

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

16 April 2024

TITLE:	Discretionary Housing Payment and War Pensioner/Armed Forces Policy
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Christopher Wood - Portfolio Holder for Finance
CONTACT OFFICER:	Joanne Wheeldon - Head of Revenues and Benefits
WARDS INVOLVED:	N/A

Appendices Attached

A1: Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

A2: Housing Benefit - 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/Armed Forces disregards.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That Cabinet 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 the benefit cap;
- Supporting claimants affected by social sector size criteria;
- Supporting claimants affected by Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reforms; and
- Any other reason (covers original funding).

3.2 In order to qualify for funding from the scheme, a customer needs to 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.

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. 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> None - Discretionary Housing Payments are funded by the Department for Work and Pensions.
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> N/A

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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