

Revenues and Benefits

Civic Centre
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For Official Use Only		
Council Tax ref:	Date Issued:	Date Received:

Exceptional Hardship Payments

What are Exceptional Hardship Payments?

If you need extra help with Council Tax, Exceptional Hardship Payments may be available to you. Exceptional Hardship Payments are payments that can be made, along with any Council Tax Support already in payment.

We have a limited annual Exceptional Hardship Payment budget. This application form will help us to decide if an award can be made to you. Please note that not all applications will be successful as funds for Exceptional Hardship Payments are limited. To ensure consistency we will only consider information included on the form and any current supporting evidence supplied, no assumptions can be made. Each claim made is unique they are not continuations, therefore if another claim is made all information is required once more, we cannot refer to previous claims.

What is not covered?

A number of items are excluded:

- Parts of rent not covered by benefit, such as charges for fuel, hot water or meals
- Charges for individual water and sewerage
- Increases in rent due to rent arrears
- Benefit that has been suspended because you have failed to supply the information necessary for your claim
- Any reduction in Benefit as a result of non-attendance at a work-focused interview
- Any reduction or loss of Benefit due to Job Seeker's Allowance employment sanction
- Any reduction in Benefit due to Benefit Direction or failure to comply with Child Support Agency in arranging maintenance
- Any reduction in Benefit due to recovery of an overpayment, social fund loan or direct payments
- Payments for debts or utility payments
- Overpayments of Council Tax Support and/or Housing Benefit for current or previous years
- This list does not cover all exclusions

Who can apply for an Exceptional Hardship Payment?

To be eligible for a payment, you must be receiving Council Tax Support, and you must then satisfy us that you require further help with your Council Tax Liability.

If you do not get Council Tax Support you cannot apply for Exceptional Hardship Payments.

How can I apply for an Exceptional Hardship Payment?

Complete and return this form immediately, along with any supporting evidence you may have. The more supporting evidence supplied, the better your chance of qualifying for an award. If no supporting evidence of debt or outstanding loans is supplied, hardship due to debt will not be proven and therefore cannot be considered.

If you are acting on another's behalf, please make this clear on the form.

What do I need to do?

As part of this application you must be willing to:

- Show you have tried to maximise your income
- Show you have tried to obtain cheaper alternative accommodation
- Made an effort to make some payments or be willing to make payments
- Co-operate with Harlow Council to identify any needs/discounts/exemptions are correctly applied
- Show flexibility and/or accept alternative payment arrangements
- Sought money management/debt advice from independent bodies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau

How will it be paid?

Payment will be made directly to your Council Tax account.

Awards can only be made up to the end of the financial year. If you continue to need help with your housing costs you should reclaim two weeks before your current award runs out.

Where can I get help with this form?

Attached to this form is a list of agencies/organisations that may be able to assist you in completing this form. Alternatively, please ask at Contact Harlow for an appointment to be made with an LCTS Officer.

What should I do if I do not agree with your decision?

Exceptional Hardship Payments are made outside of the Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support scheme and therefore there are no statutory appeal rights.

If you disagree with the decision made you can write to us and ask us to look at your application again. A panel of Senior Officers will then review your original request. You must contact us within one month of the date on the decision letter, giving the reasons why you disagree and supply any new supporting evidence that you believe is relevant.

Alternatively you can phone or write to us and ask for a full explanation of the decision.

For Further Help and Advice

In Person

Contact Harlow
Harlow Council
Civic Centre
The Water Gardens
Harlow, Essex
CM20 1WG

By Post, Phone or Email

Revenues & Benefits
Harlow Council
Civic Centre
The Water Gardens
Harlow, Essex
CM20 1WG

Opening Times:

Monday - Friday 9 am – 4.45 pm

Telephone: 01279 44668

E-mail: council.tax@harlow.gov.uk

Exceptional Hardship Payments Form

Complete and return this form as soon as possible.

Confidential

Title: Mr Mrs Miss Ms

Surname:

Other Names:

Date of Birth:

National Insurance Number:

You will find your National Insurance Number on your National Insurance Number Card, payslips, tax papers, or other letters from the Department of Works and Pensions.

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime Telephone Number:

1. How much is your current Council Tax Bill?

£

2. How much are your Council Tax arrears?

£

3. Do you have rent/mortgage arrears? Yes No

If YES how much? £

4. Are you currently under occupying your property? Yes No

If YES how many extra bedrooms?

5. **Is there a risk you will be evicted if you do not pay your arrears?** Yes No

If YES please provide proof of rent arrears or copies of letters from your Landlord, Notice of Repossession or Notice to Quit

6. **Have you attempted to find cheaper alternative accommodation?** Yes No

If YES please give details of what you have done and why you are not able to move

7. **Are all members of your household in good health?** Yes No

If NO please give details. You may be required to provide supporting medical evidence

8. **Has the property been adapted in any way due to a physical disability of yourself or your household?** Yes No

If YES, please give details.

9. Do you have any special circumstances associated with support or incapacity of yourself or others? Yes No

If YES, please give details.

10. Do you have any special circumstances associated with the schooling or care of dependent children? Yes No

If YES, please give details.

11. Do you have any family living locally who could give you help or financial support? Yes No

If YES, please give details.

12. Do you have any income that you could use to top up your Council Tax? Yes No

If YES how much could you pay? £ per week Council Tax

13. Do you have any assets, property or belongings such as a car, motor bike, caravan etc.? Yes No

14. Could you sell these to help pay the Council Tax? Yes No

If YES, please give details.

Request for Financial Information

Income Details	Weekly	Monthly
Wages / Salary of the Claimant		
Wages / Salary of any Partner		
Working Tax Credit		
Child Tax Credit		
Income Support / Job Seeker's Allowance / Employment and Support Allowance / Statutory Sick Pay		
Other Benefits (Please specify which)		
Retirement Pension		
Pension Credit		
Other Pensions (please specify)		
Child Support / Maintenance		
Income from boarders/ Lodgers		
Non-Dependant Contributions		
Student loans / Grants		
Disability Living Allowance / Attendance Allowance / Personal Independence Payments		
Carers Allowance		
Other Income		
Total Capital		

Please use the following space to give details of any other income you may have.

Expenses	Amount	Frequency
Rent / Mortgage		
Council Tax		
Electricity		
Gas		
Water Rates		
Landline telephone		
Food & grocery shopping		
Secured Loan		
Bus fares		
Taxi fares		
Mobile phone		
TV Licence		
Satellite/cable TV		
Internet		
Household insurance		
Life Insurance		
Car insurance		
Petrol/diesel		
Car Tax		
Car repairs/MOTs		
Drinking		
Smoking		
Clothing and shoes including school uniform		
School expenses		
Gambling		
Christmas/birthdays		
Loans		
Credit cards		
Catalogue Payments		
Any other debts (please specify)		
Other (please specify)		

Please provide proof of all debts and loans on this application form. Without this your application could be delayed.

Please use this space to tell us of any other income, outgoings or financial liabilities which you may have

- 15. Could you move if your rent/mortgage cannot be met?** Yes No
Please give details why

- 16. Have you approached any professional organisations/advice services to check that you have claimed all the benefits to which you are entitled?** Yes No
If YES please give details

- 17. Have you approached any professional organisations/advice services for debt/money management help and advice?** Yes No
If YES please give details and dates of any appointments made or outstanding

Use this space to provide any other information you think is relevant in support of your application

Declaration & Warning

The information supplied via this form will only be shared with, or disclosed to other bodies as per the information sharing statement on your original benefit application form.

The information may also be used anonymously for statistical surveys, which means we may pass this information, in confidence, to the Department for Work and Pensions and agencies working on our behalf.



Any false information or failure to disclose relevant information may lead to a prosecution under the Social Security Administration Act 1992 (as amended by The Social Security Fraud Act 2001), The Fraud Act 2006 and The Local Government Finance Act 1992

- The information I have given is true and complete
- I authorise the local authority to verify the information if they wish to do so
- I will write and tell you if there are any changes in my circumstances or my households circumstances
- I understand that my application may not be considered if I do not provide all the information you have asked for

The following must be completed by all applicants

I / We have read the declaration and warning above and declare that to the best of my/our knowledge and belief, the information shown on this form is in accordance with that declaration and warning.

Your Signature:

Date:

Your Partner's Signature:

Date:



Do not delay in returning this form. Any delay may affect your award.

What do I do if my circumstances change?

You must inform us of any changes in you circumstances as soon as possible. We may need to revise an award of Exceptional Hardship Payment where your circumstances have changed. If the change means that you have received monies to which you are not entitled to, you may be asked to pay the money back.

Examples of changes in income and family circumstances:

- Changes in income or savings
- When Income Support, Job Seeker's Allowance or Employment Support Allowance stops or starts
- If Tax Credits are awarded withdrawn or the rate of award changes
- When someone moves in or out of your home

If you not sure if a change in your circumstances will alter your Exceptional Hardship Payment, tell us anyway.