tax Benefit queries:

housing.benefit@torbay.gov.uk

For Council Tax queries:

council.tax@torbay.gov.uk

For Local Housing Allowance (LHA) queries:

lha@torbay.gov.uk

DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS

August 2008

What are Discretionary Housing Payments?

Discretionary Housing Payments are additional payments that the Local Authority can make in exceptional cases to customers who claim Housing or Council Tax benefits. These payments are not part of the Housing and Council Tax benefit scheme and can only be paid as a temporary measure.

Who can claim?

You must satisfy the Local Authority that you need additional help. There is a limited amount of money available under this scheme and the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that it is paid to those who are in most need.

Are there any exclusions?

There are certain parts of your rent charge for which Discretionary Housing Payments cannot be awarded:

- Services such as fuel costs, meals, water rates included in the rent you are liable to pay.
- An increase in your rent because of outstanding rent arrears.

Discretionary Housing Payments cannot be considered to make up:

- Shortfalls in your income caused by overpayments that are being recovered from your ongoing benefit entitlement.

- Where benefit sanctions have been imposed.
- If your benefit claim has been suspended for any reason.
- If you and your partner, if you have one, have savings in excess of £3,000.

What information will I need to provide?

To claim Discretionary Housing Payments you will need to complete a claim form, which we will send you. You will be required to provide full details of all the income and expenditure of all members of your household, including full details of any savings or other assets any of you have.

How do I apply?

You can obtain a claim form by contacting any of the offices shown overleaf, or you can telephone the Council and we will send you one in the post.

After you have returned the form we may need to interview you. This may be done by visiting you at home, asking you to call into one of our offices or on the telephone.

You will be notified of the outcome of your application, in writing, as soon as possible.

What if I disagree with the decision?

Discretionary Housing Payments are not part of the Housing or Council Tax Benefit, so do not have the same appeal rights. The Local Authority has set up an appeals system to review applications if you are not satisfied with the decision. Details of how to appeal will be contained in the decision letter.

How we collect and use information

Torbay Council asks you for personal information to action your benefit claim. The Council is bound by the UK Data Protection Act, 1998 to use the information you give us fairly and lawfully. For a full explanation of why we need that information, how we use it and organisations we share it with, please make sure you read the "How we collect and use the information" section on your claim form, or visit the relevant pages on the Council's website.

Equality Statement

We are committed to ensuring that no member of the public or employee is treated less favourably than any other on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, religion, ethnic origin, age, disability or any other condition that cannot be justified during our contact with you.