

# Temporary Accommodation Charging Policy

The Temporary Accommodation Charging Policy sets out Dartford Borough Council's approach to temporary accommodation charges.

December 2025

**DARTFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

[housing@dartford.gov.uk](mailto:housing@dartford.gov.uk)

## CONTENTS

No.	Section	Page
1	<a href="#"><u>INTRODUCTION</u></a>	3
2	<a href="#"><u>AIMS AND OBJECTIVES</u></a>	3
3	<a href="#"><u>STRATEGIC CONTEXT</u></a>	3
4	<a href="#"><u>TYPES OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION</u></a>	4
5	<a href="#"><u>CHARGING POLICY</u></a>	5
6	<a href="#"><u>PAYMENT OF CHARGES</u></a>	8
7	<a href="#"><u>ARREARS RECOVERY</u></a>	8
8	<a href="#"><u>RECHARGES</u></a>	8
9	<a href="#"><u>COMPLAINTS</u></a>	8
10	<a href="#"><u>DATA PROTECTION</u></a>	8
11	<a href="#"><u>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</u></a>	9
12	<a href="#"><u>REVIEW</u></a>	9
	<a href="#"><u>APPENDIX 1 – EXAMPLES OF HOW THE CHARGING POLICY IS APPLIED</u></a>	10
	<a href="#"><u>APPENDIX 2 – LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE (LHA) RATES</u></a>	13

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This policy sets out Dartford Borough Council's ('the Council's') approach to temporary accommodation charges for the provision of interim and temporary accommodation (hereafter referred to as 'temporary accommodation').
- 1.2 The Council has a duty to work with people who are threatened with homelessness to help prevent them from becoming homeless ('the prevention duty'). Where a person is already homeless, the Council must take reasonable steps to help the person secure accommodation for at least six months ('the relief duty').
- 1.3 During the homeless application process, the Council has a duty to provide interim accommodation to applicants during the relief stage if there is reason to believe that the applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance, and have a priority need (s188 of the Housing Act 1996). Interim accommodation is that which is provided when the Council is still making its enquiries in order to satisfy itself of the longer-term duties.
- 1.4 If following enquiries the Council is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, in priority need, and unintentionally homeless; then the 'main housing duty' is owed (s193 of the Housing Act 1996). The Council is required to provide temporary accommodation until the applicant's housing can be suitably resolved by a final offer of accommodation and the homelessness duties discharged.
- 1.5 The Council has the right to make a reasonable charge to homeless households as a contribution towards interim and temporary accommodation costs (s206(2) of the Housing Act 1996).

## **2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The overall aim of the policy is to provide a consistent, transparent and proportionate approach towards charging for temporary accommodation.
- 2.2 The objectives of the policy are to ensure that charges for temporary accommodation:
  - Are affordable to all;
  - Contribute towards meeting the operational costs of temporary accommodation provision or as much as reasonably can;
  - Do not act as a disincentive for households to work;
  - Are fair charges to those who can afford to pay; and
  - Are in line with housing benefit subsidy rules.

## **3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

### **3.1 Council plans, strategies and policies**

- 3.1.1 This policy and its delivery is intended to be compatible with the following Council plans, strategies and policies:

- 3.1.2 The [Corporate Plan](#) sets out the strategic direction the Council will take in relation to its powers, functions and responsibilities. This includes an ambition to relieve homelessness in our town, work to eradicate the causes of it and rough sleeping.
- 3.1.3 The [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) sets out how the Council will prioritise the prevention of homelessness and ending of rough sleeping in the borough.
- 3.1.4 The [Temporary Accommodation Strategy](#) sets out the approach to procuring temporary accommodation now and in the future for homeless households.
- 3.1.5 The [Homelessness Accommodation Policy](#) sets out the policy for the prioritisation of homeless households for accommodation according to its location.
- 3.1.6 The [Equality and Diversity Document Framework](#) sets out how the Council will meet the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 **Legislation and statutory guidance**
- 3.2.1 This policy and its delivery is intended to be compatible with the Council's obligations consequent to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, but not limited to:
- Housing Act 1996
  - Homelessness Act 2002
  - Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
  - Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018
  - Equality Act 2010

## **4 TYPES OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

- 4.1 The Council makes use of the following temporary accommodation options for homeless households in the borough.
- 4.2 **Nightly paid accommodation**
- 4.2.1 Nightly paid accommodation is shorter term accommodation used during the relief stage of homelessness whilst a household's homelessness application is being assessed. It can also be used under the main housing duty stage if longer term temporary accommodation is not available at the time, or until a suitable offer to discharge that duty can be made through the household securing accommodation either in social housing stock or the private rented sector.
- 4.2.2 Nightly paid accommodation is provided through local private landlords and can be self-contained or shared accommodation. As a rule, the Council does not place homeless households into shared accommodation unless it is absolutely necessary.

#### **4.3 Dartford Private Leasing Scheme (DPLS)**

4.3.1 Dartford Private Leasing Scheme (DPLS) accommodation is a longer-term temporary accommodation option used for homeless households where the Council has accepted the main housing duty. The accommodation is used until a suitable offer of accommodation to discharge that duty can be made.

4.3.2 Self-contained accommodation is provided under leasing arrangements with local private landlords. The Council will lease properties for a period of two, three or five years, and will undertake to maintain the fixtures and fittings of the property. The rent is guaranteed to be paid quarterly in advance and the Council is responsible for full tenant and rental management.

#### **4.4 Council owned temporary accommodation**

4.4.1 The Council owns temporary accommodation stock that is used for shorter and longer-term provision both under the relief and main housing duty stages. The Council is responsible for a mix of family sized and single occupancy accommodation. The properties are mainly unfurnished. The Council is responsible for maintaining the fixtures and fitting of the properties, including undertaking safety checks.

### **5 CHARGING POLICY**

5.1 The Council has the right to make a reasonable charge to homeless households as a contribution towards their temporary accommodation. It is considered that a charge levied that is equivalent to the relevant local housing allowance (LHA) rate for the type of temporary accommodation is reasonable.

5.2 [Appendix 1](#) provides illustrative examples of how the charging policy is applied to the different types of temporary accommodation.

#### **5.3 Matters outside the scope of this policy**

5.3.1 This policy does not apply to council tenants who have been temporarily decanted from their properties due to necessary works and have been placed into temporary accommodation. In such cases the Council covers the cost of the temporary accommodation while the tenant continues to pay their rent on their Council tenancy. More information on the decant process can be found in the [Decant Policy](#).

#### **5.4 Affordability**

5.4.1 As part of the temporary accommodation placement process, the Council will seek to undertake affordability assessments and ensure that all those placed in temporary accommodation are provided with relevant information about entitlement to welfare benefits and income maximisation services.

## 5.5 Communication needs

- 5.5.1 Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that the household understands any information given about their temporary accommodation charges. This may include signposting to appropriate support services and provision of information in alternative formats and translation services in accordance with the Council's [Equality and Diversity Document Framework](#).

## 5.6 Housing benefit

- 5.6.1 All households entering temporary accommodation will be expected to complete a housing benefit application to determine whether they are eligible for assistance with payment of their rent. It is the household's responsibility to apply for and maintain any claims for housing benefit, however the Council will provide support in the application process where required.

## 5.7 Rent

- 5.7.1 For all types of temporary accommodation, the household's contribution towards the rent will be dependent on whether the household is awarded housing benefit and the amount of benefit awarded. LHA rates are used to calculate the amount of housing benefit awarded.
- 5.7.2 When setting the charge for the accommodation, it is fixed in line with the government's subsidy rules. For **nightly paid and DPLS temporary accommodation**, the maximum subsidy is 90% of the January 2011 LHA rates for the size and area of the property (as illustrated in table 1 in [Appendix 2](#)). As the LHA rates do not reflect current market conditions, the rent charged by private landlords is above this subsidy level, creating a subsidy gap. This means that the Council must cover the shortfall.
- 5.7.3 For **Council owned temporary accommodation**, the LHA subsidy arrangements are based on current LHA rates for the size of the property (as illustrated in table 2 in [Appendix 2](#)). This means the current LHA rates are higher than the 90% of the 2011 rates applied to nightly paid and DPLS accommodation, and therefore cover 100% of the actual rent charged.
- 5.7.4 Therefore, in cases where the household receives full housing benefit, this will cover the full rental element of the accommodation. Where the household receives part housing benefit, they will be responsible for meeting the costs of the difference between the full housing benefit entitlement and what they receive in part housing benefit. And, where a household chooses not to apply for or maintain a claim for housing benefit, or if they are not eligible for housing benefit, they will be responsible for paying the full rental element.

## 5.8. **Personal charge (nightly paid accommodation)**

- 5.8.1. Households placed into **nightly paid accommodation** will be required to make a financial contribution of £10 per week for the accommodation provided. This personal charge is to contribute towards the Council's administration costs for the accommodation; including, procuring the accommodation, arranging placements and ongoing management and monitoring of the accommodation. The personal charge is applied regardless of whether the household receives housing benefit or not. The personal charge is exempt from housing benefit.
- 5.8.2. A personal charge is not levied to households in DPLS and Council owned temporary accommodation due to the longer-term nature of the accommodation and reduced level of ongoing administration costs incurred.

## 5.9. **Other costs in temporary accommodation**

- 5.9.1. Where a household is placed in self-contained accommodation, they will be responsible for meeting the costs of utilities (gas, water, electricity etc). These costs are separate to the temporary accommodation rent account and should be paid directly to the utility supplier.
- 5.9.2. In some types of temporary accommodation there may be an eligible service charge to cover items such as communal heating, lighting, cleaning and grounds maintenance.
- 5.9.3. Households in temporary accommodation are responsible for paying Council Tax, and if on a low income, may be eligible for Council Tax Reduction which should be applied through the Council Tax Team in the area the household has been placed into.
- 5.9.4. Most temporary accommodation landlords do not currently allow pets. However, where pets are allowed and permission has been given to keep a pet, the household may be required to pay a contributing pet charge determined by the landlord. This charge is in addition to any applicable personal charges (as set out in 5.8). The amount of the pet charge will be specified in the associated documentation provided at sign up. Furthermore, all pet owners must sign a Pet Disclaimer Form, acknowledging full responsibility for any damage, nuisance, or additional maintenance arising from the presence of the pet. This condition is in place to uphold the safety, hygiene, and overall wellbeing of all occupants and the property.

## 5.10. **Support and assistance**

- 5.10.1 The Council appreciates that many homeless households face financial and practical difficulties, and because of this, assistance may be provided through the Council's Housing Inclusion Service, Accommodation Service support, and the Income Recovery Officer.

- 5.10.2. Discretionary payments for households in serious financial difficulty; may be available from the Council's Benefits Team. This may include Exceptional Hardship Payments to help with Council Tax costs if the applicant is entitled to Council Tax Reduction. In addition, Discretionary Housing Payments can help with housing costs where the applicant is entitled to Housing Benefit. However, while households in DPLS accommodation may apply for Discretionary Housing Payment assistance, households in nightly paid temporary accommodation are not able to apply for this financial assistance for personal charge arrears as this is ineligible for Housing Benefit and therefore ineligible for Discretionary Housing Payment assistance.

## **6 PAYMENT OF CHARGES**

- 6.1 Where households are in receipt of full or part housing benefit, this will be paid directly into the households rent account. Any remaining charges that are the responsibility of the household should be paid into the rent account in advance on Monday of each week.
- 6.2 Payment methods include standing order, bank transfer, over the phone with a debit or credit card, online and via a swipe card that can be used in any Post Office.

## **7 ARREARS RECOVERY**

- 7.1 In the event a charge is due and not received from the household, the Council will send an arrears letter. If no attempt has been made to resolve the arrears, then a second arrears letter will be sent followed by a Notice to Quit. This will detail their last night in accommodation due to failing to maintain their charge. The Council has the right to end the accommodation and discharge the relevant duties.

## **8 RECHARGES**

- 8.1 The additional recovery of costs may be applied in certain circumstances, such as for clearing households' possessions when a property is vacated or left in storage, or any work to repair deliberate damage or wilful neglect caused to a property. The [Housing Recharge Policy](#) sets out the process for recharging.

## **9 COMPLAINTS**

- 9.1 If a customer is not satisfied with the level of service they have received, the Council's [Corporate Complaints Procedure](#) can be followed. Complaints leaflets are also available from the Council offices.

## **10 DATA PROTECTION**

- 10.1 The Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR regulate the processing of information relating to individuals, which includes the obtaining, holding, using or disclosing of such information.



10.2 The Council needs to collect and use certain types of information about its service users in order to carry out its everyday business and to fulfil its objectives and its statutory functions.

10.3 The Council's:

- [Data Protection Policy](#) sets out how it will protect special category and criminal convictions personal data; and
- The [Homelessness Services \(Housing Solutions\) Privacy Notice](#) explains that the Council collects personal information to administer these services.

## **11 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

11.1 The Council is committed to welcoming and valuing diversity, promoting equality of opportunity and tackling unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. The Council, in delivering this policy, will have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and ensure that no individual is discriminated against based on their sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, race, religion, belief, disability or age.

11.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty is a duty on the Council and that responsibility cannot be delegated to a contractor/service provider and is a continuing duty.

11.3 A [Customer Access Review](#) has been undertaken to assess the equality impact this policy will have on affected persons with protected characteristics. The review concluded that overall, the policy is considered to have a positive equality impact as it provides a transparent, proportionate, fair and consistent approach to the approach to charging households in temporary accommodation. Charging will be based upon what homeless households can pay; the Council will not charge indiscriminately.

## **12 REVIEW**

12.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier to address legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **EXAMPLES OF HOW THE CHARGING POLICY IS APPLIED**

#### **Nightly paid accommodation**

**A household is placed into a two bedroom property at a nightly cost of £65.**

##### **Example 1 – Full housing benefit awarded**

- The cost of the placement is £455 per week
- The household receives the full housing benefit amount of £135 per week
- The household pays the £10 personal charge per week
- The Council covers the difference in the cost of £310 per week

##### **Example 2 – Part housing benefit awarded**

- The cost of the placement is £455 per week
- The household receives a part housing benefit amount of £120.89 per week
- The households pays the difference between the full housing benefit amount and the part housing benefit amount of £14.11 per week
- The household pays the £10 personal charge per week
- The Council covers the difference in the cost of £310 per week

##### **Example 3 – No housing benefit awarded**

- The cost of the placement is £455 per week
- The household does not receive any housing benefit
- The households pays the difference in the full housing benefit amount of £135 per week
- The household pays the £10 personal charge per week
- The Council covers the difference in the cost of £310 per week

## **Dartford Private Leasing Scheme (DPLS) accommodation**

**A household is placed into a three bedroom property at a weekly cost of £155.76 (90% of 2011 LHA rates)**

### **Example 1 – Full housing benefit awarded**

- The cost of the placement is £155.76 per week
- The household receives the full housing benefit amount of £155.77 per week

### **Example 2 – Part housing benefit awarded**

- The cost of the placement is £155.76 per week
- The household receives a part housing benefit amount of £77.88 per week
- The households pays the difference between the full housing benefit amount and the part housing benefit amount of £77.88 per week

### **Example 3 – No housing benefit awarded**

- The cost of the placement is £155.76 per week
- The household does not receive any housing benefit
- The households pays the difference in the full housing benefit amount of £155.76 per week

## **Council owned temporary accommodation**

**A household is placed into a one bedroom property at a weekly cost of £172.60 (current LHA rate)**

### **Example 1 – Full housing benefit awarded**

- The cost of the placement is £172.60 per week
- The household receives the full housing benefit amount of £172.60 per week

### **Example 2 – Part housing benefit awarded**

- The cost of the placement is £172.60 per week
- The household receives a part housing benefit amount of £86.30 per week
- The households pays the difference between the full housing benefit amount and the part housing benefit amount of £86.30 per week

### **Example 3 – No housing benefit awarded**

- The cost of the placement is £172.60 per week
- The household does not receive any housing benefit
- The households pays the difference in the full housing benefit amount of £172.60 per week

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE (LHA) RATES**

**Table 1: January 2011 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates**

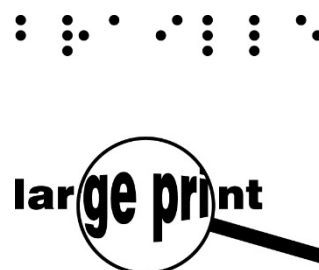
<b>Dartford (North West Kent)</b>	<b>One bed</b>	<b>Two bed</b>	<b>Three bed</b>	<b>Four bed</b>
LHA rate	£121.15	£150.00	£173.08	£253.84
90% of LHA rate	£109.04	£135.00	£155.77	£228.46

**Table 2: March 2025 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates**

<b>Dartford (North West Kent)</b>	<b>One bed</b>	<b>Two bed</b>	<b>Three bed</b>	<b>Four bed</b>
LHA rate	£172.60	£228.99	£276.16	£330.70

To find Local Housing Allowance rates in other areas, please visit [LHA Direct](#).

If you or anybody you know requires this or any other council information in another language, please contact us and we will do our best to provide this for you. Braille, Audio tape and large print versions of this document are available upon request.



**Tel: 01322 343434**

**Calls are welcome via Relay UK**



<b>ਪੰਜਾਬੀ</b> Punjabi 01322 343610	<b>தமிழ்</b> Tamil 01322 343611	<b>Polski</b> Polish 01322 343612	<b>česky</b> Czech 01322 343613	<b>简体中文</b> Mandarin 01322 343614	<b>Français</b> French 01322 343615
--	---------------------------------------	---	---------------------------------------	---	---