

APPENDIX 5

Council Tax Support scheme Hardship Policy

Council Tax Hardship Payments

In accordance with Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended in 2012 Section 13(a) (2) the Council Tax Support Hardship Fund is an additional payment which has the effect of reducing Council Tax liability for the liable person. The liable person must reside in Tameside and be in receipt of Council Tax Support. Hardship payments are generally paid to people experiencing a short term exceptional finance problem; in accordance with the eligibility criteria set out in the Tameside Resettlement Scheme and as set out below, so applicants must not rely on a payment being made.

Who can apply for a Council Tax Hardship Payment

You can apply for a Council Tax Hardship Payment if you are the liable person to pay Council Tax.

How decisions are made on whether a Council Tax Support Hardship payment is made

Each request will be considered independently and no single factor will determine if an award is to be made.

As well as the criteria set out in the Tameside Resettlement Scheme, the following will be considered when making the decision:

- Applicant is leaving an institution such as leaving care, prison, young offenders institute, hospital, care home, temporary supported housing or hostel
- Avoidance of going into care
- Council tax hardship being experienced
- Chronic illness, disability including mental health illness
- Experiencing domestic abuse
- Homelessness or living in temporary housing such as 'sofa surfing'
- Substance or alcohol abuse
- Lone parent and / or pregnant
- Applicant has a support worker
- Housing circumstances and rented properties
- Other people living with the applicant
- Sanction placed by the DWP
- Significant debt
- It is reasonable that applicants may be able to manage money better

The amount payable

Each application is considered individually and on its merits, and the amount of payment depends on circumstances. The maximum paid would be no more than the amount of Council Tax outstanding after any Council Tax Support has been applied. Usually such payments are a 'one off' payment and will not be repeated.

How a Council Tax Support Hardship payment is made

If approved a Council Tax Support Hardship payment will reduce the amount of Council Tax outstanding. Applicants will not receive cash or any other type of payment.

Appeals against the decision

If the applicant does not agree with the decision, they may request that the decision is looked at again. Council Tax Support Hardship payments are discretionary and if after a reconsideration the applicant still does not agree with the decision then they may appeal to the Valuation Tribunal Service.

Process by which a person can apply for a Council Tax Support Hardship payment

The application form for Tameside Council Tax Support Hardship scheme can be accessed via the Council's web-site.