

Appendix A

Homeless Prevention Fund Policy

The purpose of the Homeless Prevention Fund is to assist us in reducing the number of households placed in bed and breakfast and/or temporary accommodation, or delay homelessness until a planned move can be made.

There are two elements of the fund, rechargeable and non-rechargeable. The Homeless Prevention Fund will be used for the following purposes:-

Rechargeable elements of this will be:

- Rent in Advance
- Rent Arrears
- Loans for furniture if applicant is unable to access a Crisis Loan (administered by the DWP) and the loan will result in them leaving temporary accommodation.

Non-rechargeable elements of this will be:

- Agency fees to secure privately rented accommodation for example to pay for credit checks or references.
- Payments to family/friends to keep the applicant until suitable accommodation can be found. Sometimes family members are unable to afford to keep relatives as it impacts on their own benefits
- One off payments in exceptional circumstances, where it will result in a tenancy being saved, or homelessness delayed.

Eligibility

The scheme will be used for applicants that are homeless or threatened with homelessness. They must be in priority need as defined by the Homeless Act 2002.

The applicant will normally have a local connection to South Somerset. However, on occasions payments may be made for applicants who have no local connection for example if they are fleeing violence.

Repayments of the Rechargeable Element

Before any payments are made the Housing Officer will carry out a detailed check on affordability. From this information they will then be used to agree a repayment plan with the applicant.

Authorisation Limits

Housing Officers, Accommodation Officer and Private Sector Tenancy Sustainment Officer will be able to authorise payments of up to £200 for non-rechargeable and rechargeable items.

Housing Policy and Performance Officer, and the Senior Supported Housing Officer will be able to authorise payments up to £1,000 on rechargeable and non-rechargeable items.

Senior Housing and Finance Officer will be able to authorise payments of up to £2,000 on rechargeable and non-rechargeable items.

Housing and Welfare Manager will be able to authorise payments of up to £8,500 on rechargeable items. Non-rechargeable items will be up to £5,000.

If a payment is required to save a tenancy or prevent homelessness, and falls outside of the above categories the Health and Wellbeing Assistant Director will be responsible for authorising the payment. A report will then be submitted to the portfolio holder on a quarterly basis to monitor these exceptional circumstances and ensure value for money.

Maximum Payment

The maximum payment we would consider making on the rechargeable code would be for six months rent in advance. The highest rent value in line with Local Housing Allowance (see table attached at page 16) would be £1,400.01 a month, this equates to £8,400.06 for six months rent in advance.
