

OUTLINE OF THE REVISED DOWNSIZING INCENTIVE SCHEME

1. Purpose of the scheme

1.1 The purpose of this scheme is to support the Council's housing allocations policy by making best use of its housing stock.

2. Who can apply?

2.1 Property Size

2.1.2 Any Council tenant who currently lives in a 3, 4 or 4+ bed roomed property and who no longer requires this size of property can register for assistance under the scheme. The Council will accept registrations where there is evidenced need for the size, type and location of the property they would be leaving.

2.2 Adapted Property

2.2.1 Any Council tenant or qualifying occupier who occupies a wheelchair adapted property (irrespective of property size) may also register for assistance under the scheme. Eligibility would be met where the disabled person is no longer in residence.

3. Eligibility Criteria

3.1 Applicants may qualify for the scheme if they are:

- a Council tenant;
- live in a 3+ bedroom Council property;
- want to move to a smaller property;
- under occupy their accommodation by at least one bedroom;
- have a satisfactory tenancy report;
- their home is an area of demand and can be easily re-let; **or**
- the tenant or qualifying occupier who live an adapted property where the disabled person is no longer in residence.

4. Application Process

4.1 Applicants who want to use the Scheme will also be required to submit a transfer application to the Council, unless they have one registered already. The points to be awarded to transfer applications will be assessed in terms of the Council's Allocations Policy.

4.2 All tenants and qualifying occupiers who apply for entry onto the scheme will receive a written outcome as to their application. If refused entry onto the scheme they have the right of appeal.

5. Incentives offered through the scheme

5.1 Tenants (and qualifying occupiers) accepted for the Downsizing Incentive Scheme will qualify for financial and practical support. This is separate to any decoration allowance that a landlord may pay to reflect the decorative condition of the new home.

3+ bedroom applicants will receive:

Financial Assistance	
£1,500	Basic incentive scheme payment
+£400	For each bedroom given up
+£400	Disruption payment
Practical Assistance	
Helping with information and advice about the downsizing scheme	
Helping with form filling	
Helping with viewings and removal arrangements	
Helping with arrangements to disconnect/reconnect utilities etc	
Helping with notifications of change of address, GP, Bank etc	
Helping with arrangements and disposal of unwanted furniture	
Helping with Housing Benefit and income maximisation	
Helping with the preparation of the new home	

Adapted Property applicants will receive:

Financial Assistance	
£1,500	Basic incentive scheme payment
+£400	Disruption payment
Practical Assistance	
Helping with information and advice about the downsizing scheme	
Helping with form filling	
Helping with viewings and removal arrangements	
Helping with arrangements to disconnect/reconnect utilities etc	
Helping with notifications of change of address, GP, Bank etc	
Helping with arrangements and disposal of unwanted furniture	
Helping with Housing Benefit and income maximisation	
Helping with the preparation of the new home	

- 5.2 Payments made under the scheme will be expected to cover the costs of removals etc. which will be paid by the tenant to the contractors involved. Disconnection and reconnection of washing machines, dishwashers etc, with the exception of gas cookers, will be arranged by the Council, who will meet the costs of such works. A further payment of £400 is offered to all applicants to reflect unforeseen circumstances that can arise during the period of their transfer. This will be recorded as a disruption payment.
- 5.3 The Council will provide a named officer contact for each person moving under the Downsizing Incentive Scheme.

6. Offers of Housing

- 6.1 All offers of housing will be made in accordance with the Council's Allocations Policy. Applicants accepted on to the Scheme will be eligible for an award of 500 points. To assist the Council to make best use of its housing stock, applicants on the Scheme will receive unlimited offers of housing and will not be penalised should they refuse an offer of housing.

7. Recoverable debts

- 7.1 If a tenant has rent arrears, rechargeable repairs or any other housing related debts, these will be deducted by the Council and the tenant will receive a reduced downsizing payment to reflect this.

8. Change of Circumstances

- 8.1 The Downsizing Incentive Scheme is voluntary and tenants can decide to remove themselves from the scheme or the transfer list at any time should they decide to do so.

9. Right of Appeal

- 9.1 If an applicant is not satisfied with a decision made under the Downsizing Incentive Scheme they have the right to appeal. Their appeal should be made in writing to the Housing Services Manager, stating reasons for the appeal and should be made within 28 days from the date of that decision.