

HOUSING SERVICES

Area : Housing Management
Department : Housing Management
Subject : Under Occupation Policy

Procedure Ref: HM-

Owner: Housing Management Team Manager

Date approved: 22.5.12 (Cabinet)

Effective date: June 2012

Please state what policy & documents (if any) this procedure is linked to:

- Allocation Policy
- Void Lettable Standard
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy

Version	Date	Details of amendment	Creator/ amender	Approved by	Next review due
1	27.3.12	N/A	Amanda Harper	Chris Lambert	2015/16
2	7.7.14	* Amended eligibility criteria * Amended incentive scheme payment	Amanda Harper		2017/18

Copies of this document are available upon request and can be obtained in large print or translated into other languages, if required.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy explains who is eligible to apply for a financial incentive to move and how the Council can help residents to move to a smaller sized accommodation if they want to.

1.2 The Under Occupation Policy is intended to increase the number of family homes that become vacant each year by managing under-occupation in our houses to make best use of our housing stock.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- Under-Occupation is where a resident is living in a house which is too large for their housing need in accordance with our Allocations Policy or in accordance with the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) assessment for the under occupation charge.
- The Under Occupation Incentive will financially help current tenants to move to a smaller property.
- A transfer is where a household moves from one property to another.

3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Council tenants will be considered for the incentive scheme if they are:

- A transfer applicant of a house and apply to move to a supported or sheltered property or
- A transfer applicant who is affected by the Under Occupation Charge and apply to move to a smaller Council or Housing Association general needs property where no charge would apply based on their household size at the time of the move.

In addition to the above, the payment will only be made providing the tenant:

- Is a secure Council tenant
- Has a clear rent account or has agreed to use the incentive payment to clear the rent account
- Has kept their home and garden in a clean and reasonable condition
- Has kept to the terms of their tenancy agreement

3.2 A transfer applicant who is unable to manage their current property due to ill health or disability will be considered for the incentive scheme and the costs of remedial works to bring the property they vacate to the void lettable standard will be deducted from the incentive payment.

3.3 Residents will not transfer to a property which they will under occupy.

3.4 Tenants will only be eligible for one incentive payment.

4. INCENTIVE PAYMENTS

4.1 The Council will pay a total of £2,000 to the tenant who moves from a house to a supported or sheltered property.

4.2 The Council will pay a total of £1,000 to the tenant liable to pay the under occupation charge in their current home who moves to a smaller Council or Housing Association property where no charge would apply based on their household size at the time of the move.

4.3 The payment will be made in two parts, 50% at the time of signing the agreement for the new property and the balance following the deduction of any rechargeable works items.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

5.1 The delivery of this policy and the overall success will be monitored by using a mixture of indicators aimed at measuring success and speed of internal processes, such as:

- Number of tenants benefitting from the Incentive Scheme
- Number of family homes released
- Tenant satisfaction

5.2 The policy will be reviewed in 2017/18 and/or in response to legislative changes, feedback or recognised good practice.

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

6.1 The Council is committed to reflecting, embracing and promoting the diversity and inclusion of individuals and groups of people. We recognise that by understanding the differences between people, we will be able to provide better services. Our staff are trained to recognise and understand what different customer needs may be so that we can ensure our services are accessible to all.