

Local Housing Allowance

Tenants who are likely to have difficulty paying their rent: A Guide for Tenants

Local Housing Allowance is usually paid to the tenant. You cannot decide to have your Local Housing Allowance paid to your landlord. However, we can pay Local Housing Allowance direct to your landlord if we decide you are **vulnerable** or **unlikely to pay your rent**.

By **vulnerable** we mean someone who is likely to have difficulty managing his or her own affairs. The intention is to prevent people who are likely to have difficulties from falling into arrears.

Evidence to support your request will need to be supplied, usually in writing.

People who are likely to have difficulty managing their own affairs might be someone who:

- has a learning disability
- has a medical condition, that is likely to impair their ability to manage their own affairs on a day to day basis
- has literacy problems
- is unable to speak English
- has an addiction to drugs, alcohol or gambling
- has severe debt problems
- is unable to manage their tenancy without support
- is unable to obtain a bank account

What to do if you think you are likely to have difficulty managing your own affairs:

- Contact us. We will assist you in making an application for payments of Local Housing Allowance to your Landlord.
- Give us as much information and evidence as possible. We cannot pay Local Housing Allowance to your landlord without this.

Making a decision

Once we have collected evidence we will decide as quickly as possible if you are to be classed as vulnerable or as unlikely to pay. We may still pay Local Housing Allowance to you while we are making our decision. We will notify all the affected parties of our decision.

What you should do if you think this decision is wrong

If you disagree with our decision you should get in touch with us within **one month** of the date of the decision notification. The rules for this are the same as the rules for Housing Benefit. You can contact us by phone or in writing. You can either:

- ask for an explanation
- tell us why you think the decision is wrong and ask us to look at the decision again
- appeal against the decision – this must be in writing.

If you appeal, an independent tribunal by the Tribunal Service may hear your appeal.

Money advice

You can get help managing your money from Citizens Advice Bureau, Bennet House, 14 Horsemarket, Darlington, Co Durham, DL1 5PT Tel: (01325) 256999.

Further information

If you want more information about vulnerable tenants/ unlikely to pay tenants:

Visit our website at: www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/housing+benefits

Write to us at:
Housing Benefits Section
Darlington Borough Council
Town Hall
Darlington
DL1 5QT

Telephone: Customer Services on (01325) 388514

or visit us in person at: Customer Contact Centre Town Hall Darlington.

Opening Times are: Mon – Thurs 8:30 to 5:00, Friday 8:30 to 4:30