



Help to Move Policy

Last reviewed **January 2020**, approved....

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.

Contents

1.0 Policy overview

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Aim(s) of the policy
- 1.3 Links to the Council's corporate aims
- 1.4 Equality and diversity
- 1.5 Policy statement

2.0 Eligibility

- 2.1 Terms of the scheme
- 2.2 Applying for the Scheme
- 2.3 Terms of the Scheme
- 2.4 Rent Arrears

3.0 Links to other corporate strategies and policies

4.0 Legislation

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, more suitable accommodation, but are put off doing so by the thought of upheaval and the cost of moving.

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.
- Consider allowing tenants moving out of a large home the ability to retain one 'spare' bedroom.
- Promote the Council's approach to under-occupation proactively on the Moving with Dacorum website if an applicant indicates they are under-occupying.
- Help those that are finding a larger property with a garden a struggle but are unable to afford the cost of moving.
- Reduce utility bills, rent and council tax.
- Encourage households to move out of 'desirable' properties, therefore preventing expensive adaptations being made to other less suitable homes.

1.3 Links to Council's corporate aims:

This policy supports the council's corporate priorities which are set out in ['Delivering for Dacorum – Corporate Plan 2015-2020'](#).

- Building strong and vibrant communities
- 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 Statement(s)

Tenants will be eligible for the scheme under certain 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 smaller 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 2.4)

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 and have enough points on our transfer list to qualify for a move.

A tenant will be eligible for this scheme if they are an introductory, secure or flexible tenant of DBC 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. (NB if moving to a two-bedroom property from a three for example, only one bedroom is regarded as being released under this scheme).
- A one bedroom property and would like to move to a designated elderly person's 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

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.

Where a tenancy is in dispute due to a relationship breakdown or where domestic violence has occurred, the remaining tenant(s) would not be eligible to move via the Help to Move Scheme until the tenancy issues have been resolved.

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'. If they successfully bid for smaller accommodation then support for a move will be forthcoming via this scheme. 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

In order to help tenants who wish to downsize from housing owned by Dacorum Borough Council or move into sheltered housing owned by Dacorum Borough Council, the Council will:

- Arrange for your cooker to be disconnected and refitted at your new home. If this is not possible, a new electric cooker will be provided for tenants moving into sheltered housing. We cannot reconnect a cooker for tenants moving to a Housing Association property.
- Arrange and pay for relocation of your washing machine.
- Recompense £450 for removal costs or arrange a removal company to move items if you are moving into sheltered accommodation and don't have any other assistance to move.
- Make a one off payment of £500 to anyone reducing the size of the home regardless of number of bedrooms once your transfer is complete. One payment will be made for each move per household.
- Make a one off payment of £1000 to Dacorum Borough Council tenants moving from a home with Major Adaptations such as a Level access shower, stair lift, through floor lift, adapted kitchen) This one off payment is also available to Dacorum Borough Council tenants moving from a general needs property to Sheltered housing

2.4) Rent Arrears

The Council will waive the requirement for the tenant to keep a clear rent account for three months, if it can be shown that a move to smaller accommodation will be beneficial to the tenant's financial circumstances. If the tenant has rent arrears, the allowance provided under the Scheme can 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.

In exceptional circumstances a move can also be considered if the debt exceeds the allowance provided under the Scheme. For example, if the tenant has mental health problems, is deemed vulnerable due to a medical condition or has a learning difficulty. These cases will need to have independent support and will be assessed by the Council's Medical Advisor in conjunction with the Housing Panel. This would also be conditional on a firm arrangement being made with the tenant to clear the rent arrears after the move has taken place.

3.0 Links to other corporate documents

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

4.0 Legislation

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

Localism Act 2011

Housing Act 1985