



Decant Policy for Social Housing Secure Tenants

Department of Community and Children's Services

Housing Division

1. Purpose and scope

- 1.1 This policy sets out the Corporation's approach to managing the rehousing of residents when it is necessary to move residents from their existing home into temporary accommodation or in order to facilitate modernisation or redevelopment works.
- 1.2 Home loss is not covered by this policy as it refers to situations where residents are permanently moved from their property. Where a resident requires a permanent move, they will be subject to a Home Loss Payment and a new tenancy agreement covered by the Allocations Scheme and the Lettings and Transfers Policy. For Home Loss guidance please refer to the Home Loss Payment (Prescribed Amounts) (England) Regulations 2014 and the Land Compensation Act 1973 which can be found at www.legislation.gov.uk
- 1.3 The policy applies only to housing stock of which the Corporation is the landlord and only to the decanting of residents who are secure tenants of the Corporation.

2. Aims and objectives

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to outline the arrangements for the rehousing and financial compensation of residents in order to deliver temporary vacant possession of affected properties to allow for renovation or modernisation works and ensure effective use of public funds.
- 2.2 The policy will support the Corporations future and existing approved modernisation programme proposals.

3. Service standards

- 3.1 Consultation with affected residents will be carried out prior to the Committee's consideration of the works. Consultation will continue throughout the decant programme where appropriate on the detail of the modernisation or redevelopment programme.
- 3.2 Programmes will be managed by dedicated officers who will manage communication and consultation with residents and provide the first point of contact for advice and support for all households affected by the decanting programme.
- 3.3 A housing needs survey will be undertaken of all affected residents and households prior to agreeing any temporary move.
- 3.4 The policy aims to ensure no person will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, gender, religion, belief, age, sexual orientation, physical disability, appearance, and economic or marital status

4. Legislation and regulation

- 4.1 This policy will help us to comply with the following regulatory requirements:
 - Decent Homes Standard
 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

- Repairs Standard

Required Outcome: to ensure that all housing meets the Corporations Repair Standard

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

5. **The policy approach**

5.1 Decant programmes will be scheme specific. The approach to decanting will take into account scheme proposals, works requirements, residents' choices to be rehoused temporarily or permanently, and residents' rehousing needs and preferences.

5.2 Whilst there is no legal requirement to allow residents to return to properties in a redeveloped site, the Corporation is committed to allowing residents who wish to return to be given priority to do so subject to availability of suitable properties which meet the identified needs and requirements of their household. Local lettings plans may be applied to the letting of new or redeveloped properties units to facilitate this.

5.3 Where residents are to move temporarily and return to their substantive home upon completion of works residents will:

- retain the tenancy of their existing substantive home
- move temporarily with a licence to occupy their temporary decant property
- pay the lower of the two property rents during the period of the works
- have the right to return to their substantive home upon completion of the work.

5.4 Housing needs survey:

All residents will be offered a visit or interview to assess their individual households' rehousing needs, preferences and support requirements, and determine their eligibility for help with rehousing and financial compensation.

Household details will be updated periodically throughout the duration of the programme and further visits will be undertaken prior to rehousing to check requirements and enable claims for financial compensation

5.5 Eligibility – qualifications and exclusions

The following residents will be eligible for rehousing and assistance:

- tenants living in affected property 12 months prior to the date of the Committee decision to proceed with the proposed scheme
- family members including children living with the tenant at the property 12 months prior to the date of the Committee decision to proceed with the proposed scheme
- partners and spouses living with the tenant 12 months prior to the date of the Committee decision to proceed with the proposed scheme

Proof that residents meet the eligibility criteria may be required. The Corporation will not rehouse unauthorised occupants, sub-tenants, lodgers, licensees, children of the tenant whose main or principal home is elsewhere, or other non-secure occupants.

- 5.6 The Housing needs assessment and size of accommodation will be determined using the Corporation's allocation policy in the first instance.

Where necessary, estate-specific decant plans will allow flexibility and discretion to adapt requirements to the particular needs and circumstances of individual estates and works programmes.

- 5.7 Offers of accommodation

Residents will be notified in writing of the size of property they are entitled to, their priority for rehousing, and their stated preferences for rehousing. They will also be notified of their right to return to their substantive property.

- 5.8 Disturbance payments

Disturbance payments are paid to compensate eligible tenants, as defined above, for reasonable expenses incurred in moving. Removal and associated costs eligible for disturbance payments are set out in more detail in Appendix One.

- 5.9 Discretionary payments

The Corporation may, exceptionally, exercise discretion to provide compensation or financial assistance where tenants are not legally eligible for home loss payments or incur costs beyond those set out in this policy. Where applicable this assistance will be defined as part of a scheme-specific decant and works programme and claims will be considered on a case-by-case basis. These discretionary payments cases will not be subject to appeal.

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 temporarily decanting tenants will be the responsibility of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee.

7. Associated policies or strategies

- Lettings Policy
- Housing Strategy
- City of London Corporation Housing Allocation Scheme
- City of London Corporation Housing Asset Management Strategy

8. Document management

Policy title	Decant Policy
Date created	25 April 2016
Policy owner	Head of Housing Management
Authorised by	Housing Management and Almhouses Sub-Committee
Date authorised	
Review period	3 years
Date of next review	

Consultation and assessment	
Customer consultation	
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	April 2016	Original document
2.0	October 2020		Routine policy review.

9. Appendix 1

Table 1
Schedule of disturbance payments

1.	Removal costs	To include packing/unpacking for vulnerable/older tenants where approved
2.	Redirection of mail	For three months
3.	Disconnection and reconnection of domestic appliances	Cooker, dishwasher, washing machine. Must be undertaken by industry approved tradesperson
4.	Disconnection and reconnection of telephone line, broadband, satellite dishes, aerials	
5.	Carpets, floor covering	Uplift, alteration and refitting of existing or disposal and replacement to Corporation-approved standard
6.	Curtains, curtain tracks, blinds	Alteration and refitting of existing or replacement to Corporation-approved standard
7.	Redecoration	Allowance or redecoration to approved re-let standards where Corporation is the landlord. Allowance for non-Corporation properties subject to deduction of any landlord decoration allowance
8.	Security devices	Special or additional alarms, locks where fitted by tenant
9.	Aids and adaptations	To be refitted/re-provided where previously approved by the Corporation; allowance or reimbursement for same where provided by the tenant subject to proof or approval of costs
10.	Fitted furniture	Dismantling and refitting of wardrobes and kitchens where provided by tenant
11.	Other home improvements	Compensation and reimbursement as per existing policy
12.	Sheds, garden furniture	Dismantling and reassembly; reimbursement for loss or replacement
13.	Loss of earnings	For up to two eligible members of household. Written proof required
14.	School uniforms	Where change of school required
15.	Storage	For temporary decants only
16.	Other	Other exceptional or special costs may be considered and approved by the Corporation

Table 2Flat rate disturbance allowance – rates of payment

Flat rate disturbance payments are payable for items 1 to 6 as set out in Table 1 of this Appendix. Current rates are set out below. Rates will be subject to review.

Size of Property	Flat rate allowance
Studio	£1145
One bedroom	£1545
Two bedrooms	£1945
Three bedroom	£2345
Four bedroom	£2465

Table 3Decoration allowance – rates of payment

Where properties are undecorated tenants can claim an allowance at the following rates:

Size of property	Decoration allowance
One bedroom	£274
Two bedrooms	£355
Three bedroom	£517
Four bedroom	£598

Shift allowance - rates of payment

The shift allowance (payable where tenants 'downsize' or give up a bedroom as they move) is payable as follows:

First bedroom released	£2000
Subsequent rooms	£1000