

**Gloucester City Council**  
**Crisis and Resilience Fund - Housing Payments**  
**Policy**

## Table of Contents

1.0	Background.....	1
2.0	Purpose of the Policy.....	1
3.0	What Housing Payments cover .....	2
4.0	What Housing Payments do not cover .....	2
5.0	Statement of objectives.....	2
6.0	Application process .....	3
7.0	Amount and period of award .....	4
8.0	Payment of an award.....	4
9.0	Backdating a Housing Payment .....	5
10.0	Notification of a decision.....	5
11.0	Changes of circumstances.....	6
12.0	Overpayments of a Housing Payment.....	6
13.0	Disputes/Review of a decision.....	6
14.0	Fraud and Overpayments.....	7
15.0	Guidance for awarding Housing Payments.....	7
16.0	Repeat applications.....	8
17.0	Homeless/Housing joint working.....	9

## 1.0 Background

The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) has been made available to local authorities in England to support low-income households who encounter a financial shock and to support activity that builds individual and community financial resilience. This funding covers the period of 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029 inclusive and includes specified funding for housing support.

The Housing Payment strand of the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) commences from April 2026 and replaces Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). The CRF Housing Payment will closely replicate existing DHP guidelines.

The Housing Payment will adopt a phased transition over the 3-year funding period and means Gloucester City Council will continue to receive an allocation to be spent on Housing Payments in Years 1 and 2. From April 2028, Unitary Authorities will receive allocations and will administer applications for Housing Payments.

The purpose of a Housing Payment is to provide financial support towards housing costs and can be paid where the Council is satisfied that an applicant needs further financial assistance with housing costs and is entitled to either Housing Benefit or the Housing element of Universal Credit (this includes shared ownership properties which carry a rental liability).

Housing costs refer to rental liability, as well as:

- rental deposits and rent in advance
- costs associated with securing housing or downsizing (such as removal expenses)
- Shortfalls between housing support and actual rent, including those caused by:
  - The benefit cap
  - Removal of the spare room subsidy
  - Local Housing Allowance

The Council has formulated this policy having regard to the Crisis and Resilience Fund Housing Payment guidance published by the Department for Work and Pensions in December 2025 updated on 1 April 2026 – a copy of which is attached to this policy at Appendix A.

The main features of this scheme are that:

- the scheme is purely discretionary; a customer does not have a statutory right to a payment,
- entitlement refers to individuals who are in receipt of, or qualify for, Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit but have not yet received payment.
- where the CRF Housing Payment allocation is exhausted no additional Housing Payments will be awarded in that financial year.
- when the Housing Payment is being considered for rent costs, it should not exceed the weekly HB or UC Housing element.
- the scheme commences on 1 April 2026 and ends on 31 March 2028.
- the administration of the scheme is for the local authority to determine.

## 2.0 Purpose of the Policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to specify how Gloucester City Council will administer Crisis and Resilience Fund Housing Payments. It details the application process and indicates some of the factors that will be considered when deciding if a Housing Payment can be awarded.

### 3.0 What Housing Payments cover

- 3.1 Housing Payments are intended to support people who are entitled to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit within Gloucester City and need additional support to cover housing-related costs.

Housing-related costs are:

- Rental liability as defined in the Housing Benefit and Universal Credit legislation
- Lump sum payments for deposits or rent in advance where the applicant is moving to accommodation that is considered both appropriate and affordable.
- Other lump sum costs associated with a housing need, such as removal costs.

- 3.2 Lump sum payments will be considered to help customers, where their current tenancy is unsustainable, to move to more affordable accommodation. To receive a lump sum payment, the customer must be entitled to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (that includes a housing costs element) at their current address in Gloucester City.

### 4.0 What Housing Payments do not cover

- **Ineligible Service Charges** as specified in [Schedule 1 of the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006](#) or [Schedule 1 to the Housing Benefit \(Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit\) Regulations 2006](#) or, for UC, a service charge not listed in [Schedule 1 paragraph 7 of the Universal Credit Regulations 2013](#)
- **Increases in rent due to outstanding rent arrears** as set out in [Regulation 11\(3\) of the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006](#) and [Regulation 11\(2\) of the Housing Benefit \(Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit\) Regulations 2006](#)
- to cover **deductions from on-going HB or UC** due to an overpayment
- **Sanctions and reductions in benefit** as specified under regulations 100 to 114 of the Universal Credit Regulations 2013 or due to a breach of a community service order
- **Benefit suspensions** where there is doubt about entitlement or because a claimant has failed to supply information pertinent to their claim as specified in section 21, 22 or 24 of the Social Security Act 1998 or section 68 of, and paragraphs 13 and 14 of Schedule 7 to, the Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act 2000
- **Council Tax liability**

### 5.0 Statement of Objectives

- 5.1 To promote a consistent and fair approach to the assessment of eligibility.

5.2 Within the above constraints, the Council's broad aim is to support people affected by welfare reform with a view to:

- alleviating poverty
- preventing homelessness
- supporting people to secure paid employment
- supporting people to secure sustainable and affordable accommodation
- supporting those who are trying to source alternative accommodation
- supporting people who have had to flee domestic abuse and need to move to a place of safety
- keeping families together
- helping customers through personal crisis and challenging life events
- supporting people who are in unaffordable tenancies but cannot move to more affordable accommodation due to reasons such as health, disability, or child protection
- supporting families with children at a critical point in their education
- supporting young people and care leavers as they transition to adult life
- supporting families with a social services intervention, for example highly dependent adults, children at risk or involvement in a family intervention project
- supporting people with shared care arrangements; the person who does not receive the Child Benefit will not receive calculations for the children in their housing entitlement
- Supporting claimants or their partners who are due to reach State Pension age which means they will no longer be subject to an under-occupation reduction
- supporting people with health or medical problems, either physical or mental, who need access to local medical services or support that might not be available elsewhere
- supporting disabled people who need, or have had, significant adaptations made to their property, or where they are living in a property particularly suited to their needs. This includes properties which have been adapted for other members of the household, such as disabled children or non-dependants
- supporting disabled people who receive informal care and support in their current neighbourhood from family and friends, which would not be available in a new area. In this respect, you may also consider families who have a child with an impairment who rely heavily on local support networks
- supporting the elderly or frail who have lived in the area for a long time and would find it difficult to establish support networks in a new area
- supporting people who are refugees who need to maintain stability in their financial and housing circumstances

## **6.0 Application process**

6.1 An application for a Housing Payment can be made electronically through the Council's website using the Council's online service. Customers that are unable to apply online without assistance may download an application form from the Council's website or telephone the Council for a paper copy.

6.2 Applications will be accepted from someone acting on behalf of the applicant such as an appointee, including a friend or relative, or a voluntary and community sector organisation.

6.3 Each application will be considered on its own merits, taking into account relevant information provided by the customer in support of their application. The Council reserves the right to verify any information or evidence provided where this is essential to the decision-making process.

6.4 Decisions on Housing Payments may be taken by designated officers within the Benefits Team, in accordance with DWP guidance and this policy.

## **7.0 Amount and Period of the Award**

7.1 The length of time over which a payment is made is determined by the Local Authority. Housing Payments will not normally be used to provide long term support for individuals.

7.2 The minimum period for which a Housing Payment will be awarded is one week.

7.3 Housing Payments will normally be awarded for a period of 13 weeks.

7.4 Housing Payments will not be made for a period exceeding 12 months without a review.

7.5 The amount of Housing Payment paid cannot be more than the value of the rent.

7.6 When considering rent arrears, proof of these will be required from the landlord or their agent.

7.7 In exceptional circumstances, the officer will consider a long-term award until the customers' circumstances change if the officer feels this is appropriate. For example, if a customer is living in significantly adapted accommodation and it is considered unreasonable to expect them to move house.

7.8 Housing Payments will not be awarded for a period after 31 March 2028.

7.9 A Housing Payment can be awarded in respect of two homes when someone is treated as temporarily absent from their main home. This includes those who have fled their main home because they are a victim of domestic abuse. In such cases of temporary absence, if the claimant is treated as liable for rent on both properties and, in both cases, there is a shortfall, it is possible to award a Housing Payment in respect of both properties subject to the weekly or monthly limit on each property.

## **8.0 Payment of an award**

8.1 The Officer awarding the Housing Payment will decide the most appropriate person to pay based on the circumstances of the case.

8.2 This could include, but is not limited to:

- The applicant
- Their partner

- Their appointee or holder of financial Power of Attorney
- The landlord (or agent of the landlord)
- Any other third party to whom it might be appropriate to make payment.

8.3 Rent arrears will usually be paid directly to the landlord or their agent. However, requests to pay the applicant directly will be considered based on the circumstances of the claim. Confirmation that the arrears have been paid to the landlord may be requested.

8.4 Payment will be made by BACS in all cases.

8.5 Payment frequency will normally be in line with payments of Housing Benefit. This will usually be on a four-weekly cycle to allow the full award to be paid within the financial year. For Universal Credit claimants payments may align with UC schedules.

8.6 One-off lump sum payments can be made immediately if required.

### **9.0 Backdating a Housing Payment**

9.1 The Council will consider any reasonable request for backdating a Housing Payment award. The customer will need to demonstrate that there were exceptional reasons for delaying making a claim to Housing Payment. Examples of exceptional circumstances could be a period of illness (including mental health), a bereavement or personal trauma, hospitalisation or some fact which has left an applicant unable to deal with their personal affairs. Further evidence to support a backdate request, for example, from a medical professional may be required.

9.2 All requests to backdate an award of Housing Payment will be considered on their own merits, however these will be limited to the period in which the customer has been receiving Housing Benefit or Universal Credit during the current financial year unless exceptional reasons for a late claim are accepted. Backdating cannot cover arrears accrued while not in receipt of these benefits.

### **10.0 Notification of decisions**

10.1 The customer will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application within 14 working days of receiving all the necessary information to decide on the Housing Payment, or as soon as possible after that.

If the application is successful, the notification will advise:

- the amount of any award,
- the reason for the award,
- the period of the award,
- who the Housing Payment will be paid to,
- the requirement to report a change in circumstances,
- any conditions associated with the award

If a claim is unsuccessful, the Council's decision will include an explanation of how the decision has been reached and details of the right to request a review.

10.2 Where an individual cannot access a Housing Payment, either because they are not eligible (in other words, not entitled to a qualifying benefit or owner-occupiers) or the Housing Payment allocation has been exhausted, they may be able to access further financial assistance through the Crisis Payment scheme, if they are deemed eligible. Under these circumstances, the Benefits Service will if appropriate, signpost individuals to the Crisis Payment Scheme.

### **11.0 Changes of Circumstances**

11.1 The customer must tell the Council if their circumstances change after a Housing Payment has been awarded. This is made clear to customers in the award letter and application form.

11.2 Customers must report all changes of circumstances, that may be relevant to the Housing Payment application or award, to the Revenues and Benefits Service even if they have been reported to other services or departments. The Council reserves the right to revise a Housing Payment award at any time if the customer's circumstances have changed.

### **12.0 Overpayments of a Housing Payment**

12.1 If a change in the applicant's circumstances leads to an overpayment of Housing Payment, the Council will seek to recover this. A written explanation of how the overpayment occurred and the periods and amounts to which it relates will be issued.

12.2 Recovery will be sought by issuing an invoice to the applicant or person to whom the award was paid.

12.3 Recovery will not be taken from ongoing awards of Housing Benefit.

12.4 The decision letter that notifies an overpayment will also set out the right to a reconsideration of this decision.

### **13.0 Disputes/Review of Decision**

13.1 Housing Payments are not payments of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit and are therefore not subject to a statutory appeals process, however the Council does have a review process.

13.2 A request for a review of a Housing Payment decision must be made within 28 days of the date of the notification informing the customer of the decision. The customer must clearly give their reasons why they disagree with the decision to refuse an award.

13.3 A senior officer not involved in the original decision will review the case within 14 days of the request. The customer will be notified of the decision of the review which will clearly state the reasons for the decision. If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, the final decision in the event of a dispute will be taken by the Head of Finance & Resources.

13.4 The review decision will be final and binding and may only be challenged via the judicial review process in the High Court.

#### **14.0 Fraud and overpayments**

14.1 Gloucester City Council is committed to the fight against fraud. A customer who fraudulently tries to claim a Housing Payment by falsely declaring their circumstances, providing a false statement or by giving false evidence in support of their application may have committed an offence under the Fraud Act 2006. Where it is alleged, or we suspect that such a fraud may have been committed, the matter will be investigated, and any overpaid monies will be recovered. Further action may be taken, and if appropriate, criminal proceedings may be instigated.

#### **15.0 Guidance for awarding Housing Payments**

15.1 In most cases, a Housing Payment award will be based on the household's financial circumstances from the declared income and expenditure on the application form.

15.2 In deciding whether to award a Housing Payment the following will be considered:

- The official guidance
- The shortfall between the rent charge and the Housing Benefits or Universal Credit Housing Costs
- The level of any rent arrears
- Any steps taken by the applicant to reduce their rental liability, including following advice provided in a previous Discretionary Housing Payment or Housing Payment award
- The income and expenditure of the applicant, their partner and any dependants or other occupants of the applicant's home. The Council may require customers to demonstrate that their housing costs are unaffordable having regard to all their sources of income and savings by providing evidence of their income and outgoings.
- Contributions to household expenses from non-dependants and any other adult occupiers who are not in full-time education
- The financial and medical circumstances of the applicant, their partner and any dependants or other occupants of the applicant's home
- Any savings or capital held by the applicant and their household members
- The level of indebtedness of the applicant and their household members
- The exceptional nature of the applicant and their household circumstances
- The amount available in the Housing Payment budget at the time of the application
- The possible impact on the Council of not making an award, for example the pressure on priority homeless accommodation
- Whether the applicant has previously refused the allocation of more suitable affordable accommodation
- Any other special circumstances indicated in the application.

15.3 When deciding how to treat income from disability-related benefits such as Attendance Allowance (AA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

and War Pensions these will usually be disregarded when considering the household income, as it is generally accepted that these benefits are awarded as the recipient has greater needs which can incur additional financial costs.

- 15.4 Lump sum compensation payment due to personal injury or a lump sum payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme will be disregarded as capital.
- 15.5 The Benefits Service will seek to maximise a resident's income by checking the availability of state benefits and other sources of financial assistance that may be available to the resident.
- 15.6 The Benefits Service will explore and address underlying needs and if appropriate offer warm referrals to CRF – funded Resilience Services.
- 15.7 The amount of the award will be based on the need, be that a rental deposit, rent in advance, or the shortfall between rent due and housing benefit / Universal Credit (Housing Element) award.
- 15.8 **Non dependant deductions** are made from housing benefit and the housing element of Universal Credits if there is an adult living in the household who is not a partner, or who is liable for rent. These deductions are made regardless of whether that person does in fact contribute to the household costs. However, for the consideration of Housing Payment's the deduction should not generally be considered as a shortfall in the rent as contributions should be made by the non-dependant from their own income. This is not always the reality, so if evidence can be provided which clearly demonstrates that contributions are not being made by the non-dependant, along with the reason why such contributions are not being made, then Housing Payment can be considered.
- 15.9 **Housing Benefit Overpayments**, if an application is made for a Housing Payment and previous housing benefit overpayments are reducing the maximum entitlement to housing benefit or the housing element of universal credit, it must be considered what is reasonable to allow a Housing Payment to cover.  
An example would be - an overpayment has been created due to an act of fraud, and that overpayment is being recovered from the claimant's ongoing housing benefit by instalments. The claimant makes an application for a Housing Payment as they need to downsize to a more affordable property. The Housing Payment application is processed in the normal way, however, the amount of benefit that is being recovered by instalments is treated as though the claimant still had that money and included in the claimant's finances.
- 16.0 **Repeat Applications**
  - 16.1 A customer may apply for a Housing Payment more than once.
  - 16.2 However, the Housing Payment fund is for short term support whilst customers take personal action to mitigate the impact of welfare reforms on them and cannot be considered as part of their regular income. This action will normally include seeking paid employment and/or moving to more affordable accommodation and, where appropriate, to engage in obtaining personal advice to better manage their finances including referrals to CRF – funded Resilience Services. For example, the fund can be utilised to:

- Help secure and move to alternative accommodation (for example, rent deposit / rent in advance / moving costs)
- Help with short term rental costs until the claimant can secure and move to alternative accommodation
- Help with short term rental costs while the claimant seeks employment
- Help with on-going rental costs for a disabled person in adapted accommodation
- Help with on-going rental costs for a foster carer
- Help with short term rental costs for any other reason
- Prevent homelessness

16.3 These criteria must be considered alongside the financial circumstances, and whether the claimant has made, or intends to make attempts to improve their situation – including engagement with appropriate Resilience Services. This should help determine whether the claimant is eligible to receive a repeat Housing Payment. If a claimant cannot demonstrate that they are taking reasonable steps to improve their circumstances (for example, actively seeking to downsize their accommodation on Homeseeker or seeking advice to support building their financial resilience through Resilience Services) a refusal can be made based on these grounds – regardless of the claimant’s financial circumstances. The normal review procedures would apply if a claimant disputed the decision.

16.4 An award of Housing Payment may be conditional on customers demonstrating that they are continuing to take such action.

## 17.0 Homeless/Housing joint working

17.1 Upon receipt of a completed application form for a Housing Payment, if the resident has stated that they are facing eviction proceedings or have been given notice to leave their property or have requested general housing advice, the processing officer will contact the Council’s Homeless team and share the relevant details.

17.2 Applications with support and evidence from the Homeless team will be given priority and the Benefits Service will liaise closely with the team.

To try and prevent homelessness wherever possible, all applications, whether direct from residents or via internal referrals, will be treated as an emergency application where this is identified as a risk and will be prioritised.

## Crisis and Resilience Housing Payment Policy

<b>Applicable To</b>	All Council Staff
<b>Effective Date</b>	1 April 2026
<b>Termination Date</b>	31 March 2028
<b>Next Review Date</b>	N/A
<b>Review Cycle</b>	N/A
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Karen Haile
<b>Accountable Person</b>	Karen Haile

## Appendix A – Crisis and Resilience Fund: Guidance for local authorities in England

[Crisis and Resilience Fund: Guidance for local authorities in England \(1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029\)](#)  
[- GOV.UK](#)



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