



Newsletter

4th Quarter

February - April 2019

DFTRA Update

Although we are still unable to use our office, we continue to work hard to support our members and non-members with issues. In March 2019 we have dealt with 16 issues ranging from repairs queries to benefit tribunals.

Following a meeting with Amber Rudd, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions we met with Sean Beckett regarding Discretionary Housing Payments, details of which you can find [overleaf](#).

We will continue into the new financial year to support tenants and residents across the Borough in the best way we can—and hopefully find ourselves back in an office very soon!

Training Courses

If you book a training place please turn up. Did you know.....

Between 31.05.18 and 08.01.19 the Participation Team provided 59 training places to tenants and residents to help them increase their knowledge and skills. Out of these confirmed places, 29% didn't attend.

We do understand that a late cancellation is sometimes unavoidable. However, we still have to pay for the places when people either don't turn up, or cancel at the last minute, as it's too late to offer the place to someone else.

Training places cost Housing an average of £50 each, and that's a conservative estimate. This means there was a minimum loss to the organisation of around £850 on this for this period.

It may not seem much, but every penny counts, so if you book a training place please turn up or let us know in plenty of time so we can offer the place to someone else. Thank you.

**Stay up to date on meetings and events -
sign up for FREE email and text alerts**

📱 **Text** your surname, house number and postcode to 07797 870352
e.g. Brookes, 10, DY1 1HF (initial text will only cost your standard text rate)
or

☎ **Call** 01384 815168 to sign up to the service

Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary housing payments (DHPs) are an award of additional financial assistance to help with your rent. The council may be able to make an award if you are unable to meet your housing costs from your available income or savings and have genuine financial hardship.

To receive an award from Dudley Council you must live in the borough, and rent your home from the council, a housing association, a charity or a private landlord. You must also be currently claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (housing element) and have a shortfall between your benefit payment and your rent.

In most cases, awards are short term to give you time to make lifestyle changes. This could mean moving to more affordable accommodation, getting help with budgeting, adjusting your finances, or finding employment/returning to work. In exceptional circumstances, awards can be made for longer periods. All applications are considered on an individual basis.

For full details of the scheme and how to apply visit www.dudley.gov.uk and search 'discretionary housing payments.'

Council Tax discounts and reductions

Dudley Council are encouraging people to find out if they can get a reduction in their council tax.

People who live alone could be eligible for a 25 percent discount off their council tax bill. A reduction may also apply to households where all, or all but one, of the people usually living there are students, severely mentally impaired, carers, apprentices or long term hospital/care home patients. Help is also available if someone with a disability lives in the property and needs an additional bathroom, kitchen or other room, or uses a wheelchair indoors.

The council tax reduction scheme can also reduce the amount of council tax that low income households have to pay. All working age claimants have to pay something towards their council tax, however, care leavers (aged between 18 and 25) may be entitled to receive up to 100% council tax reduction.

Remember, if you're housing costs are now met by Universal Credit, you will still need to make a separate claim for Council Tax Reduction from the local authority.

For more information call 0300 555 2345 or visit www.dudley.gov.uk.

Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations

The Ground Floor Complex, Booth Court, Lower Derry Street, Brierley Hill DY5 2SJ

-- Tel: 01384 868010 -- Website: www.dftra.org.uk -- E-mail: info@dftra.org.uk --
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