

Transfer Incentive Scheme

Version: 1

Approved: [date]

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council is committed to working with its Registered Provider partners to make best use of social housing stock in the borough. There is a limited supply of rented social housing and adapted social housing in the borough. This Transfer Incentive Scheme (the scheme) is aimed at social housing tenants under-occupying their homes or who no longer need an adapted home.
- 1.2 The scheme outlines the Council's approach to enabling tenants to move to smaller homes if they are under-occupying their current home. The Scheme is for Registered Provider tenants who are living in family size accommodation, have one or more bedrooms they no longer need and are interested in downsizing or ending their tenancy. Tenants have the option of transferring to another social housing property or moving to the private sector.
- 1.3 The scheme is also available for tenants living in an adapted property who no longer require those adaptations and could move to another home without adaptations (even with the same number of bedrooms), freeing up an adapted property for someone who needs it.
- 1.4 The scheme relates to tenants of social or affordable rent properties. It does not apply to intermediate affordable housing tenures such as shared owners, leaseholders or intermediate rent or any accommodation occupied on unsecure terms such as temporary accommodation or licence agreement.

2.0 Scope and criteria

- 2.1 The scheme is available to social housing tenants living in the Tonbridge and Malling Borough who:
 - Hold a Secure tenancy agreement (Assured or Secure) – starter or introductory tenancies are not eligible
 - Have been assessed and accepted onto the housing register for a transfer move. You can find more information on applying to the housing register [here](#)
 - Occupy a general needs or adapted property
 - Agree to transfer to a smaller property that meets their assessed housing need and/or a non-adapted property and provide vacant possession of their current

home. Housing need is assessed through the Housing Allocations Scheme, with one spare room allowed for households who are downsizing or moving home under this scheme.

- Are under-occupying or living in an adapted home and relinquish their home and tenancy, moving out of their social housing home into another tenure such as private rental or home ownership. Once the tenant has formally ended their tenancy and given vacant possession of the home to the Registered Provider payments can be released.

2.2 There are circumstances that will exclude tenants from being eligible for the Transfer incentive scheme as follows:

- Any form of legal or possession action; possession orders, Notice of Seeking Possession, demotion notice
- Where the tenant has previously received a Transfer Incentive Scheme payment or similar incentive from their Registered Provider landlord.
- Where a Registered Provider will not accept the creation of a new tenancy following any policies they have in place on allocations and tenancies.

2.3 As well as moving through a transfer to another social home via the Housing Register, tenants who may choose to move by buying a home or renting privately, are also eligible for the incentive scheme as they will be relinquishing a social home.

2.4 An adapted property is a home with major adaptations for example a through floor lift, level access to the property in the form of a permanent ramp or similar or accessible bathroom such as wet room.

3.0 Incentive payments

3.1 Incentive payments under this scheme to qualifying tenants are:

- £1,500 if the property freed up is a two bedroom home
- £2,500 if the property freed up is a three bedroom home
- £3,000 if the property freed up is a four bedroom home
- £3,500 if the property freed up is a five or more bedroom home
- £2,000 if the property freed up is an adapted property, even if the property moved to is a home with the same number of bedrooms. This can be in addition to the amounts above.

3.2 The amounts above for downsizing moves are by the number of bedrooms at the home being downsized from and freeing up to the housing stock.

3.3 The size of the property a qualifying tenant is able to move to will be assessed and agreed through a Housing Register application in line with the Council's Housing

[Allocations Scheme](#) with an additional 'spare' room allowed for transfer moves under this scheme.

- 3.4 Payment is made once the Registered Provider confirms the tenancy for the new home has been signed. For a move to the private sector, proof of the new tenancy or home ownership will be needed before any payment is issued. Payment will be made by BACS transfer only.
- 3.5 Incentive payments under this scheme are subject to budget limits, meaning:
- Once the annual budget for the scheme is met no further payments will be made through the scheme unless further budget provision can be identified. We may need to assist with a transfer in the following financial year.
 - While the offer is operating with budget available during a financial year, priority will be given to those moving from accommodation that is most needed; i.e. larger family homes with 4 or more bedrooms or adapted properties.

4.0 Approach to transfers - application and assessment

- 4.1 Tenants who believe they are eligible for the transfer incentive scheme will need to be accepted onto and have a live application on the Housing register. The homes that can be bid on through the Kent HomeChoice choice based lettings system online will be confirmed through a housing register application.
- 4.2 Tenants accepted onto the Housing Register are given priority linked to the extent they are under-occupying their current home.
- 4.3 The Council may make direct offers of accommodation for transfer households downsizing or moving from a wheelchair adapted home.
- 4.4 If a tenant is under-occupying an adapted property (which has been funded through a disabled facilities grant) the Council will work with the Registered Provider to try and find a suitable smaller property that is already adapted to meet the households needs. Where this is not possible, a smaller property that needs adaptations will be considered with suitability and extent of works needed to be informed by an occupational therapist assessment.
- 4.5 To apply for the scheme if you are moving into the private sector, whether renting or buying, you'll need to complete the transfer incentive form at least a month before the move. Proof of the new tenancy or home ownership will be needed before any payment is issued.

5.0 Reviews

- 5.1 If an applicant for this scheme is not happy with how this scheme has been applied or believe the council has not followed this scheme as set out in this document they can request a review.
- 5.2 Review requests need to be made within 21 calendar days of receiving the original decision stating why the applicant is not happy with how the scheme has been applied or why the scheme has not been followed.
- 5.3 You can request a review by email to housing.services@tmbc.gov.uk or by post to: Housing Services, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling. ME19 4LZ.

6.0 Monitoring and review

- 6.1 This scheme offer will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes due to budget, legislation or relevant case law.
- 6.2 Minor changes, which make no significant difference to service provision, will be made to the document under delegated authority by the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing.