



# Help to Move Policy

Last reviewed June 2020

Adopted April 2021

# 1.0 Help to Move Policy overview

This policy is managed and adhered to by the housing service. This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with government legislation, guidance and good practice.

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## 1.1 Introduction

Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) is committed to assisting households to move into appropriately sized accommodation where possible.

The Council knows that many tenants would like to move to smaller or more suitable accommodation, but are put off doing so by the thought of upheaval and the cost of moving. Further information can be found on the [‘Help to Move’](#) page of our website.

## 1.2 Aim(s) of the policy:

The aims of this policy are to;

- Give tenants under-occupying their home greater priority to move within the Allocations Policy
- Allow tenants moving out of a large home the ability to retain one ‘spare’ bedroom
- Make better use of council housing and assist tenants to move to homes that better suit their needs
- Help tenants to reduce utility bills, rent and council tax and move from larger homes they may be finding difficult to maintain
- Provide assistance to tenants who would benefit from a supported housing property
- Encourage households to move out of adapted properties when no longer needed, to better meet the needs of those requiring significant adaptations to live safely and maintain independence

## 1.3 Links to the council's corporate aims:

This policy supports the council's corporate priorities which are set out in [‘Delivering for Dacorum’ – Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025](#)

- A clean, safe and enjoyable environment
- Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need

## 1.4 Equality and diversity

The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services and has procedures in place to ensure that all Applicants and Tenants are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

## 1.5 Policy Statements

Tenants will be eligible for the scheme if they meet certain required criteria (see 2.1)

Tenants wishing to move via the scheme must submit a housing application and seek accommodation via the scheme (see 2.2)

We will make arrangements to help facilitate the move for eligible households wishing to move to a supported housing property (see 2.3)

The council may waive the requirement for the tenant to keep a clear rent account for six months under certain circumstances (see 2.5)

*“The Council is required to respond to any local or national restrictions imposed by central government. The administration of this and other Council policies could, therefore, be impacted by a pandemic or other emergency for the period that such restrictions are in operation.”*

# 2.0 Help to Move Policy

## Detail

### 2.1) Eligibility

To be considered for this scheme, you will need to be registered for a transfer via 'Moving with Dacorum' and have enough points on our transfer list to qualify for a move.

A tenant will be eligible for this scheme if they are a Secure or Flexible DBC tenant occupying:

- A two, three, four, five or six bedroom property and would like to move to a smaller property owned by the Council or a Housing Association in the Borough.
- A one bedroom property and would like to move to a designated elderly persons' property owned by the Council or a Housing Association in the Borough.
- A home with major adaptations that are no longer required and would like to move to a property without alterations owned by the Council or a Housing Association in the Borough

Tenants may meet more than one of the situations above.

They must agree to provide vacant possession of their present home.

A tenant will not be eligible if there is a Notice of Seeking Possession for breach of tenancy conditions currently in force (With the exception of rent arrears where assistance can be provided under the scheme).

Applications will not be accepted by tenants where:

- Any member of the household will be made homeless as a result of the move
- A tenancy is in dispute due to a relationship breakdown
- The move has been arranged as part of the Mutual Exchange process
- The move has been arranged as part of a Temporary Decant
- A payment has been received in the past two years under the Help to Move scheme (also previously known as Moving to a Smaller Home)

Those who are not eligible under the scheme can still apply to transfer in the normal way.

### 2.2) Applying for the Scheme

Any tenant wishing to move via this scheme will need to submit a housing application and seek accommodation via 'Moving with Dacorum'. When an offer is accepted following a successful bid on a property, the tenant will be assessed to identify if they are eligible for the scheme. Support as per the terms of this scheme will be offered to those who meet the eligibility criteria. This scheme does not give any additional priority to an application and does not give the promise of an immediate move.

### 2.3) Terms of the scheme

For those who meet the eligibility criteria, the Council will:

- Arrange for your cooker and washing machine to be disconnected and refitted at your new home. If you have a gas cooker and you are moving to supported housing, where there is only electricity we will reimburse you for the cost of a new one up to the value of £400.

(NOTE: We cannot reconnect appliances for tenants moving to a Housing Association property.)

- Make a one-off payment of £500 to anyone reducing the size of the home regardless of number of bedrooms. One payment will be made for each move per household
- Make a one-off payment of £1000 to any DBC tenants moving from a home with major adaptations\* and moving to a home where no extensive changes have been made
- Make a one-off payment of £500 to any DBC tenants moving from a general needs property to one designated as Supported Housing.
- Use the incentive payment to arrange for a removal company to move items for those moving into supported accommodation who don't have any other assistance to move.

\*A major adaptation is a substantial alteration to your home that the council has deemed necessary to meet your needs such as a level access shower, stair lift, through floor lift, adapted kitchen and you are moving to a home where no extensive change have been made.

### 2.4) Payment and Rechargeable debts

A rechargeable debt is your responsibility owed to Dacorum Borough Council through damage or neglect caused by the tenant, a member of their household or visitor. This includes, but is not exclusive to:

- Damage to the interior/exterior of a property
- Dirt and rubbish that need to be removed to ensure the property is of a habitable condition
- Rubbish stored in and/or an overgrown garden

Payments will be made when keys to your former home have been received and the property has been inspected. This can take up to 21 days to complete. The incentive payment will initially be used to clear any rent arrears, followed by any rechargeable debts, with the remaining balance paid directly to a nominated bank account.

## 2.0 Help to Move Policy Detail

## 3.0 Links to other corporate documents

## 4.0 Legislation

### 2.5) Rent Arrears

The Council's Allocation Policy sets out the conditions where tenants can move with rent arrears. This acknowledges that a move to smaller accommodation can be beneficial to the tenant's financial circumstances.

If the tenant has rent arrears, the allowance provided under the Scheme will be used to clear the debt after the move has taken place. Any balance will be paid to the tenant after the debt has been cleared.

A move can also be considered if the debt exceeds the allowance provided under this Scheme and the move would support the tenant financially or improve their wellbeing, for example through a move to a smaller home or where the Housing Panel supports an urgent move.

A repayment plan for any remaining debt would need to be agreed prior to the move taking place.

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and strategies:

Housing Allocations Policy

Tenancy Strategy

Sustainable Tenancy Strategy

Income Management Strategy

Rents and other charges Policy

Asset Management Strategy

The legislation listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

Localism Act 2011

Housing Act 1985