

Bolton Council

Revenues and Benefits Crisis and Resilience Fund

Housing Payment Policy

Policy effective from 1 April 2026



**Funded by
UK Government**

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Purpose of the Policy	3
3. Applying for a Housing Payment	3
4. Referrals for further support and assistance	4
5. Awarding a Housing Payment	4
6. Period of the Award	5
7. Method of Award	5
8. Notification of Award	6
9. Changes of Circumstances	6
10. Overpayments	6
11. Review of the Decision	7
12. Data Sharing	7

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Crisis and Resilience Fund Housing Payments (referred to as Housing Payments) were introduced from April 2026 and replaced discretionary housing payments.
- 1.2 Housing Payments are discretionary awards that provide tenants with additional help towards their rent. The scheme is administered by Bolton Council's Revenues and Benefits Service.
- 1.3 Housing Payments are funded by the UK government through a grant called the Crisis and Resilience Fund.
- 1.4 Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure fairness and consistency within decision making, and ensure funds remain available to support residents throughout the year.

2. Purpose of the Policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles of Bolton Council's Housing Payment Policy and to explain how the scheme will be administered.
- 2.2 This policy ensures that the Council will act fairly and reasonably throughout the decision-making process. Each application will be considered strictly on its own merits.
- 2.3 This policy aligns with the Bolton Council Plan 2025-2028 and the Tackling Poverty Strategy.

3. Applying for a Housing Payment

- 3.1 Housing payments can be awarded where the council has determined that the claimant requires further financial assistance towards their housing costs and qualifies under the scheme.
- 3.2 To qualify for a Housing Payment:
 - there must be a corresponding award of either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit with housing costs **and**
 - there must be a shortfall between the amount of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing costs received and the amount of rent charged.

- 3.3** Information and evidence will be requested and verified to support an application for a Housing Payment. Any evidence provided on the claim for Housing Benefits will also be considered, for example, evidence of income, benefits, capital, and household details.
- 3.4** A financial statement may be required in support of an application.
- 3.5** Applicants may also be asked to outline any steps they have taken, or intend to take, to help improve their financial circumstances, so that a fair and informed assessment can be made.
- 3.6** A period of one month will be allowed for the provision of information and evidence, or the application will be closed. This time limit may be extended in appropriate circumstances; the decision maker has full discretion over this.

4. Referrals for further support and assistance

- 4.1** The Crisis and Resilience fund is intended to support low-income households who encounter a financial shock and to support activity that builds individual and community financial resilience.
- 4.2** Where an application is received for a Housing Payment, the decision maker will consider whether the applicant may be referred for further support from other crisis and resilience services.
- 4.3** Referrals for additional support will only be made with the applicant's consent, ensuring they understand the purpose and nature of any assistance being offered.
- 4.4** Applicants are encouraged to take up any additional support offered to gain the greatest benefit from the assistance available. If an applicant chooses not to engage with further support without a clear reason, this may be taken into account when any future applications for Housing Payments are considered.
- 4.5** The Revenues and Benefits Service is committed to working in partnership with other areas of the council, the local voluntary sector, social landlords and other parties in Bolton.

5. Awarding a Housing Payment

- 5.1** When assessing the amount of Housing Payment awarded, the following will be considered:
- the shortfall between the award of Housing Benefit / Universal Credit with housing costs and the rental liability
 - any steps taken by the customer to reduce their rental liability.

- the total household income and expenditure of the customer and their family.
- any medical or special circumstances of the customer and their family

5.2 A Housing Payment cannot be awarded for:

- services changes that are not eligible for help under the Housing Benefit scheme, for example ineligible service charges, water and sewerage etc
- increases in rent charged due to outstanding rent arrears.
- 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.
- a shortfall caused by HB or UC overpayment recovery.
- benefit suspensions where there is doubt about entitlement or because a claimant has failed to supply information required for their claim.

6. Period of the Award

6.1 The Revenues and Benefits Service will decide the length of an award by considering the facts available in each application. The start date of an award will usually be:

- the Monday following receipt of an application; or
- any date or period that the decision maker feels is appropriate given the customer's personal circumstances.

6.2 Where reasonable, a Housing Payment may be awarded for a past period, and each application will be considered on its own merits. A Housing Payment can only be considered for a period where there is a corresponding award of either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit with housing costs.

6.3 The period of the award is decided on a case-by-case basis dependent on the merits of the application and the funds available in the scheme at the time the award is made.

7. Method of Award

7.1 The Revenues and Benefits Service will decide the most appropriate person to pay based upon the circumstances of each application. This could include.

- the customer
- an appointee
- the landlord (or an agent of the landlord); or
- any third party to whom it might be most appropriate to make payment.

7.2 Payment will be made as soon as practicable following the award of a Housing Payment. For council tenants, the payment will normally be credited to their rent account. For private tenants, the payment will be paid by BACS.

8. Notification of Award

8.1 Customers will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

8.2 Where the application is unsuccessful, the Revenues and Benefits Service will give reasons why this decision was made and explain the right of review.

9. Changes of Circumstances

9.1 An award of a housing payment may be revised or withdrawn where a customer's circumstances have changed, or at any other time it is appropriate to do so.

9.2 All customers receiving a Housing Payment should report any change in their circumstances as soon as reasonably practicable to Bolton Council's Housing Benefit department.

10. Overpayments

10.1 The Revenues and Benefits Service may seek to recover any overpaid Housing Payment

10.2 If recovery of a housing payment is sought, an invoice will be issued to the customer or the person to whom the award was paid.

10.3 Recovery from any Housing Benefits payments due will only be allowed with the customer's consent.

10.4 Decisions about the recovery of a housing payment overpayment will be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the customer's circumstances and the factors that led to the overpayment.

11. Review of the Decision

- 11.1** Housing Payments are not subject to the statutory benefit's appeals process.
- 11.2** Customers may dispute a decision and request a review.
- 11.3** The review will be considered by a different officer within the Revenues and Benefits Service who was not involved in the original decision.
- 11.4** The officer will review the decision made and notify the customer of the outcome of the review in writing.
- 11.5** If the customer is not satisfied with the outcome of the review, the route of judicial review is available, and a complaint may be made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman if there is an allegation of maladministration or service failure.
- 11.6** A new application for a housing payment can be made at any time.

12. Data Sharing

- 12.1** We will collect and use information to perform our statutory duties and to protect public funds.
- 12.2** Our Benefits privacy notice provides further information for people accessing the Benefits service, please visit www.bolton.gov.uk/data-protection-freedom-information/privacy-notices for further information.