

Easy to Read Guide
to the
Housing Assistance Payment
Tenant Guidebook





What is Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)?

HAP is a type of social housing support provided by local authorities.

It supports people to rent a property from a private landlord.

Rent is the money you pay to your landlord to live in your house.

A landlord is the owner of the house you live in.

With the HAP, the local authority will pay a part of the rent to a private landlord for you.



Benefits of HAP

You can have a full-time job and still get HAP.

Every week, you must pay money towards your rent to your local authority.

The amount you pay is based on your income and what you are able to pay.

You can also apply for other social housing options through your local authority's transfer list.



How does HAP work?



Finding HAP accommodation

Normally you must find your own private rented accommodation.

This accommodation should be within the HAP rent limits.

These limits are based on your household and the rent prices in your area.

Your household is the number of people living with you in your house.

Your local authority will let you know what the rent limits are.

If your rent is higher than the HAP limits, you might need to pay the extra amount of money to your landlord.

This is called a “top-up”.



Who can apply for HAP?

Anyone who qualifies and is on the local authority housing waiting list can apply for HAP.





How to apply for HAP

If you are not already on your local authority's housing list, you will need to apply for social housing support.

To do this, you must fill out the Social Housing Support application form.

An application form is a form you fill in to apply for any type of support you need.

If you qualify for social housing, you can ask your local authority for a HAP application form.

Once you have found a home that meets your needs, you can fill in the HAP application form.

Your landlord also needs to fill in part of the HAP application form.

Who is my landlord?

The landlord is the owner of the house you live in.

Your landlord is the person you made the rental agreement with and who the local authority pays the HAP payment to.

A rental agreement is the money you agree to pay and the rules you agree to follow.





The local authority is not your landlord.

When you get HAP, you must follow the same laws and rules that you follow when you rent a house.

Will my landlord know about HAP?

Most landlords will know about HAP.

If they want more information, your local authority will give you an information booklet.

This booklet and more general information on HAP are available online at www.hap.ie



The property

Property means your house or home.

The property must meet the housing standards for rented accommodation.

Housing standards mean things like having heating in all rooms, having smoke alarms and other standards.

Your local authority will contact you within eight months of the first HAP payment to check your property to see if it meets the standards.



What is a deposit?

A deposit is amount of money you pay before you pay the rent when you move into the house.

Will I have to pay a deposit?

Yes. You must pay the deposit yourself.

This should not be more than one month's rent.

You might be able to apply for help from the Department of Social Protection with paying your deposit.

Rent Contributions

The local authority pays the HAP payments to your landlord.

You will need to pay your rent every week to your local authority.

This is called a rent contribution.

Your local authority decides what amount you will have to pay.

The local authority can change your rent contribution as your income goes up or down.



an
post



If you are getting social welfare payments through the post office, you will pay your rent contribution through the Household Budget Scheme.

The Household budget scheme helps people getting social welfare payment to spread the cost of some bills over the year.

This is done online. This means it is done through your devices like computer, tablet or smartphone.

Employment

Even if you work full time, you can still get HAP.

If you earn more money, you will have to pay more rent contribution to the local authority.

You must tell the local authority immediately of any changes to your income or money you earn.

Moving house

Your local authority will want you to stay in that property for at least 2 years.

If things change you can apply to your local authority to move.

For example, if you work in a different place or if there are more people living with you or if someone moves out.



Can I transfer to another housing support?

You can apply to transfer from HAP to other types of social housing support such as local authority housing.

Local authority housing is housing you can live in that is owned by your local authority.



This is done through the local authority's transfer list.

If this is something you want to do, you need to ask the local authority to put you on the transfer list once you are approved for HAP.



What do you need to do to get HAP?

You must fill in and send the application form to the local authority.

Your local authority will check the application.

Once the application has been approved the local authority can start making HAP payments to your landlord.



You must pay a weekly rent contribution to the local authority.

If you do not pay your weekly contribution your local authority could stop paying HAP payments to your landlord.

Your local authority will not approve a HAP application if your house is not meeting your household's needs.

You or anyone living in your house must not behave badly.

Your landlord must be paying their taxes.

This Easy to Read document was developed by the Housing Agency.

This document was proof-read for its accessibility by people with disabilities.

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