

Special Recognition Payment - Supporting People and Homelessness - FAQs

Q1. Who qualifies for the payment?

Staff must have worked normal contracted hours as part of a contract of employment for a minimum of one continuous period of 4 weeks between 17 March 20 and 31 January 21. Staff on a zero hours contract in the relevant time period will be considered eligible.

Unpaid volunteers, staff who were on a career break during the qualifying period, staff who were dismissed for misconduct and Non-Executive Directors are not eligible for payment.

Q2. Do I have to apply for this payment?

No, eligible organisations will apply to the Housing Executive. The payment will be processed and paid to all those that meet the qualifying criteria by their employers.

Q3. The service I work is jointly funded by Supporting People and the Department of Health (DoH). How will I receive my payment?

Jointly funded services are included in the DoH Special Recognition Payment Scheme. You will receive your payment from your employer through the DoH scheme.

Q4. When will I receive my payment?

The Housing Executive have written to Supporting People (SP) providers to detail the payment and claim process, and to request information on eligible staff. Once this information is received, payments can begin to be made to organisations to pay eligible staff.

The scheme will be progressed in two phases. The first phase will see payments made to SP providers for eligible staff currently employed and phase two will see payments made for agency employees and other categories (*including homeless provider staff outside of SP, agency staff and other groups such as those who were employed by a SP providers but have since left*).

Phase 1 has commenced with payments to eligible organisations anticipated to begin to be made in December 2021. Phase 2 will commence in early 2022.

Q5. How is my award calculated and paid?

This scheme is calculated on a pro rata basis to reflect the contribution of those who worked over the qualifying period.

It is the responsibility of employers to calculate the correct value of the award applicable to each eligible individual, and to make the payment to them.

Q6. Will I have to pay tax and National Insurance on my Award?

Yes, all income derived from employment is subject to tax and National Insurance. However, those who are entitled to the full payment who pay tax at the rate of 20% and are at the normal employee National Insurance level, will receive a £500 net payment.

Q7. The payment is “non-consolidated”. What does that mean?

Non-consolidated means the payment it is not pensionable and does not create a new baseline for future pay calculations. However, tax and national insurance are payable on the sum and these deductions have been included in the cost of the scheme.

Q8. Can I refuse the Payment?

No, the payment will be made automatically by SP provider organisations to those who meet the qualifying criteria.

Q9. Will my benefits be affected if I receive this payment?

Additional income may have implications for those in receipt of income assessed benefits.

While it is not possible to disregard the special recognition payment, SP providers may be able to offer any employee with concerns the option to receive their award in instalments (for example over 3 months).

Individuals may wish to seek independent advice in relation to income assessed benefits.

Q10. I receive Universal Credit. Will my Universal Credit be reduced if I receive the payment?

If you are currently receiving Universal Credit and you receive a special recognition payment, you need to tell Universal Credit how much you have received when you receive it. This will make sure your Universal Credit payment is correctly calculated.

If you would like to speak to someone about how your Universal Credit may be affected and seek to know if you should request a phased payment, for example over 3 months, you should speak to your Universal Credit work coach or contact your service centre on 0800 0121 331.

Q11. Will this payment be included in my holiday pay calculation?

No, the payment stands in isolation and will not be included in the calculation of any payment which is based on a reference period, such as holiday pay, sick pay or occupational maternity pay.

Q12. I was part time during the qualifying period and worked additional hours, will this be reflected in my payment?

Yes, your part time hours, including additional hours worked at standard pay rate, will be averaged over the qualifying period. Your payment will therefore be based on your average hours worked per week, pro rata up to the full time equivalent payment of £500.

Q13. During the qualifying period I spent time off work. Will my payment be affected?

Any period of time staff spent shielding, on (paid) sick leave, on maternity leave, on paternity leave, on adoption leave or on furlough will count towards the 4 week qualifying period. Normal contracted hours will be used in these instances.

Only periods of illness in which a staff member is on a zero rate of pay are not included.

Q14. I was full time during the qualifying period and worked overtime, will overtime be reflected in my payment?

No, overtime hours above full time are excluded for the purpose of the calculating the payment. Your payment will be capped at £500.

Q15. I worked full time and part time during the qualifying period, how will this affect my payment?

A pro rata calculation will be completed, based on the period when you were full-time and the period you were part time. Any excess hours worked when you were part time will also be taken into account. Overtime will not be included in the calculation.

Q16. Are on call hours reflected in my payment?

No, only paid work hours are eligible. Allowances for being on call are not included.

Q17. I work for two Supporting People providers. Will I get the payment twice?

The payment is capped at £500. It is your responsibility to make sure that if you work for more than one employer and work more than full time that you do not receive more than the maximum payable of £500.

You should notify one of your employers that you work more than full time and ask for your payment to be reduced from that employer.

You should also notify your employer of any duplicate or excessive payments that you have received.

Q18. Will I receive this payment if I left one Supporting People provider and commenced employment with another Supporting People Provider?

Providing you meet the qualifying criteria in either of your employments, you will receive the payment, but the payment will be capped at £500.

Q19. Will I receive this payment if I have left or retired?

Staff who left or retired between 17 March 2020 and 31 January 2021 are eligible for the payment equivalent to the period worked, providing they meet

Q20. I started/left employment half way through the qualifying period. How will my payment be worked out?

Provided you completed 4 weeks continuous service, of your normal working pattern within the qualifying period, you will be eligible to receive the payment. The payment is calculated on a pro rata basis up to £500 net per individual.

Q21. What about situations where someone has died in service or left and subsequently died?

In situations where staff have died, while in service or subsequently, their estate is eligible for payment. This is provided they completed 4 weeks continuous service, of their normal working pattern within the qualifying period. Payment will be administered by their former employer.