



City of London Corporation
Department of Community & Children's Services
Housing Service

Downsizing (Shift Allowance) Policy

Approved by:	<i>Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee</i>
Original Approval Date:	<i>February 2018 (as the "Shift Allowance Policy")</i>
Review Date:	<i>October 2020</i>
Re-Approval Date	<i>November 2020 (v.2)</i>
Review Date:	<i>November 2023</i>
Re-Approval Date:	<i>03/06/2024 (v.3 – this version)</i>
Next Review Date	<i>June 2027</i>

1. **Purpose and scope**

- 1.1 We recognise that there is high demand for social housing in London and our ability to house families in need of larger homes is restricted by the availability of suitable accommodation. At the same time, we are aware that there are tenants who are under occupying their current homes. We want to increase the availability of larger properties and to help us to do this we have adopted a discretionary scheme which pays an allowance to eligible tenants who choose to downsize to a smaller property. This is called a Shift Allowance, commonly referred to as a downsizing payment.
- 1.2 This policy applies to City of London Secure tenants.

2. **Policy aims and objectives**

- 2.1 To meet the demand for larger properties, we aim to increase the number of existing tenants moving to smaller homes. To achieve this aim, we will:
- Promote our downsizing incentive scheme
 - Increase accessibility to the scheme
 - Explain the financial incentives available
 - Set out the eligibility criteria
 - Assist as many people as possible to move

3. **Service standards**

- 3.1 When we deal with downsizing applications, we will:

- Respond to downsizing enquiries within 10 working days
- Explain to tenants all the options available to downsize including mutual exchanges
- Explain the eligibility criteria for a downsizing payment
- Support tenants to make applications for a downsizing payment
- Provide tenants with support during the moving process
- Make the downsizing payment within 28 days of the start of a new tenancy.

4. **Legal and regulatory obligations**

- 4.1 This policy will help us to comply with the following regulatory requirements:

Tenancy Standard – Allocations and mutual exchanges

- Required outcomes: make the best use of available housing
- Specific expectations: develop and deliver services to address under-occupation

4.2 There are no direct legal obligations arising from this policy.

5.0 **Our approach**

5.1 **Advice and Assistance**

We will provide advice and assistance on housing options, to tenants who are under-occupying. Tenants identified as under-occupying their homes may be contacted periodically to advise them of housing options and available incentives.

5.2 **Eligibility**

To be eligible for a downsizing payment, tenants must:

- Be a Secure tenant of the City of London Corporation
- Occupy a property that is two bedrooms or larger
- Qualify to join the Housing Register
- Have maintained their home in a satisfactory condition
- Fully vacate their home
- Move into an appropriately sized home with us or another social landlord

The following tenants are excluded from the downsizing scheme:

- Tenants who are moving through a mutual exchange
- Fixed-term tenants who are required to move to a smaller property upon renewal of their tenancy
- Successors or assignees who are required to move to a smaller home by us
- Tenants moving into a studio property (except sheltered housing)
- Tenants subject to a Possession order or who have been served with a Notice of Seeking Possession for anti-social behaviour.
- Tenants subject to anti-social behaviour proceedings

5.3 **Allowances and payments**

The payment is based on the number of bedrooms released by a move. It is a set amount from which tenants are required to meet all expenses associated with moving including removals and relocation expenses. The current payment is as follows:

- £2,000 for the first bedroom

- £1,000 for any subsequent bedrooms

Removal costs - When a tenant is unable to fund the cost of removals we may arrange and pay for removals ourselves. In these circumstances the cost of removals will be deducted from the tenants Shift Allowance payment.

5.4 Payments

We will aim to make the payment within 28 days of the start of the new tenancy. This timescale is subject to having all the necessary information available.

If a City of London tenant downsizes to another landlord, the payment cannot be made until the tenant provide a copy of their new tenancy agreement showing the number of bedrooms in their new home.

5.5 Deductions

Rent or other tenancy related debts - If the tenant is in rent arrears or has any other debt owed to the City of London Corporation, any money owed will be deducted from the downsizing payment.

Moving support costs - Where tenants require additional support to assist them to move home, such as arranging removals, property clearance or cleaning, the costs will be deducted from the payment.

Rechargeable repair costs – Any costs incurred to rectify that damage to the tenant's old home will be deducted from the downsizing payment.

6. Responsibilities, monitoring and performance

6.1 Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation rests with the Head of Housing Management. The Head of Housing Management will ensure that staff receive the appropriate training and support to achieve the aims of this policy. Where needed we may establish appropriate operational procedures.

6.2 Monitoring of the implementation of this policy and our performance in increasing the number of tenants moving to smaller homes will be the responsibility of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee.

7. Associated policies

- Decants Policy
- Housing Strategy
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- City of London Corporation Housing Allocations Scheme

8. Document Management

Policy title	Downsizing (Shift Allowance) Policy
Date created	February 2018
Policy owner	Head of Housing Management
Authorised by	Housing Management and Almhouses Sub-Committee
Date authorised	03/06/2024
Review period	3 years
Date of next review	03/06/2027

Consultation and assessment	
Customer consultation	Housing User Board (HUB), October 2020
Equality Impact Assessment	This Policy has been subject to a full Equalities Analysis and will be implemented in accordance with our responsibilities and duties under relevant legislation, including the Equalities Act 2010.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required. Minimal risk of data breaches. Use of personal data covered by privacy statement.

Document review history			
Version	Date amended	Date approved	Key changes
1.0	N/A	February 2018	Original document
2.0	October 2020	November 2020	Routine policy review.
3.0	June 2024	03/06/2024	Routine policy review.