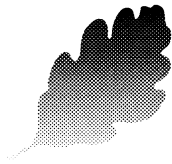


Department	Customer and Housing Services
Subject	Re-housing due to change of use of building
Objective	To provide guidance on the policy and procedure on the issues of allocations, removals and compensation to ensure there is clarity and certainty for residents and staff in general policy terms as we continue to respond to specific circumstances with each household directly.

Procedure No			
Issue No	1	Revision No	
Issue Date	August 2019	Revision Date	
Pages			

Version	Issued	Date	Comments	Initials
Draft				SC



1. **Housing Allocation Policy**

1.1 Background

The Council needs to amend its policy for the rehousing of residents who are required to move to alternative accommodation in order that the block of flats that they reside in can be converted for use as temporary accommodation for families who are homeless.

This procedure aims to explain the process of moving home, the likely changes, the legal process and the options available for tenants.

The information provided is intended to be as clear and accurate as possible although changes can occur. We will keep staff and tenants informed should changes arise.

All tenants have been visited by a member of the Project Team for Re-housing to discuss their willingness to move and to complete a housing application.

1.2 Health and Wellbeing

The loss of their home and moving from an existing neighbourhood can have a huge impact on individuals and result in considerable anxiety, concern and emotional distress. These responses are entirely natural and legitimate and must be allowed to be voiced and to influence policies and procedures.

Continuing effective communication and transparency are vital in providing reassurance and countering perceptions of any unfairness through consistency in the advice, information and recommendations offered to households;

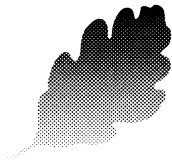
- residents should be able to rely on the proactive advocacy of representatives working on their behalf;
- residents should be given the time necessary to make informed decisions and to pursue all the support available to them and to have their queries and concerns about the process recognised and responded to;
- residents should have access to an appeals and review systems if they are unhappy with the advice and support they are receiving;

Some households are particularly vulnerable and require particular additional support through the relocation process. These include:

- individuals with no experience or no recent experience of moving home (for example elderly people or young people leaving home for the first time);
- individuals who are less familiar with housing processes and systems,
- people with health disabilities and support needs.

The support and advice provided to residents during the relocation process is essential in ensuring that the disruption and anxiety caused by losing their home and moving into a new property is minimised through

- the provision of information about policies and procedures involved
- household financial appraisals and advice about financial assistance,
- advice about grants and benefits entitlement;
- assistance in completing forms and legal paperwork;
- advice about legal rights and accessing solicitors;
- advice about utilities suppliers and energy efficiency;



- providing information, housing support services and occasionally practical assistance relating to removals and the moving process

1.3 Amendment to the existing Housing Allocation Policy

All households will have completed an application for housing which has been assessed for evident housing, medical and social needs.

All households at 39 Blackcot Road will be given 300 additional points which will put them at the top of housing lists in Midlothian, ensuring that they are given higher priority compared to other applicants. These additional points will apply to all areas in Midlothian and not just lets in the Mayfield area as a number of tenants preference is to move outwith Mayfield. Midlothian Council will continue to make a number of open market purchases and will try to focus some purchases in the areas that tenants from 39 Blackcot Road move to in order that other housing applicants at the top of the list in these areas do not feel that these households moving to the top of the list has been detrimental to their chances of being allocated a home. The housing service will also consider transfer of temporary accommodation units into permanent lets if they meet the requirements of the tenants requiring to be rehoused.

It is proposed that existing transfer tenants are provided with the same level of support and access to home loss payment/disturbance payments as tenants who were not existing transfer applicants as there is no guarantee that an applicant awaiting a transfer would be able or willing to move if they were offered accommodation without the additional support being provided to support a swift process of moving home.

In the event that tenants at 39 Blackcot Road are shortlisted for the same property, the tenant who has been resident at 39 Blackcot Road for longest period will be given the offer for the property.

It is not anticipated that there will be incidences of refusals as the housing service will only offer properties which meet their housing application choices. However applicants will be made aware that whilst they will not be suspended from being offered housing the building will start to be used by other occupants in the event that it takes a prolonged period of time to identify suitable alternative accommodation.

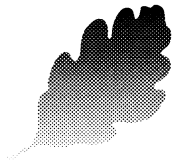
1.4 Support to Move

To help make the move as easy for tenants as possible, the council will arrange for a removal company to move furniture and belongings and undertake any necessary disconnection and reconnection of appliances. The company used by the Council will be a professional removal contractor who are fully insured, with experience of dealing with the needs of tenants.

Tenants are advised that they will need to organise other aspects of the move themselves, including for example, redirection of mail, broadband, television services, etc as the suppliers will only deal with the customer, not the Council. Tenants will be reimbursed for any associated costs.

As set out above, some disturbance expenses, for example removals, may be organised and paid for directly by the Council.

Other eligible disturbance and Home Loss payments will be processed and paid after tenants have terminated their current tenancy or returned the keys of their old home.



1.5 Claims and Compensation

Home Loss

Tenants receive a payment to compensate them for the process of having to relocate. This is a set amount to the tenant. Legally, secure tenants who move out of their homes, provided that they have lived there for at least 12 months and it's their only home will be eligible for a Home Loss payment of £1,500 per household. We will exercise discretion and provide that payment to all tenants, even if some families have not been resident for 12 months. This payment will be processed within 20 working days of receipt of a valid claim form being provided.

Disturbance Payments

Tenants can receive discretionary payments to cover the actual expenditure occurred in relocating. These payments are based on receipts provided by households and therefore vary between households.

Disturbance payments for costs incurred in moving and who have demonstrable detriment are payable. Tenants who wish to claim a disturbance payment will be required to produce a claim of their costs prior to payment. Examples of disturbance payments that tenants can claim include:

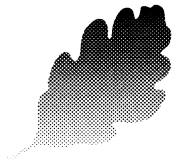
- Removal expenses (the Council arranges and pays for removals directly)
- Redirection of mail
- Telephone disconnection and reconnection
- Compensation for the value of carpet and curtains where no carpet and curtains are provided in replacement home.
- Decoration costs.
- Disconnection/reconnection of services
- The value of large items of furniture that cannot be dismantled or moved to the secure tenant's replacement property.
- We will not pay for costs for garden equipment or materials in the event that we allocate a property with a garden to a tenant who is being rehoused.

1.6 Housing Debt

Tenants must continue to pay their rent and any arrears, if applicable, on a weekly basis until their current tenancy comes to an end. If repayment arrangements are in place for rent arrears these must continue up until they move. The Arrears Team will take action against anyone who does not pay their rent and continue with recovery proceedings against those that are in breach of their tenancy agreement.

If there are rent arrears, or any other debt owed to the Council e.g. council tax, court costs, rechargeable repairs, housing benefit overpayments, former tenant arrears, that amount will be deducted from the Home Loss payment.

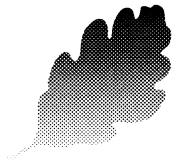
A tenant who moves may choose to move to a house or a new build property with a higher council tax or rent charge. Midlothian Council cannot compensate applicants if they move to a property with a higher council tax or rent charge but can advise on this prior to an applicant deciding to accept an offer of alternative accommodation.



Midlothian

Mayfield Homeless Families Project

Reference



APPENDIX 2:

HOME LOSS PAYMENT REQUEST

Date of Request: _____

Rent Acc. Number: _____

Tenant's Name: _____

DOB: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Date of Termination: _____ Keys Received: 1 Set ☐ 2 Sets + ☐

New Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Date of Entry: _____ Contact Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

ID of tenant checked: YES ☐

FOR PAYMENT INTO TENANT'S BANK ACCOUNT

Details required (all fields must be completed)

Name of Bank: _____

Bank Account No.: _____ (must be 8 digits)

Sort Code: _____

Name of Bank Account Holder: _____

If payment by cheque, please confirm if cheque to be collected or posted.

Collected ☐ Posted ☐ (X required method)

(Please advise tenant that if they wish to collect cheque they will be contacted by phone or e-mail to arrange collection date. Two forms of ID will be required, passport, driving licence, missive of let, utility bill etc). If cheque to be posted please confirm postal address:

Postcode: _____

Verified by: _____ (Print Name)

Authorised by (Line Manager): _____ (Print Name)



Reference

Deductions

	REFERENCE NO.	AMOUNT
Rent		£
Council Tax		£
Overpayment of Benefit		£
Sales Ledger		£

RESIDUAL BALANCE PAYABLE £

Balance Offset Actioned by _____ Date / /

Cheque posted/collected YES ☐

Appointment made for collection of cheque Date _____

Cheque collected by: _____ (Print Name)

* ID verified by: _____ (Print Name)

Letter advising of deductions issued YES

*Two Forms of ID required these should be any of the following:

- Tenancy Agreement
- Driving Licence.
- Rent Card
- National Insurance Card
- Passport
- Bus Pass
- Utility Bill