

## Essential and non-essential expenses

If you are claiming a Discretionary Housing Payment or help from the Discretionary Discount fund because of severe financial hardship, you will need to let us know about the money you have coming in and going out, so that we can make a decision about any extra help we can give you.

When we look at your claim, we class some outgoings as essential expenses and we will allow for these. But some outgoings will not be allowed when working out if we can award any extra help.

Here are some examples of essential and non-essential expenses.

### Travel

We will allow:

- Public transport (for work, school, shopping etc)

If we consider that you need a car:

- Car insurance, MOT and car maintenance
- Vehicle tax
- Fuel (petrol, diesel, oil etc)

But we will not normally allow:

- Breakdown or recovery
- Parking charges or tolls
- Taxis (unless you are getting Disability Living Allowance and this is your only means of transport)

### Housekeeping

We will allow:

- Food and milk
- Cleaning and toiletries
- Laundry
- Clothing and footwear
- Nappies and baby items

But we will not normally allow:

- Newspapers and magazines
- Cigarettes, tobacco and sweets
- Alcohol
- Dry cleaning
- Pet food

## **Other expenditure**

We will allow:

- School meals
- NHS health expenses, such as dentist, glasses and prescriptions (people getting benefits such as Income Support and Jobseekers Allowance get some of these services free)
- Essential house repairs if you own your home or have a mortgage. If you rent your home, these will be the responsibility of your landlord

But we will not normally allow:

- Hairdressing or hair cuts
- Pocket money and school trips
- Lottery and pools
- Hobbies, leisure, sport (including going to the pub or on outings, or going to the gym)
- Gifts (Christmas, birthdays, charity etc)
- Vet bills and pet insurance
- Cable, satellite and internet
- Television, video and other rented appliances

However, there are always exceptions, so please put down all of your outgoings when filling in your claim form.