

## Local Housing Allowance

### Safeguarding your Housing Benefit

The Council has to make all payments of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to you, but we can make payments direct to your landlord if you have difficulty managing your money.

In order to safeguard your Housing Benefit and ensure that you continue to maintain your home, we will use our discretion to decide whether it is better for you that we pay your LHA to your landlord.

#### Asking to have your LHA paid to your landlord

You will find managing your money easier if you have a bank account so you can set up a direct debit or a standing order to pay your landlord. Everyone's circumstances are different but if you still think you will have difficulty managing your money contact us as soon as possible to ask us to consider paying your Housing Benefit to your landlord. Below are some examples of when we may consider doing this.

- You have a medical condition affecting your mental or physical health
- You have a learning disability or a physical disability
- You are going through some changes in your life and need some extra support for a while
- You are dealing with an addiction (to gambling, alcohol or drugs etc.)
- You are fleeing domestic violence
- You are leaving prison
- You are a care leaver
- You cannot open a bank account
- You have a history of debt problems

To ask us to consider paying your LHA to your landlord please complete the form "***Application for payment of Local Housing Allowance direct to your landlord***"

#### Information and written evidence

You must tell us why you think you will have problems dealing with your money and we will need evidence of this from other people.

This might be evidence from:

- Your doctor
- Care Worker
- DWP
- Solicitor
- Landlord
- Bank or building society
- Social Services
- Probation Service
- The Court
- Support Group
- Hospital
- Your family or friends

Evidence from a landlord cannot be accepted on its own

## Making a decision

When we have collected all the necessary evidence in support of your request we will decide as quickly as possible if we can pay your Housing Benefit to your landlord. We will consider each request individually.

## Telling you about the decision

We will write to you and your representative, if you have one, to tell you:

- Whether or not we are going to pay your Housing Benefit to your landlord.
- If we will need to review the decision in the future and if so, when.
- How to appeal against the decision.
- How to contact other agencies and organisations who may be able to help you e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau or Welfare Rights.
- We will also notify your landlord about the decision.

## How to contact us

If you would like further information or advice you can contact us

**Address:** Housing Benefit Section  
PO Box 4  
Civic centre  
West Street  
Oldham  
OL1 1UH

**Email us at:** [benefits@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@oldham.gov.uk)

**Phone:** Customer Services: 0161 770 6633. Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm Saturday 9.00am to 1.00pm

**Visit us at:** Civic Centre Monday to Friday 8.40am to 5.00 pm.

**Website:** [www.oldham.gov.uk/factsheets/ocfs-advice-benefits](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/factsheets/ocfs-advice-benefits)