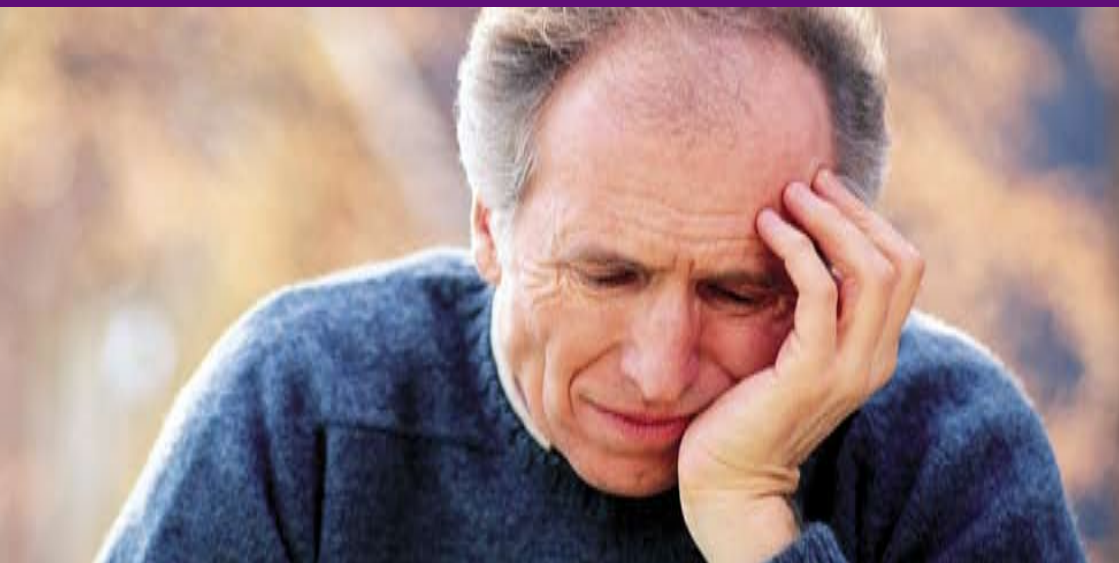


## **LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE**

Tenants who are likely to have difficulty paying their rent



With Local Housing Allowance, benefit is usually paid to the tenant. Tenants cannot choose to have their benefit paid to their landlord. But in some circumstances we can decide to pay benefit to the landlord.

## WHEN MAY A LOCAL AUTHORITY MAKE PAYMENTS TO THE LANDLORD?

The local authority must usually pay the benefit to the landlord if the tenant is eight weeks or more in arrears with their rent.

Payment may be made direct to the landlord where we decide that the tenant is:

- likely to have difficulty in managing their financial affairs.
- unlikely to pay their rent

We can also decide to pay benefit to the landlord if, during the current claim to benefit, we have had to pay the landlord because the tenant was eight weeks or more in arrears with their rent. (Elapsed arrears)

## WHO CAN ASK FOR THE PAYMENTS TO BE MADE TO THE LANDLORD?

- You,
- Your friends and family,
- Your landlord,
- Welfare groups (including money advisers),
- Social Services,
- Your doctor,
- Probation officers,
- Jobcentre Plus, or
- The Pension Service.

This list is not definitive and we may ask for evidence from other persons or organisations than those listed. It may also be necessary to invite you to our office for an interview to establish vulnerability.

Please remember that your rental agreement is a contract between you and your landlord, and although the council will administer the payment of Housing Benefit depending on your circumstances and sufficient evidence being provided, it is your responsibility to ensure that your rent is paid to your landlord regardless of whether or not you receive Housing Benefit payments.

In order for Blaby District Council to consider paying your landlord direct you must supply evidence to support your claim of vulnerability, if insufficient evidence is provided the council will continue to make payments to you.

## WHO MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY PAYING THEIR RENT?

There are many reasons why someone may have difficulty paying their rent.

### **They might be someone who:**

- has severe debt problems
- has a recent County Court judgement against them
- is an undischarged bankrupt
- is unable to open a bank or building society account
- has some of their Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance paid direct to the gas, electricity or water company by the Department for Work and Pensions
- is getting Supporting People help
- is getting help from a homeless charity

### **or someone may have difficulty paying their rent if they:**

- have learning difficulties
- have an illness that stops them managing on a day-to-day basis
- cannot read English
- cannot speak English
- are addicted to drugs, alcohol or gambling

- are fleeing domestic violence
- are a care leaver
- are leaving prison
- are homeless.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, if you think that you will have difficulty paying the rent then please contact us immediately. The details of ways and how to contact us are at the end of this leaflet.

## MAKING A DECISION

Once we have collected evidence we will decide as quickly as possible if direct payments to the landlord are appropriate. We will still pay benefit while we are making our decision.

We will write to the tenant and explain our decision. If it is appropriate to do so we will also write to the landlord.

## REVIEWS AND APPEALS

If the tenant or landlord disagrees with our decision they can ask us to look at the decision again. This is called a reconsideration.

**THEY CAN ALSO APPEAL AGAINST THE DECISION, GIVING REASONS WHY THEY THINK THE DECISION IS WRONG. PLEASE NOTE THERE ARE TIME LIMITS FOR APPEALS TO BE MADE.**

## CONTACT DETAILS

If you require any further information please contact the Benefits Team:

- Telephone: 0116 2727510
- Email: [Benefits@blaby.co.uk](mailto:Benefits@blaby.co.uk)
- Visit us at Council Offices, Desford Road, Narborough, Leicester LE19 2EP.

Remember that this leaflet is a guide only. It is not meant to say exactly what your legal rights are. While we have tried to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct at the time of going to press, it is possible that there may be incorrect information or some ideas may be oversimplified. Also, please remember that the information in this leaflet is likely to become less accurate over time because of changes to the law.