

## LWP – Summary of proposals

| Point | Current Policy details   | Proposed Policy (Stay same or change)   |
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| 5.7.1 | The policy does not include details of available LWP funding and instead references awards are at the discretion of the Council (and taking into account available funding)  | <p><b><u>Change Policy</u></b><br/>           Confirm within policy that Council is working to an overall budget and if exceeded normally no further awards can be made for either CS or CCS that financial year unless alternative funding sources can be agreed.</p>  |
| 5.7.2 | Policy details that LWP CS is to assist people to deal with disasters or unforeseen emergencies, and can provide short term and one-off assistance with the costs of food, fuel, travel, or clothing   | <p><b><u>Change Policy</u></b><br/>           Confirm in policy the following changes to LWP Crisis Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain food / fuel support and with 7-day awards remaining the default award but include provision for shorter awards to meet a specific short-term need</li> <li>• Confirm current practice that foodbanks are the default provider for food support and Council will look at support only where foodbanks are unable to assist (subject to the foodbanks remaining able to deliver support)</li> <li>• Remove from our policy, support for travel. This has not been used since 2016.</li> </ul>   |
| 5.7.3 | Policy details that LWP CCS will contribute towards the cost of the key household items needed when setting up home and will also be a 'full award' or a 'partial award' to reflect household composition and what items may already be available to them. | <p><b><u>Change Policy</u></b><br/>           Implement previously agreed policy for LWP CCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement revised financial contributions based on agreement to award levels detailed in 5.4 (single / couples £600 and for children £150 ) up to maximum of £1,200</li> <li>• Provide default support via BACs transfers but retain provision of goods via local frameworks and suppliers where this is still needed.</li> <li>• Revise potential support offers – for example provide air fryer or refurbished cookers instead of (since early 2022) new electric cookers. This will bring down costs and installation costs, make award funding go further, and provide items that may be cheaper to run than larger cookers.</li> </ul> |
| 5.7.4 | The LWP policy includes both a review and a further review stage   | <p><b><u>Change Policy</u></b><br/>           Change policy to include one review stage aligned with the Councils Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure. Currently policy includes both a review and further review stage.</p>  |

## DHP - Summary of proposals

| Point | Current Policy details   | Proposed Policy (Stay same or change)   |
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| 6.3.1 | <p>Only limit applied to overall DHP spending within the policy is the legal limit of 250% of the DWP DHP grant allocation (£675,000 on a grant allocation of £270,000)</p>  | <p><b><u>Change Policy.</u></b><br/>           Include in the policy that the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will only use its annual DWP DHP grant allocation and not exceed this, and</li> <li>• If spending would exceed this, any remaining DHP claims for that financial year will be disallowed unless alternative funding sources can be agreed.</li> </ul>   |
| 6.3.2 | <p>The Policy (Appendix 1) States that savings/capital should be fully considered but does not include a specific savings / capital limit.</p> <p>The proposed savings limit of £500 was included within the summary of DHP scheme and process changes, and within public communications.</p>  | <p><b><u>Change Policy.</u></b><br/>           Include in policy a savings limit of no more than £1,000 to be applied to all DHP claims.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The policy will also reference deprivation of capital rules applying in the event customers have had a significant reduction in savings in the period before they applied for a DHP.</li> </ul> <p>DHP is meant to be short term support so savings should be used in preference, to DHP funding.</p>   |
| 6.3.3 | <p>The Policy (Appendix 1) states Universal Credit included as income to be taken fully into account (except for Housing Costs element)</p>  | <p><b><u>Change Policy.</u></b><br/>           Include within the Policy the following statement on how DHP claims based on Housing Benefit and Universal Credit will be managed via the Financial Assessment process.</p> <p>Although HB and UC are different benefits and are calculated differently, the Council's financial assessment process seeks, as far as possible, to achieve parity in the awarded DHPs as to applicants with similar financial circumstances</p>   |
| 6.3.4 | <p>The Policy does not include a maximum number of awards for repeat DHP claimants.</p> <p>The policy does:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define repeat applications from the same customer / partner within a year linked to any address within Sunderland and where circumstances are similar to initial claim</li> <li>• Require that customers can demonstrate what they are doing to improve their housing or financial situations, or what additional barriers they face when doing so (that mean that they cannot make changes easily).</li> </ul> | <p><b><u>Change Policy</u></b><br/>           Repeat applications to be defined as a further application within 2 rolling years of any DHP award made after April 2024 by the claimant or partner at any address in the Sunderland Council area</p> <p>Policy rather than guidance to include strict criteria for new and repeat awards and with only the following 4 groups being eligible for ongoing repeat awards at full value</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People affected by domestic abuse who remain in a property which has been adapted under a sanctuary scheme</li> </ol> |

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|       |  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Families with a disabled child not in receipt of upper of middle rate DLA but whose condition makes sharing a bedroom difficult.</li> <li>3. 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</li> <li>4. Where the claimant or someone in their household has an impairment, which requires them to have a larger property than would usually be the case for the size of their household due to, for example, where a bedroom is used for storage of medical equipment or used to support their disability for example, sensory room.</li> </ol> <p>All the other 22 groups listed by the DWP will either receive a defined number of repeat awards and / or tapered awards worth 50% of the full award value.</p> <p>Most customers are unlikely to be able to evidence that they fall within any of the 26 groups and from April 2024 they will only be provided with one DHP award and one further tapered award at 50%</p> |
| 6.3.5 | The online Policy includes a DHP award length of no more than 20 weeks although this was increased to 26 weeks prior to pandemic with Portfolio Holder agreement | <p><b><u>Change Policy.</u></b><br/>Confirm within the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an initial DHP award length of up to 26 weeks, although shorter awards can be made.</li> <li>• Repeat awards of up to 52 weeks however these would only be for some of the 4 groups above, where their circumstances are unlikely to change in the award periods.</li> <li>• All other awards based on circumstances (normally 26 weeks or shorter) and subject to contact during award period</li> </ul>  |
| 6.3.6 | The Policy does not include any reference to initial / ongoing dialogue with customers – although the latter built into practice                                 | <p><b><u>Change Policy</u></b><br/>Change policy to include a requirement for all customers to normally be contacted, and claim / requirements discussed before any award made – and with appropriate follow up during claim (for all but one off – short duration awards)</p>   |

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| 6.3.7 | The policy details that one of the grounds for awarding a DHP is 'To help secure and move to alternative accommodation' | <p><b><u>Change Policy</u></b><br/>Detail in policy that the Council will only provide help in extremely limited cases for removal costs, rent in advance or bond payments – and the situations where such payments would not normally be considered.</p> <p>There has been a significant increase in requests for help for These costs, often linked to social sector tenancies (although still overall small numbers)</p> |
| 6.3.8 | The policy does not detail when DHP applications can be backdated. This is detailed in guidance .                       | <p><b><u>Change In Policy</u></b><br/>Detail in policy the situations and maximum length that a DHP award can be backdated. This will be for no more than 52 weeks and only with good cause</p>   |
| 6.3.9 | The policy includes both a review and a further review stage  | <p><b><u>Change Policy</u></b><br/>Change policy to include one review stage aligned with the councils Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure. Currently policy includes both a review and further review stage</p>  |